

Academic Policies and Procedures

Orientation and Responsibility to Inform and Keep Informed

The main responsibility for keeping informed rests with each student. The current Graduate Bulletin, along with information shared on the website and through College e-mail, will typically be the primary sources of information about the graduate program. The College will make every effort to inform students of changes in the programs as they occur. Nevertheless, students should take the initiative to consult their graduate program advisors and the School of Graduate, Global, and Online Education to keep current and for advice before making significant decisions.

Students have the concomitant responsibility to inform their advisors and the administration of any changes affecting their status. Students should refer to the College's website for the most up-to-date information on policies and procedures.

For the most current policy information, please visit the Policy Manual online at <https://policies.tcnj.edu/>. The following are a list of key policies related to graduate students and graduate programs.

Absence and Attendance

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/15368545/latest>

Academic and Academic-Related Student Complaints

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/15382245/latest>

Academic Integrity

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/15382372/latest>

Class Recording by Students

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/13260900/latest>

Final Assessment, Reading Day

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/12675908/latest>

Grade Appeals

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/13009972/latest>

Graduate Comprehensive Exams and other Culminating Experiences

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14097031/latest>

Graduate Non-Enrollment

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14880172/latest>

Housing Eligibility

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14879697/latest>

Participating in Graduation

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/12675946/latest>

Student Conduct Code

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/17535113/latest>

Student Rights and Freedoms Policy

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14093031/latest>

TCNJ Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace/Educational Environment

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14879496/latest>

Undergraduates Enrolling in and Double-Counting Graduate Courses

<https://tcnj.policystat.com/policy/14089868/latest>

Student Complaints Policy

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the procedure students should follow for complaints. This procedure should not be used for complaints about areas for which there is a separate complaint policy, such as academic integrity appeals, grade appeals, ADA compliance, or complaints involving discrimination or sexual harassment. Students who are uncertain about which complaint procedure to use should ask their department chair.

DEFINITIONS

A Student Complaint is a request from a student to resolve a problem that negatively impacts them and does not fall under the domain of academic integrity, grade appeals, ADA compliance, or complaints involving discrimination or sexual harassment. Non-academic interpersonal matters between students do not fall under this policy.

POLICY

Students having a Complaint shall follow the steps below. If either party is not satisfied with the decision at any step, an emailed appeal may be made at the next step. All email correspondence must be from a tcnj.edu address. In the case that the student cannot contact a faculty or staff member, the student should contact the chairperson of the department or director of the relevant office or program.

1. Discussion and informal resolution of the issue: A student should begin by discussing the issue with an appropriate faculty member, academic advisor, or College staff person most closely associated with the Complaint. If the student is unsure where to direct the Complaint, the student may consult with the chair of the department or assistant dean of the school most closely associated with the issue. If the issue is resolved through informal discussion, no further action is necessary. Step 1 should happen as soon as possible, but no later than thirty days after the issue occurred. Expedited reviews can be granted to shorten the

timeline for resolving student complaints and will be granted in cases where delaying the decision would clearly have immediate and direct negative effects on the student's academic performance and/or standing at the College. If a student has an urgent request they need resolved in a more timely manner, such as before an upcoming exam, they may request an expedited review. The student, in their request, must clearly justify the need for an expedited review. The request must be emailed to the chair or director most closely associated with the issue, who will decide within five business days whether an expedited review is warranted. If the issue is not resolved informally within five business days after the expedited review has been granted, the student may proceed to Step 2. Given the contracted timelines, all complaints for issues that occur during the summer and winter terms will involve an expedited review process by default.

2. **Formal Complaint:** If the issue is not resolved at Step 1, the student may articulate a formal complaint in writing via email to the faculty or staff member most closely associated with the issue within 20 business days of the informal decision in Step 1. Appropriate documentation must be submitted as necessary to support the complaint. The faculty or staff person receiving the complaint will issue an emailed decision to the student within 20 business days. For expedited reviews, an emailed response must be sent within five business days. If the student does not receive an emailed decision within these time frames, the student should follow the procedure outlined in Step 3.
3. **Appeal to the Chair or Director:** Upon receipt of the decision in Step 2, the student may appeal the decision to the chairperson of the department or director of the relevant office or program. The appeal must be emailed and include appropriate documentation to support appeal of the previous decision. A student who wishes to file an emailed appeal must inform the department chair or director within a period of ten business days after receiving the decision at Step 2. It is the responsibility of the student to submit an emailed statement outlining the basis and grounds of the Complaint, and supporting documentation must be included as necessary to support the appeal. The chair or director may choose to review the appeal, refer it to a designee or committee within the department or, if it is about an issue outside the department, refer it to the appropriate administrator. A review should include contacting appropriate individuals, as necessary. The chair or director must issue a decision via email to the appealing party within 20 business days and ensure the affected faculty/staff person is copied. Appeals for expedited requests must be sent by the student within five business days after receiving a decision at Step 2. The chair or director must issue a decision to the appealing party and relevant faculty/staff within five business days.
4. **Appeal to the Dean's Office:** Upon receipt of the decision in Step 3, either party may appeal the decision to the office of the dean of the student's school. The dean or dean's designee will determine whether to consider the appeal or to refer it to another office. It is the responsibility of the appealing party to file an emailed appeal with appropriate documentation within 20 business days after receiving the decision at Step 3. The office reviewing the appeal must issue a decision via email to the appealing party within 20 business days. Appeals of expedited requests must be sent within five business days after reviewing the decision at Step 3. The office reviewing the appeal must issue a decision via email to the appealing party within five business days.
5. **Appeal to the Provost:** Either party may appeal the decision at Step 4 to the Office of Academic Affairs (the Provost or a provost-level designee). An appeal at this level may only be made 1) on the grounds that the decision did not follow established College policy or 2) if new information is available. Neither party may appeal a decision made at Step 4 simply because of dissatisfaction with the decision. A party who has grounds for an appeal to the Provost must submit this appeal via email within 20 business days after receiving the decision in Step 4 and must specifically outline either how appropriate College policies were not followed or what new information is available. Expedited complaints, with grounds, must submit an appeal by email within five business days. The Office of Academic Affairs has the authority to decide if the appeal has merit, in which case it may choose to review the matter further and then present a final decision regarding the case in question. The decision of the Office of Academic Affairs is final and not subject to appeal. If the Office of Academic Affairs denies the basis of the appeal, then the decision at Step 4 is final.

Records of formal complaints from Step 3 or higher will be kept for a period of five years in the department, school, or administrative office where the complaint is resolved.