

**Policy Number:** 100

**Subject/Title:** Student Academic Conflict Resolution Process

**Effective Date:** October 27, 2005

**Policy Statement:** The School provides a measure of freedom to the student and expects the student to act responsibly in exercising this freedom. It is the responsibility of the student to put forth his/her best effort, assuming primary responsibility for meeting his/her goals for graduate education and career preparation. Together with the Faculty Advisor and the Academic Council, the student is expected to actively participate in the planning of his/her academic program.

The School recognizes that there will be times when particular students may feel that their academic concerns have not been acceptably addressed. In such instances, the School provides this alternative process to assist the student in the resolution of academic concerns. Examples of academic concerns for which these processes might be appropriate include but are not limited to: individual student concerns about a grade; the reliability of an advisor; and thesis or qualifying examination procedures.

The student should first attempt to resolve his/her concerns using common-sense, day-to-day problem-solving methods such as meeting with the faculty member, faculty advisor, other members of the student's advisory committee, and/or the Department Chair. At any time, the student should feel free to discuss his/her concerns with the Assistant Dean of Students. Ordinarily the concern is resolved using these informal methods.

If the student's concern remains unresolved and if the student chooses, he/she may use a more formal process, requesting review and recommendation from the Academic Council through the Council's Academic Conflict Resolution Process.

There will be no recriminations against the student for the use of the Academic Conflict Resolution Process.

**Reason for Policy:** The faculty of the University of Texas School of Public Health seeks to create a supportive setting through flexible academic programming, individual guidance, fair student evaluation, and attention to the quality of their own work, and to treat students as adult learners.

**Definitions:** N/A

**Scope and Audience:** All UTHealth SPH students

**Responsibilities and Procedures:** The following steps constitute a formal Academic Conflict Resolution Process.

Step1. Request for intervention by the Academic Council and Initial Assessment

- (a) Conflict Resolution Form: The student completes a Conflict Resolution Form (CRF), which is available through the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services. The

signed and dated form is submitted to the Academic Council via the Assistant Dean of Students. When completing the form, the student should be aware that a copy of the form may be forwarded to any faculty who are involved or have authority over the subjects of the conflict.

The Conflict Resolution Form includes:

- a concise statement of the fact(s) and/or incident(s) that form the basis of the conflict, including date(s),
- a description of the steps that have been taken by the student prior to implementation of this process,
- a description of the student's issues of concern, and
- a clear statement of the result(s) desired by the student.

- (b) Initial Assessment: If, upon review of the CRF at the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Academic Council, it is determined that the initiation of the Conflict Resolution Process may be premature, the Academic Council may communicate with the student within five working days to suggest recommended actions to be taken by the student prior to intervention by the Academic Council. Such recommendations, along with the student's response, shall be documented in the appropriate portion of the CRF.

Step 2. Preliminary Recipient Response(s)

- (a) In the event that the initial assessment leads to anticipated intervention by the Academic Council, the Academic Council will form a subcommittee to forward the CRF and request for response to the appropriate faculty member(s) within five work days.
- (b) The faculty member(s) should provide a written response to the Academic Council within 10 work days of receipt of the CRF.
- (c) The Academic Council subcommittee will review the faculty member's response, if any, and shall promptly forward the response to the student.
- (d) If the response is still unsatisfactory to the student, the student should reply to the Academic Council promptly with a written explanation of the issues that remain unresolved.
- (e) Records pertaining to the process and outcome of the resolution of student academic concerns will be placed in the student's academic file.

Step 3. Conflict Resolution Intervention by the Academic Council

- (a) If the issue(s) remains unresolved, the Academic Council will arrange a meeting between the Academic Council subcommittee, the student and the respondent(s). The purpose of this meeting is for the Academic Council subcommittee to question the participants in order to gather any information they may need to evaluate the conflict and make a recommendation to the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs. The meeting may include any other individuals deemed appropriate by the Academic Council subcommittee. The student and the respondent(s) may request that specific individuals be included in the meeting at the discretion of the Academic Council subcommittee. All

practices and procedures relating to the scheduling and holding of the meetings are at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Council subcommittee.

- (b) Within 10 work days after the meeting described in Step 3(a), the Academic Council subcommittee will submit its recommendation(s) in writing to the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs.

If the dispute and resulting recommendation exist with regard to a matter over which the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs has authority, the recommendation will be accepted or rejected by the Assistant Dean of Students and may be implemented within five work days unless the appellate review process is used.

If the dispute and resulting recommendation concern a matter that rests within the exclusive authority of an academician, that respondent may accept or reject the recommendation. Students should be aware that the faculty member's judgment on such academic matters will be treated as final unless compelling evidence suggests discrimination, differential treatment, or error.

#### Step 4. Final Appeal to the Dean

A participant who wishes to appeal the decision of the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs or the final decision of the respondent may appeal by submitting a written statement explaining the grounds for appeal to the Dean within five working days of the date of the decision by the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs or the final decision of the respondent. The Dean may request and review all records and communications of the student and Academic Council and other relevant information. The Dean's decision should be communicated to all participants within 10 work days of the receipt of the appeal statement.

The decision of the Dean is final.

#### **Related Policies, Forms and Information:**

[Academic Conflict Resolution Request Form](#)

**History:** Approved by Academic Council: October 13, 2005  
Endorsed by Executive Council: October 27, 2005  
Revised: May 18, 2012, October 2016

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