

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
HELEN BADER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE**

STUDENT GRIEVANCE AND GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURES

FORMAL GRIEVANCE/GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE

STEP ONE

The student appeals in writing to the faculty member or the faculty/staff body responsible for the decision within **30 working days** of the action which prompts the appeal or grievance. The faculty member or the faculty/staff body will provide a written statement of the reason for the decision. Students are encouraged to contact their faculty advisor for assistance regarding the appeals process.

STEP TWO

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of STEP ONE, the student may continue the appeal by submitting a written Statement of Appeal to the HBSSW Student Grievance and Grade Appeal Committee (SGGAC) within **10 working days** of the STEP ONE decision. The Statement of Appeal must contain:

- Relevant facts surrounding the appeal/grievance, such as which policies or syllabus guidelines were violated
- The solution sought or the actions that will resolve the problem to the student's satisfaction
- Any evidential and supporting documentation

The HBSSW Appeals and Grievance Committee will review the materials to determine whether presented materials are in good order. If not, the Committee may return the materials to the student. If materials are complete, the Committee may decide to 1) conduct a hearing or 2) render a decision based on the materials submitted by the student. A student may request a hearing with the Committee. Within **10 working days** of receiving the written appeal materials, the Committee will inform the student in writing of its decision regarding a hearing.

The expectation is that the Committee will not substitute its judgment for that of the faculty when the merits of a student's work are involved. The obligation of the Committee is to determine whether the student was treated fairly and not to evaluate whether the assigned grade was justified. Further, grading is often relative to the course and the overall performance of all the students enrolled in the course.

STEP THREE

If the STEP TWO decision is not acceptable to the student, he or she may:

- Graduate Students: appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School within **10 working days** from the date of the decision by the Appeals and Grievance Committee. The Associate Dean will review all documents and supporting material and makes a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School, who makes the final decision.

- Undergraduate Students: appeal to the Dean of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare within **10 working days** from the date of the decision by the Appeals and Grievance Committee. The Dean will review all documents and supporting material make the final decision.

HEARING PROCEDURE

A request by a student for a hearing will be screened initially by the Appeals and Grievance Committee within ten working days upon receipt of request. A request for a hearing may be rejected for any of the following reasons:

1. The complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the Appeals and Grievance Committee;
2. The issue was not made within the time limits specified and is without a reasonable argument for a time extension;
3. No remedy is available for the Committee to recommend that would address the issue
4. The substance of the appeal/grievance or the supporting evidence is not sufficient to warrant further consideration by the Committee

If a hearing is deemed necessary by the Appeals and Grievance Committee, the following procedures will apply:

- A. When a hearing is deemed necessary, the Committee chair shall immediately notify the faculty or faculty/staff body and provide a copy of the appeal. The chair shall set a hearing date taking into consideration the scheduling requirements of all parties. The chair shall notify all parties by mail of the time and place of the hearing and of the hearing procedures.
- B. In extenuating circumstances, the Committee may waive the time limits by a majority vote of the members present at the initial screening of the appeal/grievance.
- C. The faculty may submit to the chair of the Committee a written answer to the appeal at least **5 working days** prior to the hearing.
- D. The student and the faculty may choose to be present at the hearing. All parties have a right to be present at the hearing. The student and the faculty may be each accompanied by one person. That person is welcome to advice and counsel but may not otherwise participate in the hearing. It is important to remember that the appeal procedures are primarily administrative in nature and are part of the educational process as distinguished from the judicial process.
- E. If one of the parties does not appear at the hearing, the hearing shall proceed and the committee may reach a decision on the basis of the written materials submitted to or obtained by the committee before the hearing and the verbal or written materials presented at the hearing. If a party notifies the chair prior to the meeting that appearance at the meeting will be impossible, the chair may postpone the hearing and set a new hearing date, within **15 working days** of the original hearing date.
- F. The hearing will be open unless action is taken by the Appeals Committee to close the meeting in accord with Wis. Stat. 19.85.

a. Closed Session/Meetings

Closed meetings are defined under Wisconsin Statute s. 19.85. A closed session occurs when only members of the body are permitted to be in attendance. Section 19.85 (d) allows for a closed session when personnel matters are being considered or discussed by the committee. If the committee will be meeting in closed session, a motion must be made to move into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statute s. 19.85 and the motion to be considered must be stated. A roll call/ballot vote is then taken and recorded.

To go into closed session, the following steps must be taken:

- The committee must first convene in open session
- A member of the committee must move that the group convene in closed session stating the nature of the business to be considered
- The chair must reiterate the nature of the business to be considered in closed session and cite the relevant statute that provides authority for the closed session (Wisc. Stats. 19.85)
- The motion to go into closed session must be passed by majority vote of those present.
- The vote of each member on the motion to close the session must be ascertained and recorded in the meeting's minutes.
- The contents of the announcement to go into closed session must be noted in the minutes

- G. The chair of the SGGAC will have full charge of the decorum of the hearing. The student may present one witness at a time. The faculty member may present one witness at a time. Upon recognition by the chair, committee members may question witnesses. Unless a majority of the committee votes to extend the hearing, no hearing shall last more than two hours.
- H. Student and faculty shall be afforded equal time to provide information to substantiate their claims.
- I. Upon the close of the hearing, the committee, if meeting in open session, may entertain a motion to close the session for deliberation under Wis. Stat. 19.85 (1)(a) or Wis. Stat. 19.85 (1)(c), or if meeting in closed session under Wis. Stat. 19.85 (1)(f), shall excuse the parties to deliberate the issues.
- J. The decision of the committee on the appeal shall be by simple majority vote. Members of the committee shall apply fair professional and academic standards in reaching a decision.
- K. The committee may recommend the redress sought by the appellant, may reject the appeal, or may recommend a different remedy than that sought by the appellant. All decisions of the Appeals and Grievance Committee are advisory only and are not authoritative or binding.

- L. For complaints related to faculty performance, the Committee will prepare a report consisting of facts and conclusions and the applicability of professional and academic standards. The report may include a recommendation for a suggested remedy. The hearing report should be sent to:
 - a. the parties involved
 - b. the Dean
 - c. the Executive Committee of the faculty member's department.
- M. Reports addressing complaints related to curriculum or course content should be sent to the Department Faculty.
- N. Appeal and Grievance materials and proceedings are considered confidential.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

This committee is composed of five tenured faculty members appointed by the Dean of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare; and four students shall be appointed from each of the School's programs, criminal justice and social work, two from each program at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Terms are overlapping, two year terms, including summers.

COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

- A. Quorum
The presence of three faculty and two student members are required in order to conduct all committee business. A simple majority vote is required for deciding issues related to an appeal or grievance and the ultimate decision in the appeal or grievance.
- B. Chair
The Chair shall be elected by the committee from among those serving on the committee. At the end of the academic year, if the chair is not a continuing member, a convener will be designated to assure that all pending committee business is handled in a timely fashion until a chair is selected.
- C. Conflicts of Interest
Individual committee members with a perceived conflict of interest regarding a particular appeal shall not sit on the committee as it conducts business concerning that appeal. The Dean of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare shall appoint a tenured faculty member to serve as an alternate to participate in all business concerning that appeal or grievance. The Dean shall determine that the alternate faculty member has no conflict of interest with the specific case.

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