



Policy: Student Complaint Policy	Applicability: SOGS Students
Policy Owner: School of Graduate Studies	Approved By: Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Effective Date:	Last Reviewed: July 7, 2024
Next Review: June 30, 2025	Contact: 615-327-6533

PURPOSE: This policy and the established procedure is intended to provide an appropriate framework and method to resolve student complaints of academic nature in order to maintain a conducive and supportive academic environment at the Graduate School and to ensure that the rights of students in all academic matters are clearly addressed and protected.

POLICY: Students are encouraged to address their concerns with the individual or academic unit involved at the earliest possible time and on an informal basis. If no satisfaction is gained from the informal meeting, then a formal complaint should be filed. However, if it is a matter that falls under Honor Code Violations, Student Mistreatment, Sexual Misconduct, or Grade Appeal, the policies for these specific issues will take precedence. All other non-academic matters may be referred to the College's Ombudsman or the Graduate Students Association (GSA).

DEFINITIONS:

Student: This refers to any person enrolled at the SOGS in an academic course offered by the SOGS.

Individual: This refers to any person with authority to teach and evaluate students on a course offered by the School, a preceptor/mentor or thesis/dissertation committee member.

Academic unit: This refers to a laboratory headed by a faculty member, an academic program led by a Program Director, or an academic department headed by a Chair.

Student academic complaint: This refers to a formalized complaint on academic matters involving student performance, evaluation, or grading in courses or conduct of dissertation research.

Complainant: Refers to the student who files an academic complaint.

Respondent: Refers to a person or persons named by the student when filing a formal academic complaint.

TOOLS:

1. A form for reporting complaints can be downloaded from the SOGS website ([LINK](#)) and submitted electronically.
2. The SOGS has a centralized process for review of complaints by a Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee.

PROCEDURE:

1. The student should first review the matter with the individual with whom they had the



concern to explore an immediate resolution.

2. If a matter with an individual mentor or instructor is not resolved, the student may discuss it with the course coordinator, followed by the program director. If the matter is not resolved, the student should file a formal complaint in writing to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs within 10 days from the time the issue(s) is(are) identified or the initial attempts to resolve the matter, whichever comes first. If the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs is the respondent, the complaint will be directed to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.
3. The complaint document will be filed without fear of retaliation or retribution. If necessary, the School will request additional information. Complaints filed with malice intent will be directed to Legal Counsel. Complaints may be withdrawn by the complainant, in writing at any time.
4. Upon receipt of the complaint, the following procedure will be followed:
 - a. The complaint will be logged (electronically) in the SOGS Office of Academic Affairs.
 - b. The matter shall then be referred to the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee who shall conduct the investigation.
 - c. A copy of the complaint shall be made available to the respondent(s) who shall respond in writing within 10 days to the Chair of the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee with any information or documentation related to the complaint.
 - d. The committee shall examine and evaluate fully the written allegation and response, including any supporting documentation submitted by the complainant and/or respondent.
 - e. The complainant and the respondent will be invited to appear before the committee. The committee may also invite witnesses who, in the judgment of the committee, may assist in its evaluation of the complaint.
 - f. After the evaluation and review, the committee shall compile all findings and provide a written recommendation(s) to the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - g. Upon receipt of the recommendation from the committee, the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs may consult with the complainant and respondent or others who may assist with the review. He/she shall provide a written decision to the complainant and the respondent, with a copy to the members of the committee, the program director, department chair, and the Dean.



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- h. A copy of all documents shall remain on record in the Office of the Assistant Dean at the SOGS, electronically.

5. Appeal of the Complaint Resolution Decision.

- a. The complainant or respondent may appeal the decision made at the Office of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs to the Dean. Copies of the appeal shall be sent to the program director and the department chair.
- b. The appeal shall be in writing, clearly stating the reasons and/or substantive matters in the complaint that were not adequately addressed.
- c. The Dean shall review and re-evaluate the written documents, may interview both parties and/or committee members or others with knowledge of the matter.
- d. Upon completion of the review, the Dean will make the final decision.

EXHIBITS: None.

RELATED POLICIES: None.