

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS: ACADEMIC ISSUES**

It is the policy at Cayuga Community College to protect the rights and freedoms of students. The following procedures have been established to provide for an orderly, fair, and prompt resolution of student grievances concerning academic issues. These procedures are established to ensure the due process, equitable treatment, and protection of all parties involved in the process. No adverse action shall be taken in response to an individual who registers an academic grievance.

**Academic grievance**, as used here, shall mean a complaint by a student of Cayuga Community College against a representative of the College when s/he perceives that s/he has suffered adverse academic consequences from an alleged violation, misinterpretation, inequitable application, misrepresentation, or inappropriate implementation of the academic regulations and procedures of the College.

In keeping with the intent and spirit of these procedures, it is incumbent upon all parties to show respect, restraint, and responsibility in their efforts to resolve the grievance. It is incumbent on students proceeding with a grievance to provide evidence of a violation. It is incumbent upon representatives of the College to arrange meetings and conferences concerning the matter in good faith and promptly to communicate decisions to the student promptly.

This procedure is in no way intended to supplant or duplicate other grievance procedures available either to the student or the College representative(s) named in the grievance or to prevent such individuals from pursuing other remedies as are provided by law.

### **ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

When a student believes s/he can demonstrate s/he has been harmed by a violation, misinterpretation, inequitable application, misrepresentation, or inappropriate implementation of the academic regulations and procedures of the College, the following grievance procedure shall be followed. The failure of any College personnel at any level to communicate a decision to the aggrieved student within the stated time limits shall permit the student to proceed to the next step of the process (unless, for reasonable cause, the time limit has been extended by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs). The failure of the student to appeal the grievance to the next step within the stated time limits shall constitute a withdrawal of the grievance and shall bar further action (unless, for reasonable cause, the time limit has been extended by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs).

## I. INITIAL INFORMAL PROCEDURES

The student shall initiate the informal procedures within **ten college working days** after the student first perceives the alleged violation on which the complaint is based. (For reasonable cause, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may extend this time requirement.)

The informal procedures outlined below will be initiated prior to a formal grievance being filed.

1. Whenever possible, the student shall meet with the college representative whose actions are the object of the complaint to discuss the issue and attempt to resolve it satisfactorily.
2. If the complaint has not been resolved in conference with the College representative, or if the student cannot meet with the College representative, the student will discuss the complaint with the College representative's immediate supervisor, who will attempt to help the student resolve the complaint. In the interest of resolving the complaint, when the student discusses the complaint with the immediate supervisor, the immediate supervisor shall confer with the College representative.
3. If the student does not feel the problem has been resolved within **ten college working days** after the conference with the College representative's supervisor, the student may initiate the formal academic complaint procedure.

## II. FORMAL PROCEDURES

1. Within **thirty college working days** after the student first perceives the alleged violation on which the complaint is based, the student will file an Academic Grievance Form in the Office of Academic Programs. (For reasonable cause, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may extend this time requirement.) Thereafter, the complaint shall be referred to as a grievance. The form will be completed and returned to the Office of Academic Programs.
2. Within **two college working days** of receipt by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the grievance, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will send written notification to the student who has initiated the process acknowledging receipt of the formal grievance. At the same time, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will also send written notification to the College representative named in the grievance indicating that a formal grievance process has

been initiated. A copy of the formal grievance will be attached. (To protect the rights and privacy of other individuals who may be identified by the student complainant, but who may or may not choose to participate in the grievance process, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will retain the right to expunge the names of such other individuals from the complaint.)

