

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

STUDENT GRIEVANCES POLICY

The Physician Assistant Program does not have a separate and distinct policy for processing Physician Assistant student grievances. The program follows and complies with university-wide Graduate Grievance Procedure. The procedures clearly outline how the student would file a grievance and how the grievance is adjudicated (with timing).

Graduate Grievance Procedures

The university provides a uniform method by which students can pursue grievable issues. Grievable issues are either complaints about alleged violations of the institution's academic policies or about unfairness in the application of policies. For grievance of a final course grade or appeal of final course grade see Student Appeal Procedure.

In all cases, formal grievances must be filed and resolved within one semester of the occurrence of the event being grieved. Summer enrollment period is considered as a semester.

A student who has a grievance must attempt to resolve it by using the following procedures:

- Prior to initiating a formal grievance, the student must attempt to resolve the matter on an informal basis by speaking to the person with whom the complaint rests.
- If unable to reach a resolution, the student must discuss the matter with the program director who supervises the person against whom the complaint is lodged to attempt to resolve the matter.
- If the matter is not resolved at that level, the student proceeds to the chair of the department in which the grievance resides.
- If the matter is not resolved at that level, the student proceeds to the dean of the college in which the grievance resides.

To initiate the formal grievance, process the student must submit in writing a letter to the dean of the college in which the event being grieved resides and the vice president of academic affairs informing them of his/her intent to seek formal redress through the grievance procedure, indicating the nature of the complaint.

Within fourteen (14) university business days of receipt of the written complaint, the vice president of academic affairs will convene an academic grievance committee and provide the chair of the committee, and the person against whom the complaint rests, with the student's statement of complaint. The academic grievance committee is composed of: one administrator, one faculty member and one graduate student appointed by the vice president of academic affairs.

At least five (5) university business days in advance of the hearing, the chair of the committee will notify the grievant and the individual charged with the complaint of the date, time, and place of the hearing; the specification and nature of the complaint; and the composition of the committee. Notification will occur by telephone with confirmation that all parties have been notified.

The grievance hearing is an internal review and, as such, shall be private. The grievant may be assisted by a faculty representative. However, persons external to the university, including outside counsel, shall be excluded from the grievance hearing.

Both the grievant and the person being grieved have the right to be present when charges and evidence are presented to the committee, and to provide evidence in support of their respective positions. Committee members may question witnesses to evaluate all relevant facts of a given case. Witnesses shall be excluded except for the period of their questioning.

The report and recommendation of the committee shall be in writing, including the committee's rationale for the decision; the report may include any dissenting opinions. Only those committee members who have heard all testimony and evidence in a given case may vote on the committee's recommendation.

The committee report and recommendation shall be forwarded to the vice president of academic affairs within ten (10) university business days of the hearing. The vice president of academic affairs will make the final determination and formally advise the parties involved in the grievance within five (5) university business days. Penalties for violations of the Misericordia University's Academic Integrity Policy range from a warning to dismissal from the university. The university reserves the right, depending upon the severity of the conduct, to dismiss a student for a single violation of the university's academic integrity policy. In cases where a student previously has been found to have violated the university's academic integrity policy, for which he/she received a penalty less than dismissal from the university, and the student is subsequently found to have violated the policy once again, the vice president of academic affairs may take more severe action for the subsequent violation than that previously imposed for the prior violation(s), up to and including dismissal from the university.

Students who wish to grieve circumstances that prohibit immediate continuation in a program or in a sequence of courses (e.g. dismissal from a program or a failing grade), must begin to attempt to resolve the issue based on the procedures outlined above immediately, but no longer than five (5) days upon receipt of the grade or of the dismissal notification. An expedited grievance process is then followed, and the process must be completed before the end of the add period of the subsequent semester. In the event a sequential course begins during the grievance process, the student may be granted permission to register for the course; however, if the resolution of the grievance is not in the student's favor, the student will be withdrawn from the course by the student's department chair or in the chair's absence, by the college dean.

Note: Policies and procedures are consistently applied to all similar situations in a similar manner.