

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Undergraduate/Graduate Candidate Grievance Policies and Procedures**

The School of Education defines a legitimate grievance as a circumstance that can be substantiated and is regarded by the candidate as a just cause for complaint. A grievance can be relevant to any incident involving a classroom instructor, faculty advisor, field experience supervisor, administrator or faculty member in the School of Education. A grievance may deal with circumstances involving alleged unfair or irresponsible behavior including violations of department or SOE policies. Candidates should follow the University policy for grievances related to academic issues.

**Procedures Used to Initiate Grievance:**

***Step 1: Informal Processes***

The School encourages candidates to make every effort to resolve their problems and concerns directly and informally with the faculty members or other involved parties. Discussions among the involved parties (including the department chairperson when appropriate) constitute the first step in the informal process.

***Step 2: Formal Procedures at the Department Level***

If informal discussions do not result in a resolution of the problem, the candidate may initiate the formal grievance procedure by submitting a written complaint appropriate to the nature of the complaint. Should the department chair be named in the grievance, the Assistant Dean for Certification and Advisement, the School's grievance officer, will appoint a faculty member in the department to conduct the departmental grievance process. A formal complaint must be filed using the *School of Education Candidate Grievance Form* and must be submitted within 15 class days<sup>1</sup> of the point in time when the grievant had knowledge or should have had knowledge of the problem being grieved. The department chair or Associate Dean will conduct a formal grievance hearing utilizing existing departmental grievance procedures and will inform the candidate of a decision within 15 class days. A copy of the *Departmental Candidate Grievance Report* will be filed in the department and will be forwarded to the School if the decision is appealed to that level.

***Step 3: Formal Procedures at the School Level***

If, after utilizing the procedures outlined in Step 2, the candidate's problem is not resolved, the candidate has a right to file a grievance at the School level within 15 class days following the decision rendered by the department chairperson. The Associate Dean for the School of Education will appoint an *ad hoc* panel to conduct a hearing. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Class days do not include official university approved holidays.

ad hoc panel will consist of 1three members, one of whom is a candidate. The *ad hoc* panel will be selected from a pool of faculty and candidates in the standing Candidate Grievance Committee appointed by the Associate Dean which consists of at least eight faculty members and at least four candidates. A faculty member will serve as chair (appointed by the Associate Dean) of the *ad hoc* panel and will conduct the hearing according to the Guidelines for the Conduct of Candidate Grievance Hearings. After the hearing, the *ad hoc* panel will meet in closed session to determine its recommendations. The recommendations of the *ad hoc* panel will be forwarded to the Dean of the School by the Associate Dean. The Dean will inform the candidate of the School's decision.

***Step 4: Appeal of the School's Decision***

Decisions of this committee will be considered final; however, an appeal for review of a decision may be directed to the Dean. The Dean may uphold or overturn a decision of the committee. Decisions of the Dean are final and not subject to appeal within the School of Education.

## **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF FORMAL CANDIDATE GRIEVANCE HEARINGS AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL**

- A copy of the *Candidate Grievance Form* filed by the candidate will be forwarded to the department(s) and parties involved by the Associate Dean.
- Within ten (10) days of receipt of the candidate's grievance form, the department(s) and the candidate filing the grievance will submit supporting documents and a list of witnesses that may be called to participate in a hearing. Each party will receive a copy of the materials and list of witnesses submitted by the other party.
- An *ad hoc* panel will be appointed by the Associate Dean. The panel members will be selected from the pool of members on the School Candidate Grievance Committee and will consist of three members, one of which will be a candidate. One of the faculty members will be appointed to serve as chair.
- The Associate Dean will forward all materials to the hearing panel and will schedule a hearing within twenty (20) class days of receipt of all written information. All parties involved will be notified as to date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The Associate Dean will serve as hearing officer and conduct the hearing utilizing the following format:
  1. The petitioner and the respondent will each provide a brief opening statement.
  2. Each party will make a presentation of position and evidence, beginning with the petitioner. Witnesses may be called at this time. Questioning will be restricted to members of the hearing panel and the hearing officer. Questions by the involved parties to the witnesses will be addressed through the hearing officer.
  3. Each party will have the opportunity for rebuttal during which additional evidence may be introduced to refute points made by the other party.
  4. Each party will make a brief summary statement.
- Attendance at hearings is limited to the hearing officer, panel members, the petitioner, the respondent, and their respective witnesses. Witnesses may be present only during their own testimony.
- After the hearing the panel will meet in closed session to determine its recommendations that will be forwarded to the Dean. The written recommendations will include a finding of fact regarding the incident and application of School or University policy. The Dean will inform all parties of a decision within five (5) class days after the hearing.

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Candidate Grievance Form**

Today's Date:	Date Incident Occurred:
Name:	Candidate ID #
Address;	E-mail:
City, State, Zip	Phone: (Home) (Cell)
Department:                      Major:	Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/>

Statement regarding when you discovered the issue being grieved:  
(Please attach additional comments.)

Statement of the Problem Being Grieved and Evidence to Support the Grievance:  
(Please attach additional comments.)

Remedy or Action Being Requested:  
(please attach additional comments.)

Complete If Applicable:  
Reason(s) for disagreement with previous decision if a prior hearing was held:  
(please attach additional comments.)