

Grievance Policies for Graduate Students

The graduate student grievance policies summarized below are outlined on the Graduate School's website at:

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/navigating/policies/academic/grievances>

“Graduate students have the right to seek redress of any grievance related to academic or nonacademic matters. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally between the student and the faculty member involved or with the assistance of the graduate adviser, Graduate Studies Committee chair, or department chair.”

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, students have recourse through the formal grievance procedures described below.

I) Academic Grievances

<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/navigating/policies/academic/grievances>

Many graduate student grievances are related to the student's academic responsibilities and thesis/dissertation research and meeting the requirements for their graduate degree. Examples include adherence to degree requirements, changes in supervising committee membership, situations involving program termination. When these grievances cannot be resolved at the departmental level, the Graduate School will handle the formal grievance process, which is outlined in the Handbook of Operating Procedures, The Graduate School – section VII.E: <https://compliance.utexas.edu/university-policy-office>.

A graduate student may submit a formal grievance with the assurance of timely and thorough consideration. A graduate student will not be retaliated against for filing a formal grievance. A graduate student who believes he or she has been retaliated against should immediately report his or her concern to an associate or assistant dean of Graduate Studies. Allegations of retaliation will be referred to the appropriate office for review.

All grievances must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School, which will notify the chair of the graduate studies committee, the department chair (or the director of the academic program if there is no department), and the dean of the college or school that a grievance has been filed and of the procedures for handling the grievance. The time limits given below may be extended for good cause.

A student must submit their grievance within 60 days of the incident that is the subject of the grievance; or, when there is written notification to the student of the action that is the subject of the grievance, an intent to grieve must be submitted to the Graduate School within 30 days, and the grievance must be completely submitted within 60 days.

First Level of Adjudication: Graduate Studies Committee

The first level of consideration is the appropriate graduate studies committee. The graduate studies committee, having received formal notification of the grievance from the Graduate School, shall review the grievance and meet with the grievant if requested. The graduate studies committee shall then vote either to uphold or to reconsider the action that is the subject of the grievance. The chair of the graduate studies committee shall notify the Graduate School of the results of the graduate studies committee review within 30 days of receiving the grievance.

The results of the graduate studies committee review will be provided to the grievant. The grievant will have 30 days to notify the Graduate School if they are satisfied with those results or if they wish to proceed to the second level of adjudication as provided below.

Second Level of Adjudication: Dean of the Graduate School and Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

When the grievance cannot be resolved at the level of the graduate studies committee to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievance and the decisions of the graduate studies committee will be forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean of the Graduate School, in consultation with the college or school dean(s), may decide the case on their own review and authority, or if they deem it appropriate, convene a Graduate School ad hoc panel to review the case and provide advice.

The dean of the Graduate School will review the facts of the case, including any recommendations received from a Graduate School ad hoc panel if constituted, and render a decision within 45 days of the grievant's request for review by the dean of the Graduate School. A copy of the decision will be sent to the grievant, any ad hoc panel constituted during the review process, the chair of the graduate studies committee, the graduate adviser, the department chair (or the director of the academic program if there is no department), and the college or school dean(s). The decision of the dean of the Graduate School is final.

Exception to the academic grievance policy:

Grade disputes – Grade disputes are to be filed with the department offering the course in question, and the dean of the college or school offering the course makes the final decision on an appeal of the departmental ruling.

Graduate Student Academic Services Director, Julie Meyer, is the Graduate School contact for questions/concerns about academic grievances: julie.meyer@austin.utexas.edu

II) Non-academic grievances:

1. Discrimination: Grievances involving any form of discrimination or harassment should be filed directly with the Division of Campus and Community Engagement, <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. See the Handbook of Operating Procedures for Nondiscrimination Policy: <https://compliance.utexas.edu/university-policy-office>.
2. Misconduct: General guidelines indicate that an internal resolution should be pursued in cases of student or faculty/staff/supervisor misconduct. Otherwise:
 - Issues involving student misconduct should be handled through the office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which investigates alleged violations of institutional rules and implements any disciplinary action (<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>).
 - Issues involving faculty, staff or supervisor misconduct should be presented first to the department chair, then to the college Dean, and then to the Graduate School (if necessary, in that order).

III) Employment Grievances for Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors:

Such grievances may include issues related to academic freedom of individual TAs/AIs, non-renewal of a TA or AI, withholding of salary or promotion. When there is a grievance, the teaching assistant or assistant instructor may request the informal assistance of the Faculty Grievance Committee and Hearing Panel, or a formal complaint can be filed with the chairperson of the Faculty Grievance Committee.

IV) Employment Grievances for Graduate Research Assistants:

Whenever possible, grievances should be resolved informally between the GRA and the employing faculty member. Employment disputes by GRAs should be handled according to departmental review policies. The order for review for employment disputes is:

- The faculty member employing/supervising the GRA
- The graduate advisor
- The department chair or head of the hiring unit that employs the GRA
- The dean of the college

The decision of the dean is final.