

# Academic Appeals and Complaints

## Grade Appeal

Following consultation with their advisor, the professor, and the appropriate department chair, students may request a review of a grade assigned in a particular course. Such an appeal will be heard by the Academic Policy Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Provost. Students must file an appeal within one term (semester or summer) of receipt of the grade in question. Appeals should be made in writing, addressed to the Academic Policy Committee, and submitted to the Provost.

## Request to Waive or Modify an Academic Policy

Students may appeal to the Academic Policy Committee to ask for exceptions to academic policies. Students should take care in putting together a clearly written case that supports the appeal.

To facilitate this process, students should first consult their academic advisor for help with drafting the text of the appeal. Students may also ask for letters of support from faculty members when appropriate. The written appeal and supporting documents should then be sent to the Provost ([provost@georgetowncollege.edu](mailto:provost@georgetowncollege.edu)), who will review the appeal for completeness. The Provost may ask for clarification or additional information. The Provost will then take the written appeal to the Academic Policy Committee, which will then vote on the merits of the appeal based on the written evidence.

## Academic Grievance Procedure

Students should first seek to resolve the problem with the specific faculty member involved. If a student wishes to lodge a complaint against a faculty member in an academic matter that cannot be resolved directly with the faculty member, the student should normally first consult with his/her academic advisor. The advisor will guide the student through the options available to the student (informal or formal complaint). When there is an informal expression of an academic concern, the student's faculty advisor should convey the essence of that concern to the department chair, who will investigate the issue and take any necessary action to help resolve the issue. If the faculty member in question is the student's advisor, the student should contact the Provost for resolution of the problem.

Formal complaints should be reserved for situations in which a student believes he or she has been adversely affected in a way that cannot be or has not been resolved through informal intervention. When the student wishes to lodge a formal complaint, the student should generally seek advice from his/her academic advisor about the best way to proceed (unless the advisor is the focus of the complaint). To make a formal complaint, the student must submit a written statement of the difficulty to the Provost and request that the issue be resolved through the Academic Policy Committee. This statement should be no longer than two pages and should concentrate on the facts of the issue in question.

The Provost, in consultation with other faculty/staff as appropriate, then reviews the facts, communicates with the person(s) involved, and attempts to resolve the difficulty to the student's satisfaction. If that attempt is unsuccessful, the matter will be forwarded to the Academic Policy Committee for review. The Committee will review the facts of the grievance and make a recommendation to the Provost for resolving the problem. The final disposition of the issue is in the hands of the Provost and is final and binding. A log of all formal academic complaints is maintained in the Provost's Office.

Should a student not be satisfied with the decision from the Provost, the student may file a consumer complaint with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. To file the complaint with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education the student will go to [http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/consumer\\_complaint.html](http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/consumer_complaint.html).

Grievances related to the Honor Code will be handled by the Honor Council. For policies related to non-academic grievances, see the Student Handbook.

## Academic ombud

Students may bring concerns about student academic rights and violations of academic integrity to the Academic Ombud. The Ombud serves a purely communicative function, providing a confidential and impartial space, as legally permissible, to discuss these issues. Students may explore formal complaints, clarify issues, and consider options and resources to address their concerns. The Academic Ombud may share relevant information with appropriate parties, as the student wishes, or hold it in confidence.

The Ombud advises students on issues regarding student academic rights related to:

- Academic integrity (plagiarism, cheating, etc.)
- Grade disputes as a result of a violation of the student's academic rights
- Unfairness or concerns with retaliation
- Cross-cultural misunderstandings
- Other academic issues

Consultation with the Ombud is meant to supplement, but not replace, the process of academic resolution (contacting the course instructor, department chair, and submitting a formal appeal or complaint to the office of the Provost). The Academic Ombud serves as chair and a non-voting member of the Academic Policy Committee, where formal student academic appeals are considered. In this way, they can ensure fair application of policies, as related in the Academic Catalog.

The Academic Ombud does not deal with issues relating to student life, disability services, Title IX violations, or finances. See the Student Handbook for additional information regarding these issues.

To submit an inquiry or to schedule an appointment, please email [ombud@georgetowncollege.edu](mailto:ombud@georgetowncollege.edu).

*Please note: Communication with the Academic Ombud is not "notice to the university" of problems or policy violations, except where the Ombud is required by law or university policy to forward that notice. The Ombud can help students to determine how to keep their own records or submit formal complaints and appeals, and also to identify the appropriate office to contact if applicable. In cases where information reported to the Ombud indicates that there may be a violation of the university's Title IX Policy, the Ombud will be obligated to report that information to the Title IX coordinator.*

## Academic Bankruptcy

The bankruptcy policy permits the student who has earned very poor grades in any one term, due to extreme personal or financial difficulties, to petition the Academic Policy Committee for Academic Bankruptcy status for that one term. The bankruptcy term will be so designated on the student's permanent record, and no credit earned during the semester will be calculated in the student's grade point average at Georgetown College. Nothing will be erased from the permanent record. Students are cautioned that many colleges and universities will not honor another institution's bankruptcy policy, nor may certain medical, law, or graduate institutions. Following consultation with one's advisor, at any point in a student's college career while enrolled at Georgetown College, a student may request Academic Bankruptcy for one term, according to the following procedure: (1) the request will be made to the Academic Policy Committee; (2) the student must demonstrate to the Academic Policy Committee that the particular term for which bankruptcy is petitioned was an extraordinary case; (3) if the Academic Policy Committee approves the petition for bankruptcy, the student forfeits credit for all courses that semester, and grades for that semester are not used in computing the grade point average, although they do remain on the permanent record. The permanent record will indicate clearly that Academic Bankruptcy was granted;(4) if a student has

been issued a notification of academic suspension, Academic Bankruptcy cannot be claimed until fulfillment of the suspension and the student is again enrolled at Georgetown College; (5) once bankruptcy status has been granted, the action is irreversible.