

# Student Academic Grievances

**Policy.** The College has established policies and procedures to resolve student academic grievances that result from the acts or omissions of faculty members or administrators. This resolution should be achieved at the lowest level and in the most equitable way possible. The burden of proof rests with the complainant.

**Procedures.** When students believe they have an academic grievance, they should first seek to resolve it by discussions with the faculty member or administrator involved. If these discussions are not satisfactory, the complaint should be taken to the next highest level listed in the following procedure. If the grievance arises from a classroom situation, students should take the following steps in seeking redress:

1. Consult with the instructor involved, in person or by written contact, no later than 12 calendar days following the incident.
2. If agreement on or compromise of the problem is not achieved within 3 days, take the grievance to the appropriate Division Director.
3. If agreement on or compromise of the problem is not achieved within 3 days, take the grievance to the appropriate Instructional Coordinator.
4. If still not satisfied that a fair and equitable solution has been found within 3 days, take academic grievances to the Dean, Instructional Affairs. If still not satisfied, move to step 5.
5. The student should read the Judgments section of this policy carefully before contacting the Dean, Student Affairs for a hearing before the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee. As a last resort and only after steps 1 -5 have been carried out or conscientiously attempted, a student may take a grievance in writing to the Dean, Student Affairs and the chairperson of the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee. The grievance must be filed within 20 class days of the term following that in which the grievance occurred. No instructor or administrator shall be allowed to delay resolution of an academic grievance by failing to hold a consultation with a student within a reasonable length of time of the initial request. Normally such consultation should occur immediately after receipt of the student request, unless bona fide reasons such as illness, personal emergency, or campus absences for professional reasons make the time limit unreasonable. In some instances, when the personalities or problem involved would make starting at the level of the complaint too awkward or embarrassing; students may initiate a complaint at the next higher level listed.

**Types of Grievances.** No list of grievance types could cover all contingencies that might arise. However, this procedure should be able to resolve the following types of grievances, which are among those expressed most often by students:

1. Errors in calculating or recording quiz or other grades.
  2. Improper lowering of grade on basis of an alleged violation of an attendance policy.
  3. Failure of a faculty member to follow College policies in conduct of classes or examinations.
  4. Capricious or unreasonable actions by a faculty member or administrator that intimidate students or adversely affect their performance.
  5. Failure of a faculty member to grade, return, and discuss assigned work within a reasonable time, e.g. before subsequent assigned work is scheduled for completion or before a subsequent examination.
  6. Failure of a faculty member to provide student with copies of grading policies, course requirements, course procedures, and changes in announced policies without due notice and explanation. Certain types of grievances should not be brought to the committee, although they may be brought to the attention of the Department Chairperson and, if necessary, the appropriate dean so that a continuing administrative effort may be made to ameliorate problems. Examples of these grievances include:
    - Gross differences in grading by instructors teaching separate sections of the same course.
    - Personal habits of the instructor that distract students in their attempts to learn course material.
- Fine distinctions in grading (e.g., the line between an "A" and a "B," or between a "D" and an "F") may be appealed only to the instructor.
  - Unannounced quizzes will not be considered a grievance, unless they are contrary to the class syllabus or information provided to the class by the instructor.

**Role of the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee.** There shall be 9 voting members of one or more academic standard committees to be appointed by the President of the College as follows: 7 professional employees and 2 students. A simple majority of members present may rule on any request or issue before the committee. The role of the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee shall be to hear academic grievances, to hear academic appeals for students who have been suspended from the College for academic reasons, and to provide input on College policies. The chairperson shall be the administrative officer of the committee. The chairperson's duties shall include arranging for appropriate times and places for committee meetings and hearings; informing committee members of the times and places of committee meetings and hearings; informing, in writing, all interested parties of the times and places of committee hearings that they are requested to attend and supplying them with a statement of alleged grievances; informing all other interested parties that a grievance is pending; securing and distributing to the committee written material appropriate for its consideration; arranging for recording of committee proceedings; maintaining committee records that are to be kept on permanent file in the Office of the Dean, Student Affairs; and informing, in writing, appropriate individuals of the decisions of the committee. Members of the committee may at any time disqualify themselves from consideration of any given case or cases because of personal bias. In such a case, a replacement member will be appointed by the President. Either party to the hearing may request of the chairperson, in writing, that any member or members of the committee be excluded from consideration of the

case. Such a request must be for just cause and be brought to the chairperson's attention as the first step in the hearing. In the event a member is disqualified by majority vote of the committee from consideration of a case, the President shall appoint a replacement. The replacement must meet the general requirements of regular committee members.

