



## The American University of Kurdistan Policy of Student Grievance

Policy Number: AS009  
Effective Date: May 28, 2023

### CONTENT

- I. Introduction
- II. Roles and Responsibilities
- III. Definition
- IV. Policy Statement
- V. Policy Procedures
- VI. Policy History

### I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Authority:** The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as “Board”) at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as “AUK” or “University”) is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.
- b. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Student Grievance Policy is to provide equitable and orderly processes to resolve grievances by students.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to all AUK students.

### II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Responsible Executive:** Provost
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Provost
- c. **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost
- d. **Policy Contact:** Provost

### **III. DEFINITION**

**Academic Grievance:** An academic grievance occurs when a formal or informal grievance is made or submitted by a student who believes they have been harmed by being treated arbitrarily or capriciously within the context of a course.

**Non-Academic Grievance:** A non-academic grievance occurs when a formal or informal grievance is submitted by a student who believes they have been dealt with in an arbitrary or capricious manner which violated established policies or procedures and has caused actual harm to the student.

### **IV. POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy refers to the formal and informal processes by which students are able to pursue grievances, as well as the timeframes by which the University responds. It also serves to confirm that students have the right to access appropriate levels of review and redress.

Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve differences between themselves and faculty members or university staff in an informal manner prior to initiating a formal grievance under this policy. This may entail a conversation in which the views of both parties are aired in a mutually satisfactory manner or a conversation using a neutral third party for mediation. If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, the grievant may elect to begin the formal grievance procedure.

Students may pursue a grievance or lodge an appeal of decisions or determinations made through the Student Grievance Process as outlined. The University will deal with any and all grievances in a transparent, professional and fair manner.

### **V. POLICY PROCEDURES**

#### **a. Academic Grievance Procedures**

The formal Academic Grievance Procedure (AGP) outlined in this document applies only to students' final grades. It does not apply to disputes during the semester that involve grades given for assignments of any kind, quizzes, or exams. The formal AGP for final grades must be started within 30 calendar days after the contested grade was officially sent to the student by the Admissions and Registration Department (ARD). Students are not allowed to contest any final grades after 30 calendar days from when ARD sends the grades to the student. In order to pursue a formal academic grievance of a final grade, a student must file an AGP Form with ARD, which will note the exact date and time it received the grievance form and then pass it along immediately to the relevant department. Any evidence the student has to support his or her claim should also be provided at that time. For the purpose of determining timelines, a formal Academic Grievance begins on the date the AGP Form is officially received by ARD.

#### **First Level: Appeal to the Faculty Member**

This section regards final grades only. Before filing a formal AGP Form with ARD, a student should make every effort to resolve the issue with the faculty member in question in an informal manner. This should happen as soon as possible after a student receives his or her final grade. Students who

## POLICY – Student Grievance

feel that their grade is incorrect or unfair should discuss the issue with the appropriate faculty member. They should provide whatever evidence they have to support their claim at that time. Faculty members must respond to the student within two working days.

### **Second Level: Appeal to Chair and Dean**

If the faculty member does not agree with the student concerning the final grade, the student should then discuss the matter with the faculty member's department chair and college dean, who should meet with the student. The chair and dean should form a consensus agreement concerning the student request. They must respond to the student within two working days.

If the chair and dean do not agree with the student, then, if the student wishes to pursue the matter, he or she may file a formal AGP Form with ARD. The student should not approach other faculty members, other university staff, employees, or officials. Such actions might be considered violations of the Student Code of Conduct depending upon the circumstances.

### **Third Level: Provost, and the Academic Grievance Committee (AGC)**

Before initiating the process to form an AGC, ARD should verify that the student has attempted to informally resolve the final grade issue with the faculty member, the chair and the dean. If a student has not first attempted to informally resolve the final grade issue, ARD should not accept the AGP Form and direct the student to attempt to informally resolve the issue first.

Once the AGP Form has been filed, ARD will pass the form and supporting documents to the Provost.

The Provost will convene an Academic Grievance Committee, which will consist of three faculty members chosen by the Provost. The Provost shall serve on and chair the Committee, but shall not vote. The Committee should reach complete consensus about the student's appeal, but if this is not possible, it will decide the issue by majority vote. All deliberations of the Committee will be closed and confidential. The AGC must be formed within five working days after the Provost receives the AGP Form from ARD.

The Committee must meet no later than five working days after being charged by the Provost. After the meeting concludes, a written recommendation shall be furnished by the AGC and transmitted through ARD to the student, the faculty member, the chair, and the dean. This determination must be sent within five working days after the conclusion of the AGC's deliberations. The decision of the AGC is final.

