

Grievances, Complaints, and Appeals Policies & Procedures

approved by Board of Trustees, 1 February 2006

University of the Cumberland extends to any student the right to be fully informed of and to challenge or appeal actions of the institution and its agents that the student believes inappropriate or unfair, especially in light of the University's published policies. A student may make an informal complaint or inquiry in one of the following areas by contacting the office or individual noted:

- Academic Appeals concerning grades or academic discipline such as plagiarism, class absence, etc. (the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Appeals Committee)
- Academic Standing concerning probation/suspension or academic bankruptcy (the Registrar and the Academic Standing Committee)
- Harassment involving faculty, staff, or students (any University officer and the Committee to Investigate Harassment Issues)
- Social Discipline and Other Grievances involving faculty, staff, or students (the Vice President for Student Life and the Social Discipline/Grievance Committee)

If a resolution is not achieved through informal dialogue, the student may file a formal written complaint following procedures articulated for each area. These procedures along with the full policy regarding each area are reviewed below. The disposition of all formal written complaints are subject to review by the President of the University.

Academic Standing. At the end of each academic term, the Registrar reviews student records to determine that students are making appropriate and adequate progress in their academic programs. Each student is expected to maintain a standing of 2.00, or an average of "C." A student with a cumulative standing of less than 2.00 is automatically placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation are limited to enrolling in 15 hours per semester. If any student's standing is below the minimum indicated in the following schedule, he or she faces suspension.

<u># Hours Attempted</u>	<u>Minimum GPA</u>
30-45 hrs	1.60
46-61 hrs	1.70
62-77 hrs	1.80
78-95 hrs	1.90
96 hrs or more	2.00

The term of a student's first suspension is one semester. The term of a second suspension is one calendar year. Students who are under suspension from the University of the Cumberland will not receive credit for any academic work completed at other institutions during the period of suspension.

The Registrar will inform students of any change in academic standing within 2 weeks of the end of an academic term. After being informed of their placement on academic suspension, students may file a written appeal by the first day of classes of the following regular term by completing the appeal form available in the Office of the Registrar. This appeal will be reviewed by the Academic Standing Committee, and students will be informed of the results of this review by the final day to add classes for that term.

Records of all actions regarding academic standing, including any appeals and their disposition, are maintained by the Registrar and the Academic Standing Committee.

Academic Appeals. Both undergraduate and graduate students have the right to challenge a grade. If discussions with the course instructor and department chair do not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, students may file a formal written appeal with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will forward the appeal to the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee.

This formal written appeal must be filed by the end of the 4th week of classes in the next regular term following the term in which the course in question was taken. The Academic Appeals Committee then gathers information from the student, the instructor, and any other relevant parties. The Committee will deliver its recommendation on the complaint to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After reviewing this recommendation and concurring or amending it, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will inform the student and instructor of the disposition of the complaint no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the complaint was filed.

Records of all actions regarding academic grade appeals, including their final disposition, are maintained by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Appeals Committee.

Harassment. University of the Cumberland prohibits harassment and intimidation on the basis of one's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin. Examples of conduct prohibited by these policies include, but are not limited to, repeated insults, humor, jokes, and/or anecdotes that belittle or demean an individual's or group's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin and physical conduct or verbal innuendo which, because of one's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Prohibited conduct specifically related to sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to

- Persistent, unwelcome flirtation advances and/or propositions of a sexual nature;
- Repeated unwelcome comments of a sexual nature about an individual's body or clothing;
- Unwanted displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- Unnecessary touching, such as patting, pinching, hugging, or repeated brushing against an individual's body;
- Suggestions that submission to or rejection of sexual advances will affect decisions regarding such matters as an individual's employment, work assignments or status, salary, academic standing, grades, receipt of financial aid, or letters of recommendation;
- Sexual assault.

It is in the perception of the target of the behavior that sexual harassment is defined; or in other words, harassment is in the eye of the beholder. The law defines sexual harassment from the point of view of the target of the harassment and as such excludes any consideration of intent.

Any person (student, staff, or faculty) wishing to file a complaint regarding harassment should do so to a member of the Committee to Investigate Harassment Issues. The complaint should be in writing and detail the specific incident and/or incidents and the specific individual and/or individuals involved. An investigation of the complaint will be completed within 45 days. The Committee will render its decision and notify the complainant of the Committee's decision and action within 90 days. Decisions regarding the complaint will be reported to the President of University of the Cumberlands.

Records of all complaints, investigations, reports, and recommendations are maintained by the Committee to Investigate Harassment Issues.

Social Discipline and Other Grievances. Upon registering for housing and/or classes, a student agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of University of the Cumberlands currently in effect or those which are subsequently announced. Such rules, policies, procedures, or directives for which the students are responsible are published in the *Student Handbook*, the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the *Graduate Catalog*, departmental handbooks, and/or directives issued periodically by the University's administration.

If a student is disciplined for violating University rules and regulations, the student may challenge this punishment by filing a written complaint with the Social Discipline/Grievance Committee. In addition, if a student believes he or she has been wrongly treated by a faculty or staff member of the University in a fashion not covered by the complaint and appeal procedures discussed elsewhere, the student may also file a written complaint with the Social Discipline/Grievance Committee.

After receiving a written complaint, the Social Discipline/Grievance Committee then gathers information from the student and any other relevant parties, delivering its recommendation on the complaint to the Vice President for Student Services within 4 weeks of the initial filing. After reviewing this recommendation and concurring with or amending it, the Vice President for Student Services will inform the student of the disposition of the complaint within 6 weeks of its initial filing.

Records of all actions regarding social discipline and other grievances are maintained by the Vice President for Student Services and by the Social Discipline/Grievance Committee.

The disposition of all complaints are subject to review by the President of the University.