

ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC RELATED COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR MATTERS NOT RELATED TO GRADING

OVERVIEW

1. Situations may arise where students are dissatisfied with an aspect of their academic experience at Richmond. The university welcomes feedback from students – if there is a genuine problem, Richmond officials need to be informed about it in order to respond.
2. The *Academic and Academic Related Complaints Procedure for Matters Not Related to Grading (AARCP)* applies when a student has a complaint or concern about an academic matter **not** related to a specific grade or set of grades for a course or programme or to academic progression.
3. *When a question or issues related to a grade or progression arises this must be addressed through the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#)*

Please note that ‘attendance failure’ is treated as a grading issue and as such must be addressed according to the procedures laid out in the Attendance Policy.
4. Appeals not related to academic matters (e.g., related to housing, financial services, student services, disability services, and so forth) must be addressed using the [Complaints and Appeals Procedures for Non-Academic and Non-Academic related Matters](#)
5. The information in this document outlines the procedure to follow should you have an issue or a complaint. This document does not override the wider legal obligations of the university or to employees under contract, or the obligations of students and employees to the University.
6. ALL ISSUES OR COMPLAINTS WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND THE UNIVERSITY CONFIRMS THAT BRINGING A COMPLAINT OR RAISING AN ISSUE WILL NOT HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUR ACADEMIC TREATMENT.
7. The University welcomes input from students as this enables us to develop and improve our academic offerings and the academic support we provide to students. However if the university receives a formal complaint which is demonstrably false or vexatious it reserves the right to take action under the *Student Code of Conduct*.

7.1 Academic and academic-related complaints for matter not related to grading may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Issues or complaints related to the design, content, or organisation of a specific class or programme
- ii. Issues or complaints related to official university academic policies or procedures
- iii. Issues or complaints related to course or programme delivery, such as unprofessionalism, including lateness or absence; late return of work; inadequate or insufficient academic support; inappropriate behaviour; poor classroom conduct; lack of attendance at established office hours etc.
- iv. Issues or complaints related to resources, including classrooms, academic facilities, library resources, IT support
- v. Issues or complaints related to academic advising and/or personal tutoring
- vi. Issues or complaints related to University academic offices, including Academic Registry, the Internship Office, the Library, the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, School offices, the Provost's Office.

OTHER MATTERS

1. Course and Programme.

- 1.1 If you have an issue related to the design, content, or organisation of a specific class or programme you are advised to raise this the instructor in the first instance, who will attempt an informal resolution of the issue.
- 1.2 If you do not wish to speak with the instructor or are not satisfied with the instructor's response, you should arrange to meet with the relevant Head of Department or Associate Dean.
- 1.3 Remember also that all degree programmes hold regular meetings where issues of programme design can be discussed, and the Student Government will also provide support with issues which may arise.
- 1.4 If you wish to make a formal complaint about a specific course or programme this should be made to the Dean of School, in writing. The complaint should provide a detailed description of the issues and, where possible, provide evidence to support the complaint. You should also indicate what outcome you are looking for by making a complaint: are you raising the matter for information, are you looking for a change

of some kind to the curriculum or the assessment methods etc. The Dean will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, normally in 10 working days, and provide a provisional response to the issues you raise. This response may also indicate what formal action, if any, the School will take. (Note that if the complaint concerns the Dean, it should be referred to the Provost.)

1.5 If you are not satisfied with the Dean's response you should resubmit your complaint, along with the response of the Dean, within five working days of receipt, to the Office of the Provost. The Provost will review the complaint and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action at the relevant University committee or board.

1.6 Should an error, an example of bad practice, or failing be identified the University will take timely action to resolve the issue.

2. Academic Policies and Procedures

2.1 If you have an issue related to a formal university policy or procedure (such as attendance policy, grading policy, graduation requirements) you are advised to raise this the Academic Registry in the first instance. Academic Registry will provide you with advice on the formal University appeals procedures if your issue or complaint relates to a specific case.

2.2 If your issue or complaint is a general matter you will be advised to raise this at a degree programme meeting, a School meeting, and/or with the Student Government representative to the Academic Board.

2.3 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this you may arrange a meeting with the Provost. The Provost will review the complaint and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action at the relevant University committee or board.

2.4 Should an error, an example of bad practice, or failing be identified the University will take timely action to resolve the issue.

3. Teaching, course and programme delivery

3.1 If you have an issues or complaint related to course or programme delivery, including, but not limited to: unprofessionalism, including lateness and unpreparedness; late return of work, inadequate or insufficient academic support and advice, inappropriate behaviour, poor classroom conduct, or other matters related to the conduct of a faculty member you are advised to raise this with the instructor in the first instance, who will attempt an informal resolution of the issue.

