3. Graduate and Professional Student Informal Complaint and Formal Grievance Procedures

The graduate student informal complaint and formal grievance processes can involve several steps depending on the nature of the issue. There are many avenues available to WSU graduate students to resolve differences that might arise during the pursuit of an advanced degree. If a graduate program has its own grievance procedures, these procedures should be followed before utilizing the Graduate School's complaint and grievance procedures. In general, the operational principle that should be followed is to maintain open communication at the most immediate point of access and to work upward from there when appropriate. As such, students should work with their major professor or advisor to resolve matters if possible. The next level would be the program director, department chair, or school director. If the complaint involves a complex or multi-campus issue, the dean of the College may get involved at this point in the process. There are cases, of course, where this process is difficult. In these cases, graduate students should make an appointment with a member of the Graduate School leadership team for further advice. An important role of the Graduate School is to serve as an impartial arbitrator in these matters and to provide advice to both students and faculty with the intent of helping the student continue in good academic standing.

a. Graduate Student Informal Complaint Procedures

i. Students are encouraged to first consult with their faculty advisor.

ii. If the advisor is unable to resolve the problem, the student is encouraged to discuss the problem with the chair or director (in the academic program, department, or school), or an appropriate faculty liaison, such as the graduate program director or departmental ombudsman.

iii. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the department or program level, the student should contact a member of the Graduate School leadership team.

iv. The vice provost for graduate and professional education or the vice provost's designee will review the complaint and will recommend possible actions for resolution to the student as well as to the chair or director (in the academic program, department, or school), to the college dean, or to a faculty liaison.

b. Graduate Student Formal Grievance Procedures (Appeals)

In some instances, such as those related to academic and employment issues (e.g., failed examinations, termination of assistantship, dismissal from program), the student may wish to appeal a specific decision made by the departmental or program faculty through a formal grievance procedure.

i. The student must make a formal grievance request to the vice provost for graduate and professional education in writing, with signature. An email is not sufficient; however, an electronic version of the signed appeal sent from the student's WSU email is acceptable. The student must submit documentation describing the grounds for a formal grievance to the vice provost. Formal grievances must be filed within fifteen (15) calendar days following a notice of decision on what is being appealed. The dismissal will be held in abeyance until the university has rendered a final decision. However, progression through degree requirements (such as continued course enrollment, research activities, internships, or clinical training activities) may be suspended.

ii. The vice provost for graduate and professional education may assign these formal grievances to one of the associate/assistant vice provosts for full consideration and recommendation.

iii. If the vice provost for graduate and professional education deems it appropriate, the matter may be referred to an independent Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (CGSRR) for consideration and formulating recommendations of action to the vice provosts. The CGSRR will operate with due respect to the rights of graduate students, faculty, and administrators including the conduct of interviews, the right of all parties to review and address allegations, and the right to a fair hearing. The CGSRR will deliberate and render a recommendation to the vice provost or the vice provost's designee within 60 calendar days of being formed.

iv. Recommendations for resolution of formal grievances will be acted upon by the vice provost for graduate and professional education or the vice provost's designee. The vice provost will make a final decision. The decision made by the vice provost on academic matters is final.

c. Appeal of Graduate School Resolution of Formal Grievances

If the graduate student believes there was a procedural error or failure to follow WSU or Graduate School policy during the complaint or grievance process (not academic matters), an appeal of the decision that was made by the vice provost for graduate and professional education can be made to the provost. The written appeal to the provost regarding procedural irregularities must be filed within fifteen (15) calendar days following the notice of the decision from the vice provost in response to the formal grievance. The appeal must be copied to the vice provost for graduate and professional education. If the vice provost does not receive a copy of the appeal within fifteen (15) calendar days, the student's right to appeal will be waived and the vice provost's decision will be final. The provost will only make a decision about policy or procedural irregularities. The provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of reinvestigating the grievance.

d. Professional Student Grievance and Appeal Procedures

Professional students within the College of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. program), the College of Pharmacy (Pharm. D. program), the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine (M.D. program, M.H.A.L. program), and the College of Business (M.B.A. programs) will follow College policies and procedures for grievances related to academic issues. Appeal of College level decisions can be made to the Graduate School if the professional student believes there was a procedural error or failure to follow WSU or College policies during the complaint or grievance process. The professional student must make a formal appeal request to the vice provost for graduate and professional education in writing, with signature. An email is not sufficient; however, an electronic version of the signed appeal sent from the student's WSU email is acceptable. Formal appeals must be filed within 15 (fifteen) calendar days following a notice of decision of what is being appealed. The original dismissal decision will be held in abeyance while under appeal. However, progression through degree requirements (such as continued course enrollment, research activities, internships, or clinical training activities) will be suspended. The vice provost for graduate and professional education will only make a decision about policy or procedural irregularities. The vice provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of reinvestigating the grievance.

College of Veterinary Medicine Policies for D.V.M. students (requires login credentials):
https://confluence.esg.wsu.edu/x/uCjqCw
College of Pharmacy Policies for Pharm.D. students:

College of Business Policies for M.B.A. students:
http://business.wsu.edu/graduate-programs/

Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine for M.D. students:
https://medicine.wsu.edu/md-program/student-affairs/student-handbook/