

Pennsylvania College of Technology

Procedure Statement

Title: Academic Fairness Complaint
Procedure

Number: PR 4.23

Approved by:
Presidential Action

Approved Date: 12/2010
Last Review Date: 06/2022
Last Revision Date: 09/2020

Persons/Departments Affected:
All employees and students

Responsible Department:
Academic Affairs Office

Definitions:

Instructor of Record: Person(s) identified in the course syllabus as the instructor(s). In most cases, this refers to a faculty member; however in cases of clinical or laboratory study, the term may refer to a professional staff member who oversees student progress and is responsible for course evaluation (for example, clinical, laboratory, or program director).

Dean or designee: In most instances, an academic school dean's designee will be an assistant or associate dean. However, in the School of Nursing & Health Sciences, the respective program director will receive complaints and render decisions in cases where the student and the instructor of record cannot reach an agreeable resolution (see section II.C). In such cases, the program director will consult with the Dean of Nursing & Health Sciences, who must review and approve the decision. In cases where the program director is also the instructor of record for the course in question, responsibility for receiving complaints and rendering decisions falls to the dean.

Business day: Monday through Friday, excluding any days that the College is closed. Also excluded for the purpose of instructor responses are Fall, Thanksgiving and Spring Breaks.

Student: any person who is taking or auditing classes (including non-credit) at the College or is enrolled in any College program, including students enrolled in distance learning majors.

Meeting: a real-time interaction among the specified individuals, either face-to-face or facilitated by technologies such as telephone or internet-based communication software.

Procedure:

- I. A student who feels that an instructor has infringed upon the student's right to fairness and verbal expression, as articulated in the Academic Fairness Policy Statement, [P 4.23](#), has the right of complaint.
- II. Questions related to allegations of improper academic evaluation, administrative withdrawal from a course (not related to academic dishonesty – see [PR 4.45](#)), or violation of the student's personal freedoms can be addressed through the following student-initiated procedure:
 - A. Within five business days of the alleged infraction (including unfair evaluation/grading), the student must request a meeting with the instructor of record to discuss the student's complaint and any related supporting documentation gathered by the student. If the complaint is regarding a final grade in a course, the student must contact the instructor of record within two weeks of the grade being officially published on the Student Information System.
 - B. The meeting between the student and the instructor of record must occur within five business days of the request.
 - i. In cases where the student fails to attend the scheduled meeting, the process is considered complete. The student will be deemed to have withdrawn the allegation.
 - ii. In cases where the student attends the scheduled meeting, Penn College strongly encourages the instructor of record and the student to informally arrive at a resolution. If they agree upon a resolution, the process is concluded. The instructor of record will maintain any documentation relating to the complaint and resolution.
 - C. If the student and instructor of record are unable to reach a mutually agreeable resolution, the student has five business days from the date of the notification of the instructor of record's decision in which to submit in writing an outline of the complaint and to request an administrative review by the appropriate school dean or designee.
 - i. The school dean/designee, will proceed with an investigation of the complaint, and within five business days of receiving the student's request for an administrative review, will render a decision on the issue.
 - ii. The dean/designee, will provide the student and the instructor of record with a written outcome notice and will notify the dean of enrollment and academic operations.

- D. The student and/or instructor of record may appeal the dean's/designee's decision, but such an appeal is permissible only when new information has been discovered.
 - i. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the dean of enrollment and academic operations within five business days from the date of the notification of the dean's/designee's written outcome.
 - ii. The written appeal must clearly state the basis for the appeal, specifically detailing the new information that has been discovered for review.
 - iii. The dean of enrollment & academic operations will provide the student, the instructor of record, and the dean/designee with a written outcome notice within five business days of receiving the student's and/or instructor of record's written appeal.
- E. The decision of the dean of enrollment and academic operations is final; there is no further appeal of administrative review outcomes.
- III. In the case of an appeal to the school dean/designee, all relevant materials (electronic or hardcopy) will be maintained in the respective school office in accordance with records retention protocol established by the College. If the case is appealed to the dean of enrollment and academic operations, all relevant materials (electronic or hardcopy) will be maintained by Academic Affairs in accordance with records retention protocol established by the College.
- IV. All written communication with the student regarding academic fairness outcomes are delivered via the Penn College email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor his or her PCT email account to stay abreast of matters relating to the process and to respond in a timely manner.
- V. The time periods provided for in this procedure may be extended if there are extenuating circumstances or additional time is necessary for applicable College personnel to explore issues presented.
 - A. If the instructor of record requires additional time to explore the student's complaint, he/she will notify the student of the extension.
 - B. If the dean/designee requires additional time to explore the initial appeal, he/she will notify the student and instructor of record of the extension of time.
 - C. If the dean of enrollment & academic operations requires additional time to explore an appeal, he/she will notify the dean/designee, instructor of record, and the student of the extension of time.

Revision History:

- Date: 09/2020 Updated position titles.
- Date: 10/2019 Updated position titles.
- Date: 04/2019 Updated timelines from 10 days to five days and clarified business day definition.
- Date: 02/2019 Updated position titles.
- Date: 08/2018 Updated position titles and school name.
- Date: 07/2017 Added definitions of students and meetings, to include distance learning students.
- Date: 12/2016 Revised definition of Instructor of Record.
- Date: 08/2015 Added definition to allow for a school dean's designee, namely an assistant or associate dean or, in Health Sciences, a program director.
- Date: 02/2015 Change "faculty" to "instructor of record" throughout; added definitions section; addition of the extension of time section; significant changes to aspects of the timeline for submitting appeals, the procedure relating to students' failure to attend meetings with faculty and College staff, and the conditions under which an appeal can be submitted to the director of academic operations; and minor editorial updates throughout.
- Date: 12/2010 New procedure.

Cross References:

- Academic Fairness Policy, [P 4.23](#)
- Academic Dishonesty Procedure, [P 4.45](#)