- 3.2 If you do not wish to speak with the instructor or are not satisfied with the instructor's response, you should arrange to meet with the relevant Associate Dean of School or Head of Department who will attempt an informal resolution of the issue.
- 3.3 If you are not satisfied with the response at the informal stage, if you wish to make a formal complaint about teaching and/or course or programme delivery, or you believe there has been an incident of gross misconduct you should inform the Dean of School, in writing. The complaint should provide a detailed description of the issues and, where possible, provide evidence to support the complaint. You should also, if possible, indicate what outcome you are looking for by making a complaint. You may also wish to speak with Student Government for support. The Department of Student Affairs and the Academic Registry will advise you and offer guidance on this process, but note that it is not their role to offer you formal support. If your complaint relates directly to a Dean's teaching, please contact the Provost's Office.
- 3.4 The Dean will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, normally in 10 working days, and provide a provisional response to the issues you raise. This response may also indicate what formal action, if any, the School or the University will take. The Dean may involve the VP for Human Resources and Administration. Please remember that the University has a duty of care to its employees as well as to its students and that addressing complaints is a sensitive matter.
- 3.5 If you are not satisfied with the Dean's response you should resubmit your complaint, along with the response of the Dean, to the Office of the Provost within five working days of receipt. The Provost will review the complaint and respond to you, normally within five working days and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action.

4. Resources and facilities

- 4.1 If you have an issues or complaint related to classrooms, academic facilities, library resources, IT support or related matters you should speak with a member of faculty or library staff to determine the appropriate individual or office to hear your concern. Issues related directly to your academic experience, including learning and teaching, will be considered by the School or the Library in the first instance for an informal resolution.
- 4.2 Remember also that all degree programmes hold regular meetings where issues of facilities and resources can be discussed, and the Student Government will also provide support with issues which may arise.

4.3 If you are not satisfied with the response at the informal stage, or if you wish to make a formal complaint about resources and facilities you should inform the Dean of School, in writing. The complaint should provide a detailed description of the issues and, where possible, provide evidence to support the complaint. You should also, if possible, indicate what outcome you are looking for by making a complaint. The Dean will discuss the matter with relevant colleagues and provide you with written feedback, normally within 10 working days. The matter may also be referred to the relevant University committee for further consideration.

4.4 Should a significant issue be identified the University will take timely action to resolve the issue.

5. Academic Advising

5.1 If you believe that you have been given inaccurate or inappropriate advice by a faculty member or a member of staff with regard to course or programme selection which has had a detrimental impact on your ability to proceed with your programme of studies you should raise this with your faculty advisor or the Academic Registry in the first instance. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally.

5.2 If you are not satisfied at the informal stage, and can demonstrate that your academic progression has been negatively impacted by advice provided by a faculty member or another member of academic or academic-related staff, you are entitled to make an academic appeal on the basis of a university error. For further information see the Academic Appeal procedures, but remember that you will need to provide evidence of the error.

5.3 If you have an issue or complaint about the service you have received with regard to advising which is NOT related to the academic aspects of your programme of study, you should raise this under Section 6 (below).

6. Academic Support Offices

6.1 The following are understood as Academic Support Offices (ASO) in terms of the Academic and Academic-Related Complaints Procedure:

- i. The Academic Registry: Manager - the Academic Registrar
- ii. The Department of Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance: The Dean of Quality Assurance
- iii. The Department of International Programmes: the Dean of International Programmes
- iv. The Internship Office: the Internship Director
- v. The Library: the Library Services Librarian

- vi. The School Offices (General Education, Business & Economics, CASS): the Dean of School
- vii. The Provost's Office: The Provost

6.2 If you believe that you have not been provided appropriate support or advice by an ASO or a member of staff or faculty working in an ASO, you should raise this with the staff member concerned in the first instance, who will attempt an informal resolution of the issue.

6.3 If you do not wish to speak with the staff member directly, or are not satisfied with the staff member's response, you should arrange to meet with the relevant line manager who leads that Department or Section. Details of your issue or complaint should be provided in writing, normally within ten days of an issue arising. You should also, if possible, indicate what outcome you are looking for by making a complaint. The Student Government will also provide support with issues which may arise, and you may speak with the Department of Student Affairs for advice.

6.4 If you are not satisfied with the manager's response you should resubmit your complaint, along with the response of the manager, to the Office of the Provost within five working days of receipt. The Provost will review the complaint and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action. Complaints about the Provost's Office should be made to the President.

6.5 Should an error, an example of poor practice, or failing be identified the University will take timely action to resolve the issue.

7. Other Matters: Advice and Support

7.1 A student may ask for informal advice and support at any time, on a range of issues, academic and non-academic. If you would like more information, contact the Department of Student Affairs, your academic advisor, the Student Government, or the Academic Registry.

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