3. Within **five college working days** of receipt by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the written grievance, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will inform the Academic Grievance Committee about the grievance and appoint a Chair. (For reasonable cause, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may extend this time requirement.) A copy of the grievance or redacted grievance, as the case may be, shall be provided to the Chair. The Academic Grievance Committee shall be composed of Division Chairs unless a Division Chair has participated in the informal process, in which case s/he will not be a member of the committee.
4. Committee meeting(s) of the Academic Grievance Committee will be completed within **twenty college working days** of receipt of the written grievance. (For reasonable cause, this time requirement may be extended by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.) The Office of Academic Programs will be responsible for making copies of the formal academic grievance, sending them to members of the Academic Grievance Committee, and scheduling the committee meeting(s).
  1. During the meeting(s), the Academic Grievance Committee may interview the student, the individual against whom the grievance is directed, and/or request additional material they feel is necessary for a fair and complete consideration of the issue.
  2. At all stages and at their own expense, the student and the individual to whom the grievance is directed may have one person with them during the process. The College representative, if a member of the negotiating unit represented by the Cayuga County Community College Faculty Association, may elect to be accompanied by a representative from the Faculty Association. Nevertheless, the student and the College representative named in the grievance shall serve as their own spokespersons. The role of their accompanying representatives, if any, shall be to advise the student or the College representative, and they will not be permitted to speak or to participate directly in any other way unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Committee.

3. Both the student and the college representative named in the grievance may request that the testimony of witnesses be heard. Requests for such witnesses must be made in writing in advance of any hearing scheduled by the Academic Grievance Committee and must be submitted to the Office of Academic Programs no later than **five college working days following the date of written notification by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to the student and the College representative against whom the grievance is directed acknowledging the initiation of a formal grievance procedure.** (For reasonable cause, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may extend this time requirement.) Requests for witnesses must include the complete name of all witnesses, a description of the relationship of the witness to the individual making the request, and a summary of the expected testimony each witness will provide. The Academic Grievance Committee will retain the right to limit the number of witnesses.
4. In the event that either a witness or the College representative, who is the subject of the grievance, does not appear at the meeting(s) called by the Academic Grievance Committee, or will not provide information or documents as requested, the recommendation of the Committee will be made on the basis of the information available to them.
5. When voting on an Academic Grievance, only committee members may be present. All members of the Academic Grievance Committee will participate in the vote. The Academic Grievance Committee may decide to:
  1. accept the arguments of the grievance, in which case they will recommend in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs an appropriate action to be taken concerning the grievance. Such recommended actions may include, but will not be limited to, reinstatement after dismissal from the College, change of grade, approval of a waiver, retaking a test.
  2. not accept the arguments of the grievance, which they will so recommend in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
  3. As noted above, the Academic Grievance Committee will have completed its meetings within **twenty college working days** of receipt of the written grievance. (For reasonable cause, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may extend this time requirement for as many as ten additional college

working days.) The Chairperson of the Academic Grievance Committee will submit to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs a written recommendation concerning the appropriate disposition of the grievance, as well as all supporting materials.

6. Within **ten college working days** of receipt of the recommendation from the Academic Grievance Committee, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the materials submitted, file a final decision, and provide written notification to both the student and the individual against whom the grievance is directed as to the disposition of the grievance. Normally, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will accept the findings and recommendations of the Academic Grievance Committee and (s)he will take action appropriate to redress any demonstrated harm to the student. However, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will retain the right to undertake a further review of the grievance, to also interview the student, the individual named in the grievance, and/or request additional material (s)he feels is necessary to a complete consideration of the issue. If the decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs differs from the findings and recommendations of the Academic Grievance Committee, (s)he will meet with the Committee in order to provide an explanation of the decision. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is final. If the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs are directly involved in any way in the informal stage of the grievance, the President or the President's designee will assume the responsibilities assigned to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at every stage in the formal process.
7. The Office of Academic Programs will be responsible for recording and filing the decision. All materials connected with the grievance will be held in confidence in the Office of Academic Programs, and shall not be utilized in proceedings concerning discipline, promotion, tenure, or appointments unless otherwise provided by law.



10. Did you attempt to resolve the issue by contacting the appropriate Division Chair?

Yes ( ) date of contact: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ No ( )

11. Please provide a complete description of the alleged situation, including copies of all supporting and relevant documents. Attach any additional pages necessary.

12. What specific redress or solution do you seek in making this academic grievance?

I hereby acknowledge that by signing this form, I am providing representatives of Cayuga Community College authority to review and secure any and all of my student records in order to appropriately resolve this grievance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The original copy of this form must be submitted to the Provost through the Office of Academic Affairs.