

12 | College Guidelines for Complaint and Appeal Process for Faculty Members

Approved: February 6, 2025

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GUIDELINE SUMMARY

This standard administrative procedure establishes the process for appeal to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for complaints pertaining to conditions of work or hours of work resulting from a decision issued by a department head.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. COMPOSITION OF THE COLLEGE-LEVEL FACULTY GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

1.1 **Committee Members:** The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) Faculty Grievance Committee is comprised of seven faculty members elected as departmental delegates. The makeup of the committee will reflect the composition and breadth of the faculty within the College. Committee members shall serve two-year terms, with approximately one-half of the committee rotating each year. One committee member will be appointed to serve as Chair by the Dean.

1.1.1 If a committee member is from the same department as the complainant or otherwise believes they may have a conflict of interest, they may recuse themselves from serving on the committee for a particular grievance by notifying the Dean in writing.

1.2 **Committee Charge:** This committee is charged with the duty and responsibility of hearing complaint cases of COALS faculty, both tenured and non-tenured. This committee shall operate in accordance with System policies, regulations, and university rules.

1.3 **Meetings:** The committee shall meet when the Dean submits a grievance to the committee. The committee shall be self-governing concerning the rules and procedures of grievance hearings.

2. FACULTY COMPLAINTS

2.1 **INFORMAL RESOLUTION EFFORT:** Faculty members believing that they have cause for complaints based on the conditions of work, or work relationships, should discuss the matter in a personal conference with their department head. This includes appeals for sanctions placed on a faculty member by a supervisor for allegations of misconduct. If the matter cannot be resolved by mutual consent, the issue should be discussed in a personal conference with the Dean unless the grievance is against the Dean or would otherwise be inappropriate to be heard at the college level. Hostile work environment should be reported to Ethics and Compliance.

2.1.1 The faculty member will have ten (10) business days to elevate the matter to the Dean. If the matter is elevated to the Dean, the faculty member must document the complaint in writing and request a personal conference. The written complaint must describe in detail the nature of the grievance and state to whom the grievance is directed (respondent(s)). The faculty member may attach any other supporting documentation the faculty member deems necessary.

- 2.1.2 The Dean shall have ten (10) business days to (a) decide on the complaint, or (b) refer the complaint to the COALS Faculty Grievance Committee for recommendation before deciding. The faculty member has the option to request that the Dean send the grievance to the Committee before rendering a decision (SAP 12.99.99.M0.01 under section 1.2).
- 2.1.3 If the Dean chooses to decide on the complaint, the Dean will review the complaint, and supporting documentation, if any, and meet with the parties and witnesses, if any. The Dean will communicate the decision in writing to the parties. The decision of the Dean may be appealed by the complainant and/or the respondent to the University Grievance Committee (UGC). The appeal must be filed in writing within ten (10) business days from receipt of the decision, by filing directly with the Faculty Affairs Office according to the procedures outlined in the [University SAP 12.99.99.M0.01 Procedures for Appeal of Faculty Complaints and Appeal of Dismissals and Sanctions for Misconduct or Serious Misconduct](#).
- 2.1.3.1 If the Dean chooses to send the matter to the committee, it shall follow the process set forth below in section 3.
- 2.1.4 When the grievance is against the Dean or would otherwise be inappropriate to be heard at the college level, the complainant must file the grievance directly with the Faculty Affairs Office in writing. The grievance shall contain all factual or other data or documentation that the complainant deems pertinent to the case.
- 2.1.5 If the faculty member believes that their grievance was the result of a violation of their academic freedom or a result of a violation of their civil rights, they should state such belief in writing and submit their statement to the office of Faculty Affairs who will refer the matter to the Academic Freedom Council (AFC) pursuant to [University SAP 12.99.99.M0.01 Procedures for Appeal of Faculty Complaints and Appeal of Dismissals and Sanctions for Misconduct or Serious](#) or [For Complainants - Title IX at Texas A&M](#).

3. SUBMISSION OF A FORMAL WRITTEN COMPLAINT TO THE COALS FACULTY GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

- 3.1 If the Dean chooses to send the matter to the committee, they shall do so within ten (10) business days of receipt of the complaint. The complaint shall be referred to the committee and all parties notified. Within thirty (30) business days from the receipt of the formal letter of complaint, the committee shall hold a meeting to investigate the grievance, unless circumstances require additional time. If additional time is required, the Chair of the committee will request in writing from the Dean an extension of time. If an extension of time is granted, such extension shall be communicated to all parties involved in the grievance. The committee may solicit, as it deems necessary, documentation, names of witnesses, and testimony from the complainant and the respondent. The committee's decision shall be presented to the Dean, as a non-binding written recommendation on the entirety of the grievance, within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the hearing, unless circumstances require additional time. If additional time is required, the Chair of the committee will request it in writing from the Dean. If an extension of time is granted, such extension shall be communicated to all parties.
- 3.2 The Dean shall issue a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the committee's decision, and such decision shall be communicated to all parties involved in the grievance. The decision of the Dean shall include a copy of the committee's recommendation, report, and any documentary evidence thereof.
- 3.3 The complainant or the respondent to the grievance may appeal the decision of the Dean within ten (10) business days from receipt of the decision, by filing a written appeal directly with the Faculty Affairs Office petitioning the UGC for redress according to the procedures outlined in the [University SAP 12.99.99.M0.01 Procedures for Appeal of Faculty Complaints and Appeal of Dismissals and Sanctions for Misconduct or Serious Misconduct](#). The basis for the appeal is limited to a procedural error(s) made by the Dean that substantially impacted the outcome of the decision.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR REQUIREMENTS

[University SAP 12.99.99.M0.01 Procedures for Appeal of Faculty Complaints and Appeal of Dismissals and Sanctions for Misconduct or Serious Misconduct](#)

CONTACT OFFICE

Questions regarding this rule should be referred to the Office of the Executive Associate Dean at 979-845-3712.

REVISION HISTORY

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