**Procedures for Hearing.** Each Admissions and Academic Standards Committee may establish and publish its own procedures in accordance with provisions for academic due process and in accordance with the stipulation stated below: The only people present at meetings of the committee shall be committee members, parties to the action being considered by the committee and their representatives (not to exceed 2), witnesses actually testifying before the committee, and 2 representatives of the Student Affairs Division. The College and the complainant may have an attorney present during the hearing. The attorneys may only advise. They may not cross examine, question, or address the committee in any way. The committee, as a whole, shall arrange for a swift and comprehensive investigation of the matter under consideration. It shall then decide, on the basis of written statements and discussions presented by the complainant and respondent, and review of evidence, whether or not there are sufficient grounds to hear a case and whether or not the committee will accept written statements in lieu of personal appearances by witnesses. If the committee decides that there are not sufficient grounds to hear a case and closes the case, it shall notify the complainant and respondent in writing as to the reasons for its actions. If the committee determines that the case merits further consideration, the parties involved shall be informed in writing; consulted as to the possibility of correcting the situation; and, if a hearing is still required, be advised in writing of the scheduled time and place of the hearing. At the hearing, the complainant, individuals directly involved, and witnesses may testify and be questioned by the opposite party and committee members. Only evidence presented in the hearings may be considered in the final judgment. Written statements by witnesses in lieu of personal appearance shall not be allowed except in rare instances. A record of the hearing, tape recorded or otherwise preserved, shall be reserved for reference and review until the case has been finally resolved.

**Judgments.** Committee members shall arrive at a judgment in consultation among themselves after the parties have been dismissed. Only members of the committee who have been present during all of the meetings and who have heard all testimony relating to the alleged grievance may vote on the case. A majority vote of such qualified members shall constitute a judgment. A decision of the committee relating to redress of grievances is final insofar as the committee is concerned. The committee has been delegated by the President the authority to change or direct changes in student grades, faculty conduct, or other disputed areas. A course of action deemed appropriate by the committee shall be carried out unless the student or faculty member chooses to appeal the committee's decision to the President of the College or designee. The appeal must be made in writing to the President or designee no later than 7 calendar days after the date of the committee's decision and must be resolved within a maximum of 30 calendar days. If redress requires a policy change or if a policy change appears advisable or necessary, the committee shall refer its recommendations to the President of the College or appropriate administrator.

#### **How to Reference JRCERT Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiology**

Wallace Community College Radiologic Technology Program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), whereas the program must comply with JRCERT Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiology. These standards can be referenced on-line at [www.jrcert.org](http://www.jrcert.org) Go to [www.jrcert.org](http://www.jrcert.org) then Program and Faculty then JRCERT Standards in Radiology.

#### **Procedure for Allegations of Non-Compliance with JRCERT Standards**

Students obtain the right to submit allegations against a Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)-accredited program if there is some reason to believe that the program has acted contrary to JRCERT accreditation standards or those conditions at the program appears to jeopardize the quality of instruction or the general welfare of its students.

The student must first attempt to resolve any formal/program grievance with institution/program officials by following the grievance procedure outlined in the institution/program. If the student is unable to resolve complaint with institution/program officials or believes that the concerns have not been properly addressed, he or she may then submit allegations of non-compliance directly to the JRCERT. The institution/program grievance policy can be located in the *College Catalog, Class Syllabi and Clinical Education Handbook*. The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) can be accessed at [www.jrcert.org](http://www.jrcert.org).