

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE ISSUES

I. Introduction

The following procedures describe the process of pursuing academic appeals and grievances in the Department of History at Indiana State University. These include:

Appeals which question the grading practices of a professor

Grievances which involve the classroom policies and practices of a professor.

It should be understood that appeals concerning academic matters generate tension for the parties involved. Throughout the appeal process, efforts will be made to minimize the tension by endeavoring to conduct matters efficiently and in ways that will respect the concerns of those involved.

II. Appeals which question the grading practices of a professor

It should be understood at the beginning that the professor in the course has the primary responsibility for assigning grades, and neither the chairperson, other faculty, or members of the departmental Grievance Committee will change a grade.

Students who believe their work in a course has been unfairly evaluated should:

Step One

Discuss the issue with the professor. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify possible misunderstandings or to remedy failures of communication. The professor can be expected to explain the grading procedures in the course and the method by which the student's grade was determined.

Students who continue to feel that an assigned grade does not fairly reflect the individual's performance in a course should:

Step Two

Meet with the chairperson\* of the History Department to discuss the issue further. The chairperson may be able to provide additional clarification for the student. The student may continue to pursue the appeal following a discussion with the chairperson by submitting a written appeal to the chairperson. The appeal should present information which the student feels would justify a different grade. The chairperson will provide the professor with a copy of the appeal and discuss the matter with the professor to gather additional information. The chairperson will then refer the matter to the Department

Grievance Committee for a hearing. The departmental committee's function in the process is to mediate the appeal and advise the chairperson. The committee will begin by collecting relevant documents and by conducting interviews, as it sees fit, with the persons involved. After concluding its deliberations, the committee will provide a written opinion to the chairperson.

The chairperson will then attempt to resolve the dispute. The chairperson will discuss the matter with the faculty member. He/she will provide the student and the faculty member with a written response to the student's appeal.

If no satisfactory resolution has been possible within the History Department, the student should then follow the procedures laid out in the Procedures for Appeal of Student Academic Matters of the College of Arts and Sciences.

\*Should the grievance concern the grading policies or classroom policies or practices of the department chairperson or acting chairperson, the student should first discuss the matter with him/her as noted in Step One. If the student feels it necessary to pursue the matter further, he/she should continue the appeal by contacting and meeting with the department Grievance Committee. After having followed the procedures outlined in Step Two, the Committee should report to a meeting of the department's tenured faculty.

#### Grievances which involve the instructional policies of a professor

Students who wish to call into question the classroom policies or practices of a professor should follow the same steps outlined for pursuing an appeal of a course grade. However, since this area of appeal is rather broad and students may be unfamiliar with the concept of academic freedom, the student would be well advised to consult with his/her academic advisor or Associate Dean before pursuing a grievance. It may also be helpful in such circumstances to discuss matters with other students in the class to establish perspective.

- III. The Grievance Committee of the Department of History at Indiana State University is an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Department Chair under the provisions of Part IV of the Department Bylaws. Under the provisions of those Bylaws, the committee is to make recommendations to the faculty and to the chair, and is not to act as a policy making body.

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