



## ***Student Grievance Policy***

### **Purpose**

The University recognizes the importance of providing an opportunity for students to appeal decisions made by University administrators, faculty and staff, and by committees and student governing groups. Particular care is taken to provide safeguards for students in any action which significantly alters their status at the University, e.g. changes their living situation, impacts financial aid, prohibits them from participating in certain activities, suspends them from the institution or significantly affects their academic standing.

Basic appeal procedures are summarized in the following rules. Any questions regarding appeal procedures should be directed to the individual department or committee involved or to the Office of the Dean of Students of the applicable School.

*This policy does not address grievance issues that may arise when a student is also an employee of the University either under or outside of a collective bargaining agreement. Those employee grievances should be addressed in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement or employee handbooks.*

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all schools and divisions at Tufts University and to all students at Tufts University for any initial grievance or complaint step that was initiated on or after the effective date of this policy (August 21, 2018). This policy does not address grievance issues or procedures that have already commenced prior to the effective date.

### **Policy Statement**

If a School does not maintain its own written grievance or appeal procedures, then all initial appeals must be filed in writing within 15 calendar days of the decision or action being appealed, and all appeals to subsequent steps in the process must be filed within seven calendar days of the date of the decision at the previous level. However, if a School maintains its own written procedures either in a Student Handbook or other guidance materials, then those procedures will supersede the requirements of this policy.

#### **I. Academic Grievances**

- (1) Student grievances of academic matters including grades and student-instructor conflicts or an exception from academic requirements must be appealed in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall be, as appropriate, as follows:
  - (a) To the class instructor;
  - (b) To the department head or chairperson;
  - (c) To the grievance committee of the School, if the School maintains such a committee;



- (d) To the Dean of the School in which the course is offered or designee; and
  - (e) To the Provost or designee.
- (2) Student appeals regarding matters of academic dishonesty are appealed in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for appeal shall be, as appropriate, as follows:
- (a) To the class instructor;
  - (b) To the department head or chairperson;
  - (c) To the Dean of School in which the course is offered or designee; and
  - (d) To the Provost or designee.
- (3) Academic matters outside the authority and responsibility of a particular instructor are handled in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall be, as appropriate, as follows:
- (a) To the Dean of the School in which the student is matriculated/enrolled or designee;  
and
  - (b) To the Provost or designee

## **II. Student Financial Aid, Refund Request or Loan Repayment Appeals**

A student may appeal a decision of a financial aid staff member concerning the awarding of financial aid, refund request or loan repayment in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall be, as appropriate, as follows:

- (a) To the Director of Financial Aid of the School in which the student is matriculated/enrolled or designee; and
- (b) To the Dean of the School in which the student is matriculated/enrolled or designee.

## **III. Student Appeals in Matters of University-Owned Housing**

Disputes regarding billing, damages, the housing contract, removal from a residence hall or other issues around University-owned housing are appealed in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall, as appropriate, be as follows:

- (a) To the School's Dean of Students/Student Affairs or designee; and
- (b) To the Dean of the School or designee.

For students in Arts, Sciences and Engineering:

<https://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/residential-life/on-campus-housing/housing-policies>



#### **IV. Student Activities and Organization Appeals**

Decisions of a student organization which affect students personally or as a group are appealed in accordance with written School procedures. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall, as appropriate, be as follows:

- (a) To the student organization making the decision;
- (b) To the appropriate board(s), committee(s), or organization(s) having policy-making jurisdiction over that organization; and
- (c) To the School's Dean of Students/Student Affairs or designee;
- (d) To the Dean of the School or designee.

If a grievance is filed for any student organization that has members in the School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering, the Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and the Dean of the School of Engineering shall be the final decision-makers as set forth in (d) above.

#### **V. Other Non-Academic Appeals**

Except as otherwise set forth in Article VI below, a student may appeal a decision of other non-academic matters in accordance with written School procedures, usually contained in the Student Handbook. If a School does not maintain its own written appeal procedures, the steps for an appeal shall be, as appropriate, as follows:

- (a) To the School's Dean of Students/Student Affairs in which the student is matriculated/enrolled or designee; and
- (b) To the Dean of the School or designee.

#### **VI. Additional Grievance Appeals**

Office of Equal Opportunity ("OEO") matters, which include claims or disputes relating to sexual misconduct, non-discrimination and Americans with Disability Act and other accommodation requests (except as otherwise handled by the Student Accessibility Services), shall only be processed through the OEO:

<https://oeo.tufts.edu/policies-procedures/>

Student Accessibility Services ("SAS") matters for the School of Arts, Sciences and Engineering and The Fletcher School shall be processed through the SAS:

<https://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services/currently-registered-students/appeals-and-grievance-processes>



## VII. Online Learning and Additional Dispute Matters

After exhausting the University's complaint resolution procedures set forth above, students may file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). Please note: The MA DHE will accept student complaints of any nature (academic, discrimination, harassment, etc.) regardless of the subject, where the student resides, or how they are taking classes. Eligibility of complaints for review under the SARA Complaint process will be determined by the DHE.

- (a) For students taking in-person courses in Massachusetts or taking online courses while residing in Massachusetts or a non-SARA state (California, Guam, etc.), a complaint can be filed through the DHE's [general consumer complaint form complaint form](#).
- (b) For students who are located in [SARA member states and territories](#), a complaint can be filed using the DHE [SARA complaint form](#). This includes all students who are located in SARA member states and territories for the purposes of completing out-of-state learning placements, such as internships, practica, clinical experiences, in SARA member states and territories outside Massachusetts.

Additional information from the DHE's [SARA complaint website](#) is below:

The SARA complaint process is as follows:

1. Students must first attempt to resolve their complaint using internal administrative procedures offered by the SARA institution.
2. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted with the MA-SARA institution, the student may submit a SARA Complaint via the URL below.
3. The Department shall send a copy of the complaint to the institution that is the subject of the complaint.
4. Within 30 days of the date that the Department sends a copy of the complaint to the institution, the institution must provide a written response to the student and the Department.

More information about DHE's complaint processes can be found [here](#).

**Questions?** Please contact your School's Office of the Dean of Students/Student Affairs.

### **Approval Entity(ies)**

Provost's Office  
Office of University Counsel  
Academic Council  
Office of the President



**Approval Date**

August 21, 2018

**Effective Date**

August 21, 2018

**Executive Sponsor(s)**

Deborah T. Kochevar, Provost ad interim

**Responsible Office(s)**

Office of the Dean of Students/Student Affairs in each School  
Provost's Office

**Revision**

The University reserves the right to change this policy from time to time. Proposed changes will normally be developed by those responsible for the policy with appropriate stakeholders. The approval entities have sole authority to approve changes to this policy.

**Review Cycle**

Bi-annually

**Related Policies**

Not applicable