Informal Student Academic Grievance Policy

Effective July 22, 2026

In accordance with FIU's Student Academic Grievance Policy #340.340, Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences students have the right to seek investigation and possible resolution of academic grievances. The student must first complete the College's informal grievance procedures before filing a formal grievance at the University level.

Policy Scope

The policy and associated procedures address grievances by students in which the complaint or controversy alleges one or more of the following:

(a) arbitrary and capricious awarding of grades;

(b) unprofessional conduct by an instructor that affects adversely either the student's ability to satisfy academic expectations, whether in the classroom, a field setting, a laboratory or other setting, or the student's actual performance;

(c) inappropriate or inadequate advising by a faculty mentor concerning requirements not published in official University documents;

(d) arbitrary dismissal from a course or program except as described below; and/or

(e) irregularities in the implementation of policies or procedures in grievance hearings at the college or school level.

This policy does not address:

(a) Issues related to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or discrimination based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, national origin, marital status, and veteran status. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for handling such issues. If an academic grievance alleges harassment or discrimination in addition to one or more of the above (a-e) of the defined scope of this policy, the grievance will first be referred to OCR for review and processing, as appropriate.

(b) Issues related to research misconduct (fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting results), or other research violations (i.e., non-compliance with IRB, IACUC, IBC, Lab Safety, etc.). The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) handles such issues according to the University Research Misconduct policy, and research violations procedures.

(c) Issues related to authorship disputes. Complaints pertaining to authorship disputes are handled at the department, school, or college level, in consultation with ORED.

(d) Issues related to professional standards. If the student is dismissed from a course or program due to violation of defined professional standards, those decisions are addressed at the school and/or college level; and the office of academic integrity.

(e) Issues related to grading, except arbitrary and capricious awarding of grades. Other grade appeals should be conducted at the department level. The student should discuss the appeal first with the instructor. The student may request further discussion with the department chair. The department chair issues a written response within five (5) business days from the date of the discussion and delivers it to the student and the instructor involved. The student shall not proceed beyond the department chair's decision except when the department chair is the subject of the complaint in which case the appeal continues to the college or school Dean

Informal Academic Grievance Procedures

1. Students must attempt to informally resolve an academic grievance. A student must initiate informal resolution procedures by contacting the faculty member (instructor of record or program administrator) responsible for the academic decision no later than ten (10) business days after classes begin in the semester following that in which the complaint arose or the grievance will be deemed untimely.
2. The student must first attempt to resolve the academic grievance through an informal communication (meeting or email) with the instructor/ program administrator. If the student's grievance is against a committee, the student must meet with the committee chairperson.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved, or if the instructor/program administrator/committee chairperson cannot be reached, the student must meet next with the department chair.
4. The informal grievance process is terminated at the department level except when the department chair is the subject of the complaint in which case the grievance continues to the college's dean/dean's designee.
5. The department chair or dean/dean's designee will review the grievance and discuss the complaint with the student and/or faculty member. A mutually agreeable resolution shall be formalized through written communication to all parties involved. The decision of the department chairperson ends the informal process but does not include authority to direct or override the decision of the faculty member on the underlying matter. If the parties do not reach agreement, the matter proceeds to the formal process.
6. If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached through the informal process, the student may elect to file a formal academic grievance.

Informal Academic Grievance Process

STEP 1: Student Initiates Informal Resolution

Student must contact the instructor/program administrator **within 10 business days** after classes begin in the semester following that in which the complaint arose.

↓

STEP 2: Meet with Instructor/Program Administrator

Student must first attempt to resolve the grievance through informal communication with the instructor/program administrator (meeting or email). If the grievance is against a committee, contact the committee chairperson.

↓

Can the matter be resolved at this level?

↓

✓ YES: Resolution formalized through written communication to all parties. Informal process ends successfully.	✗ NO or CANNOT REACH INSTRUCTOR: Proceed to Step 3

↓

STEP 3: Meet with Department Chair

If matter cannot be resolved with instructor OR instructor cannot be reached, student must contact the department chair. The chair reviews the grievance and discusses with student and/or faculty member.

↓

Can mutually agreeable resolution be reached?

↓

✓ YES: Resolution formalized through written communication to all parties. Department chair's decision ends the informal process.	✗ NO: Student may file a formal grievance

↓

EXCEPTION: Department Chair is Subject of Complaint

If the department chair is the subject of the complaint, the grievance continues to the college or school dean. The dean reviews and discusses with student and/or faculty member. Dean's decision ends the informal process OR student may file formal grievance if no resolution reached.

↓

INFORMAL PROCESS OUTCOMES

✓ RESOLVED: Mutually agreeable resolution in writing	✗ NOT RESOLVED: Student may file formal grievance within 15 business days of informal process end OR within 20 business days after classes begin in the semester following complaint—whichever is later

Important Notes

- **Timeline**: Student must initiate informal resolution within 10 business days after classes begin in the semester following that in which the complaint arose.
- **Required Steps:** Students must attempt informal resolution before filing formal grievance.
- **Written Communication:** All resolutions should be formalized in writing to all parties
- **Informal Process:** Terminates at department level (or dean/dean's designee level if the department chair is subject of complaint).
- **Formal Grievance Deadline**: Must be filed within 15 business days of informal process end OR 20 business days after classes begin in semester following complaint—whichever is later. Filing instructions are available at: https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/academic-grievances/