

MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Hudelson, Executive Secretary
Faculty Senate

FROM: Becky Bitter, Registrar's Office

FOR: Academic Affairs Committee

DATE: March 20, 2024

SUBJECT: Proposal to Revise Rule 104, Academic Complaint Procedures

On March 19, 2024, AAC approved a proposal to revise Rule 104. The proposal was initiated by the Syllabus Subcommittee and revised collaboratively by the Provost's Office and AAC.

The revision adds further detail and separates complaints into different categories, including for course policies found in the course syllabus, grades on individual assignments, and final course grades, in addition to the broader category of general concerns about instruction. The rule describes what students should include in a written complaint and shortens the timeline for submitting and addressing the complaint.

Proposed Rule with markup:

104. ACADEMIC COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

~~A student having complaints about instruction or grading should attempt to resolve those issues directly with the instructor. If that fails, the student should send an email to the instructor using his or her official WSU email account no later than 20 business days following the end of the semester. This email should briefly outline the complaint and be copied to the chairperson of the academic department.~~

Students should follow these steps to resolve complaints about grades, instruction, or course policies:

- For concerns on course policies as outlined in the course syllabus, the complaint should be emailed to the instructor within 5 business days after the first day of class instruction, or for students who enroll after the first day of class within 5 days of receiving access to the syllabus, in either hard-copy or electronic form.
- For grades on individual assignments, the complaint should be emailed to the instructor in a timely way (typically within a week of receiving the grade, or as defined by the instructor) so that the issue may be addressed.
- For final grades, the complaint must be emailed to the instructor within 10 business days of the final grading deadline and posting to the transcript.
- For any other concerns about instruction that arise during the course, the student should email the instructor to attempt to resolve the issue.

If the complaint is not resolved with the instructor within ~~20~~ 10 business days of sending the email, or if the instructor is unavailable, then the student may work directly with the ~~chairperson~~ chair of the academic department in which the course is offered. The chair's decision shall be rendered within ~~20~~ 10 additional business days.

After the chair's decision, the student ~~or the instructor~~ may appeal to the ~~academic college~~ Dean's Office of the academic college. Complaints must be ~~presented in writing~~ emailed to the college dean within ~~20~~ 10 business days of the chair's decision. The written statement should:

- describe the complaint,
- provide supporting evidence of how the student has attempted to resolve the complaint,
- indicate how ~~it~~ the issue affects the ~~individual or unit~~ student, and
- ~~include~~ state the remedy sought from the college dean.

The decision of the college dean is the final step and shall be made within ~~20~~ 10 business days.

~~At the campuses other than Pullman, the procedure is identical except that~~ On the Everett, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver campuses, the program leader or academic director shall substitute for will act in place of the department chair. The program leader or academic director will outline next steps if the student is unsatisfied ~~, and the campus chancellor (or his or her designee) shall substitute for the college dean, if the department chair and/or the college dean is not located on that campus.~~

The University ~~Ombudsman~~ Ombuds is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.

Note: Though chairs and college deans (and program leaders and campus chancellors) may resolve complaints about instruction and grading, they may not change a final grade without the consent of the instructor, except as provided by Rule 105.

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- For final grades, the complaint must be emailed to the instructor within 10 business days of the final grading deadline and posting to the transcript.
- For any other concerns about instruction that arise during the course, the student should email the instructor to attempt to resolve the issue.

If the complaint is not resolved with the instructor within 10 business days of sending the email, or if the instructor is unavailable, then the student may work directly with the chair of the academic department in which the course is offered. The chair's decision shall be rendered within 10 additional business days.

After the chair's decision, the student may appeal to the Dean's Office of the academic college. Complaints must be emailed to the college dean within 10 business days of the chair's decision. The written statement should:

- describe the complaint,
- provide supporting evidence of how the student has attempted to resolve the complaint,
- indicate how the issue affects the student, and
- state the remedy sought from the college dean.

The decision of the college dean is the final step and shall be made within 10 business days.

On the Everett, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver campuses, the program leader or academic director will act in place of the department chair. The program leader or academic director will outline next steps if the student is unsatisfied.

The University Ombuds is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.

Note: Though chairs and college deans (and program leaders and campus chancellors) may resolve complaints about instruction and grading, they may not change a final grade without the consent of the instructor, except as provided by Rule 105.

At this time, Faculty Senate review and approval is recommended, to be effective fall 2024.