



## **ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS (IPESA 6)**

### **6.1 COMPLAINT**

A **Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with some aspect of academic life governed by this policy.

Examples would include, but are not limited to, such things as

- failure to present a course outline;
- failure to follow the course outline in matters concerning evaluation methods;
- unfair or unreasonable evaluation methods or schedules;
- failure to return assignments and evaluation materials within appropriate timeframes;
- failure to make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities ; and
- unfairness of the grading scheme.

### **6.2.2 OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES-PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS:**

In circumstances other than final course grades (regular education), students are encouraged to first approach the teacher, the professional or the academic administrator who rendered the initial decision in order to resolve the issue at an informal level. Students can be accompanied by a Student Council member who will act as an observer **at all times during, and at all stages of,** an appeals and complaints process.

#### **Step 1. Informal level**

1. The teacher – Students, either as individuals or as a group, who have a complaint about a teacher of a particular course must first approach the teacher to discuss and try to settle the dispute.

2. The department coordinator – If students find it impossible to approach the teacher directly, or if the results of such a meeting are not satisfactory, they should then contact the teacher's department coordinator. If the department coordinator is also the teacher in question, then students should approach a co-coordinator, if one exists. If not, the students should proceed directly to Step 2 (The Formal Level).

When the appeal or complaint reaches the level of department coordinator or co-coordinator, the teacher is entitled to be accompanied by a union or a department representative who acts as an observer, and all parties must be informed of the outcome of the informal procedure by the coordinator (or co-coordinator).

## **Step 2. Formal level**

If the complaint or appeal reaches this level, it is important to note that both parties have the same rights. Both are entitled to be accompanied by their Union or Student Council representatives **at all times during, and at all stages of**, the formal procedures. These representatives act as observers. Throughout the process, both parties have the right to be heard and to present evidence of their positions in light of evidence provided by the other.

1. **If the situation is not resolved at an informal level** within ten working days of the original complaint being launched, students may file a formal written complaint with the DAA. They must complete a standardized, written form. They must ensure that complete information on the incident(s) or event(s) in question is given and it must be signed by the student(s) when completed. Unsigned complaints will not be considered.

**Note A:** To ensure fair, equitable, and prompt treatment of complaints, complainants are encouraged to sign a written consent form authorizing the College to forward a copy of the signed complaint to the concerned parties. If the written consent form is not signed by the complainant(s), the written complaint, with the names of signatories barred, will be forwarded to the pertinent parties.

**Note B:** Formal written complaints must be typed to prevent the identification of handwriting in the case where the complainant(s) do not sign the written consent form.

2. **In all cases**, the DAA will send a copy of the formal, written complaint to the teacher concerned and to the department coordinator (or co-coordinator).

3. If complaints relate to a teacher or a specific class, **the DAA will work to ensure that the rights of all parties concerned are respected.** The DAA will first attempt mediation with both parties to resolve the problem.

4. **If mediation is unsuccessful, the DAA will render a decision based on available supporting evidence from all parties.**

5. **For cases involving Continuing Education, written complaints will be forwarded to the DAA**, who must ensure that the teacher concerned receives a copy of the complaint. The DAA must then undertake steps similar to 3 and 4 above. All concerned parties must be informed of the results of the formal procedure by the DAA. In the event that the results of the formal procedure may lead to disciplinary action against a teacher, the DAA will upon request from the teacher concerned or his designated union representative, provide copies of the documentation gathered in step 4 above, with identifying information barred unless the parties have signed consent forms. The DAA will also send a letter to the complainant(s) informing them of the results.





**Written Consent Form to Accompany Appeals & Complaints**

**IPESA 6.2.2 (p. 23; note A)**

**NOTE A:**

**To ensure fair, equitable, and prompt treatment of complaints, complainants are encouraged to sign a written consent form authorizing the College to forward a copy of the signed complaint to the concerned parties. If the written consent form is not signed by the complainant(s), the written complaint, with the names of signatories barred, will be forwarded to the pertinent parties.**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize the College to forward a copy of the signed complaint to the concerned parties.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student name**