### **Grade Appeals During the Semester for Non-Final Grades**

The following section concerns grades that are issued during the semester for assignments, homework, quizzes, exams, and any other grades that are not final grades. If the student wishes to appeal a non-final grade, he should discuss the matter with the faculty member. If the student feels that he or she is being treated unfairly, he may also discuss the grade with the chair first and then the dean, who may provide their input to the faculty member. However, for non-final grades, the decision of the faculty member should normally be considered as final except in the case of obvious error or clear malfeasance as determined by the chair and/or dean.

## POLICY – Student Grievance

There is no appeal process for non-final grades and students should not attempt to appeal their non-final grades by appealing to other faculty members, other university staff, university employees, or university officials. Such actions might be considered violations of the Student Code of Conduct depending upon the circumstances.

### **b. Non-Academic Grievance Procedures**

The formal procedure must be started within 20 working days after the contested decision was officially recorded. The Non-Academic Grievance Process officially begins on the date the "Statement of Grievance Form" is received by the Director of the respective unit.

#### **First Level: Non-Academic Grievance to the Unit Director**

Any student who contests an administrative decision shall first attempt to resolve the matter with the Director of that Administrative Unit before filing a written grievance. The student must explain his/her position to the Director and attempt to understand the unit's reasons for assigning the decision. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the unit's actions and to resolve differences in an informal and cooperative manner. Should attempts at an informal resolution fail, the student may file a grievance in writing on the Statement of Grievance Form. After receiving a completed Statement of Grievance Form, the Director of the respective unit shall assure that a written decision outlining the express reasons for that decision is delivered to the student within 10 working days. Should the student fail to take further action within 5 working days after receiving the Director's decision, then that decision shall stand. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision or does not receive a response from the Director within 10 working days, and the student wishes to file a formal appeal s/he may proceed to the second level of grievance.

#### **Second Level: The Vice President for Administration & Finance and the Non-Academic Grievance Committee**

If the student elects to continue the grievance after the Director's decision or recommendation has been received, s/he may take the matter to the VPAF (or the VPAF's designee) within 5 working days. The VPAF shall ascertain within 10 working days whether the procedures at the first level have been duly followed; if not, s/he will require that they be followed before taking further action. The VPAF will complete the written statement on the Statement of Grievance Form. The VPAF makes the decision about whether to dismiss the case or establish a Non-Academic Grievance Committee, which shall consist of three staff members chosen by the VPAF or the VPAF's designee. Staff from the same Unit as the Unit involved in the case may not serve on the Committee. The VPAF or designee shall serve on the Committee as chairperson without a vote. All deliberations of the Committee will be closed and confidential.

The Committee should meet as soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days after the grievance form has been received and the VPAF has ascertained that grievance procedures at the first and second levels have been duly followed. Three staff members and the VPAF or designee shall constitute the Committee. The VPAF is not a voting member. A written recommendation shall be furnished by the Committee and transmitted through the office of the VPAF to all affected parties within 5 working days after the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations. The decision of the Non - Academic Grievance Committee is final.

**Appeal of Committee's Findings:**

Only if the student believes that a violation of the procedures herein outlined has occurred, may s/he appeal the decision of the Committee to the President, within 10 working days from the date of the Committee's written decision. The President has the discretion to take any action necessary to thoroughly complete a review of the procedure of grievance, and then will issue a decision, which will be binding and final. The decision will be conveyed in writing to the student and all relevant parties usually within 10 working days.

**VI. POLICY HISTORY**

**a. Approved by:** Board of Trustees

**b. Adopted:** May 25, 2023

**c. Amended:** December 15, 2024

**APPENDIX: STUDENT GRIEVANCE FORM**

**Statement of Grievance Form**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student

ID # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:  Academic Grievance  Non-Academic Grievance

Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date \_\_\_\_\_ (10 working days from initiation date)

Name of Involved Faculty/Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_

Course (if academic grievance) or Unit (if non-academic grievance):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specify your Grievance:

Requested Outcome (specify the solution/action you request):

By signing below: I acknowledge that the information submitted is true and that any attached documents will not be returned. It is advised that photocopies of any back-up documentation be attached to this grievance.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ POLICY – Student Grievance

POLICY – Student Grievance

**RESPONSE TO STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE**

Documentation of process of the review of the student grievance  
and suggested actions recommended

Response from Faculty-involved or Director-involved

By signing below, I acknowledge that the information submitted is true and that any attached documents will not be returned. It is advised that photocopies of any back-up documentation be attached to this grievance.

Faculty/Staff Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ POLICY – Student  
Grievance

POLICY – Student Grievance

**RESPONSE TO FACULTY/DIRECTOR REVIEW OF STUDENT GRIEVANCE**

Documentation of process of the review of the student grievance  
and suggested actions recommended

Response from Dean or VPAF (including assessment of actions taken or recommended to be taken, and whether a Grievance Committee needs to be convened).

By signing below, I acknowledge that the information submitted is true and that any attached documents will not be returned. It is advised that photocopies of any back-up documentation be attached to this grievance.

Provost or VPAF Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_