

# Academic Grievance Policy

## Purpose

Students of Goshen College who believe that policy has not been followed with respect to academic matters may initiate the academic grievance procedure. Academic matters are those concerned with instructional activities, grading procedures or other incidents related to academic affairs.

This policy does not address issues regarding student employment or sexual harassment. It deals with academic grievances only. Students should be aware that clear evidence is needed to contest a grade. Belief that a subject or text was too difficult is not grounds for a complaint.

A student must have evidence that specific policy was violated or that he or she was treated in a prejudicial or capricious manner. This policy does not limit Goshen College's right to change rules, policies, or practices.

## Informal Resolution

1. A Goshen College student must first contact the faculty member who allegedly violated his/her rights to determine if there can be an informal resolution. The contact should be made by the student within **ten (10) business days** (Monday – Friday excluding observed holidays) of when the alleged violation occurred. The student must provide a written document to the faculty member which includes:
  - A statement concerning the nature of the complaint
  - Any evidence on which the complaint is based; and
  - The outcome that the student seeks
2. The faculty member will respond in writing within **ten (10) business days** to the student's written document. The student and faculty member will then meet to determine if an informal resolution can be reached.

## Formal Resolution

3. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, the student may contact, within **five (5) business days**, the Department Chair in which the alleged violation of the student's right has occurred to appeal the outcome. If the faculty member is the Department Chair, the student may proceed to the designated Associate Academic Dean. (Step 6)
4. The student must present a written appeal to the Department Chair. The Department Chair and student will meet within **five (5) business days** after the student's written appeal has been received by the Department Chair. The Department Chair will respond in writing to the student's written appeal within **five (5) business days** after the meeting. This response will go to both the student and the faculty member.

5. If the outcome of this meeting is not satisfactory to the student, he/she may appeal to the designated Associate Academic Dean within **five (5) business days** after receiving the Department Chair's response in writing. All written documentation up to this point will be sent to the Associate Academic Dean.
6. Within **five (5) business days** of receiving the documentation, the Associate Academic Dean will meet with the student and the faculty member to attempt to arrive at a mutually satisfactory settlement of the disagreement. If the dispute is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may initiate an academic grievance hearing in writing to the Associate Academic Dean.
7. Within **five (5) business days** of receiving a written request for an academic grievance hearing, the Associate Academic Dean will lead an Academic Response Team composed of three neutral faculty members and one student. The Associate Academic Dean will appoint one faculty member from the teaching faculty at large and one faculty member each from lists of three faculty submitted by the student and the faculty member who is involved in the grievance, none of whom shall be members of the academic department of the faculty member who is being disputed. The student will be appointed by the Student Senate.
8. The Academic Response Team will review written statements and information supplied by the student and faculty member. Both the student and the faculty member have the right to make a personal appearance before the Academic Response Team. The team may make such further investigation as is deemed appropriate and may seek assistance or information from other personnel. All discussions and submitted written documents will be treated as strictly confidential.
9. After this review, the Academic Response Team will make a decision regarding the complaint within **(5) business days**. This is considered to be the final step in the academic grievance procedure. The Academic Response Team will issue their decision to the grievant, the faculty member and the department chair in writing that will include the relevant findings of fact, conclusions and reasons for the decision.

*This policy seeks to provide a fair and expeditious process that allows for both informal and formal resolution of conflicts. Students must initiate the student complaint process by the 10th business day after the conclusion of fall and spring semesters or May terms.*

## For further information

Please contact **Tom Meyers, Associate Academic Dean**  
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