

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 27-21

(Voting Units: Academic)

Revision to Policy 417.1 – “Graduate Grievances”

Submitter

Will Cantrell, on behalf of the graduate faculty.

Background/Rationale

This policy is being reviewed after its implementation in 2011. The intent of the policy was to allow students to address complaints that had no other way of being resolved. Since the introduction of this policy, there are two categories of complaints that the Graduate School would like to exclude from being heard as grievances.

1. The Office of Academic and Community Conduct (OACC) hears cases related to alleged violations of the Code of Conduct. That office has informal, formal, and restorative practices to resolve these allegations. Once heard by OACC, the Graduate School does not believe it is in the spirit of this policy or in the student’s best interests to re-hear the case. Any matters handled by OACC should not be subsequently grieved.
2. Matters involving offices or areas over which the Graduate School does not have purview over. In these cases, although we have the ability to hear the case, we can only provide recommendations to offices to resolve the grievances. The solutions in these grievances have not satisfied the parties involved and have not generally led to positive outcomes.

Proposal

It is proposed to expand the exclusions to the policy as described below.

Recommended text

This policy does not apply to undergraduate students or graduate students who have not been enrolled in a graduate program within the preceding year.

The following types of complaints will not be reviewed by the Graduate School:

- Academic judgments that cannot be reviewed by individuals lacking advanced content-area knowledge in a specific academic field or discipline. A disputed grade will only be considered a grievance if the student has already attempted to resolve the issue using the procedure outlined by University senate policy 310.1.
- Allegations of Code of Conduct violations or any other complaints that are considered by the Office of Academic and Community Conduct.
- Allegations of discriminatory harassment or discriminatory treatment or any other complaints that are considered by the University’s Institutional Equity Office.

- Allegations of research misconduct which must be considered by the University's Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct (sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating or domestic violence) should be reported to the University's Public Safety and Police Services (dial 9-1-1 or call 487-2216 for non-emergency situations) and/or the Title IX Office at 906-487-3310, titleix@mtu.edu, or 310 Admin Building.
- Matters involving offices or areas on campus where the Graduate School does not have the purview to facilitate changes to resolve the grievance.

Attached is the entire policy in University policy format.

Current text

This policy does not apply to undergraduate students or graduate students who have not been enrolled in a graduate program within the preceding year.

The following types of complaints will not be reviewed by the Graduate School:

- Academic judgments that cannot be reviewed by individuals lacking advanced content-area knowledge in a specific academic field or discipline. A disputed grade will only be considered a grievance if the student has already attempted to resolve the issue using the procedure outlined by University senate policy 310.1.
- Allegations of discriminatory harassment or discriminatory treatment or any other complaints that are considered by the University's Affirmative Programs Office.
- Allegations of research misconduct which must be considered by the University's Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.
- Allegations of sexual assault which should be reported to the University's Public Safety and Police Services (dial 9-1-1 or call 487-2216 for non-emergency situations).

Policy in University Policy format:

Policy:	(Will be assigned by policy coordinator.)
Title:	Graduate Grievances
Effective:	First day of the semester after approval
Senate Proposal:	Yes
Responsible University Officer:	Dean of the Graduate School
Responsible Office:	Graduate School

Policy Statement

The Graduate School will consider grievances by graduate students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program or who have been enrolled in a graduate program within the preceding year. Graduate students must have exhausted all other avenues for resolution before submitting a grievance to the Graduate School. When appropriate, the dean of the Graduate School will work with the relevant University officers and offices to take necessary actions to resolve the grievance.

Policy Requirements

This policy applies to students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program or who have been enrolled in a graduate program within the preceding year.

Students should first attempt to resolve conflicts and address issues with the faculty, staff, or other students who are directly involved. If resolution cannot be obtained at that level, the student should consult with the graduate program director for their graduate program and/or their department chair or school dean. Students may also seek conflict resolution advice or mediation services through the University Ombuds Office. Resources for conflict resolution are available through the Dean of Students Office at Michigan Tech.

If a resolution cannot be reached at or below the level of a department or school, the student may request the involvement of the Graduate School. The Graduate School will conduct an investigation of a reported grievance under the following circumstances.

1. The student has exhausted all other avenues for resolution.
2. The student has filed the Graduate Grievance form with the Graduate School within thirty (30) calendar days of the most recent event which is directly related to the subject of the grievance. Extensions to file a grievance are allowed only in cases where the student has made a documented effort to resolve the situation and the other party or parties involved have failed to respond to the student.

The Graduate School will only consider the following types of grievances:

- Actions, conduct, or decisions that violate University policy or the accepted professional standards **practiced within the discipline served by the graduate program.**
- Deviations from written grading, examination, and disciplinary policies at the University, graduate program, departmental, or course level.
- Failure of a faculty, staff, or other member of the University community to disclose in writing the basis for a decision that has an adverse impact on a graduate student when such disclosure has been requested in writing by the student.
- Retaliations against a student due to the result of a prior grievance or appeal.

Reason for Policy

The policy will provide a mechanism for students to formally submit a grievance to the Graduate School.

Related Policy Information

This policy has been reviewed by the Graduate School, Graduate Faculty Council, Graduate Student Government, and legal counsel.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to undergraduate students or graduate students who have not been enrolled in a graduate program within the preceding year.

The following types of complaints will not be reviewed by the Graduate School:

- Academic judgments that cannot be reviewed by individuals lacking advanced content-area knowledge in a specific academic field or discipline. A disputed grade will only be considered a grievance if the student has already attempted to resolve the issue using the procedure outlined by University senate policy 310.1.
- Allegations of Code of Conduct violations or any other complaints that are considered by the Office of Academic and Community Conduct.
- Allegations of discriminatory harassment or discriminatory treatment or any other complaints that are considered by the University's Institutional Equity Office.
- Allegations of research misconduct which must be considered by the University's Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct (sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating or domestic violence) should be reported to the University's Public Safety and Police Services (dial 9-1-1 or call 487-2216 for non-emergency situations) and/or the Title IX Office at 906-487-3310, titleix@mtu.edu, or 310 Admin Building.
- Matters involving offices or areas on campus where the Graduate School does not have the purview to facilitate changes to resolve the grievance.

Contact(s)

Office/Unit	Telephone Number
Graduate School	(906) 487-2327

Definitions

Eligible Graduate Student – student who is currently enrolled, or was enrolled within the preceding year.

Grievance – a formal written complaint.

Responsibilities

Graduate Student - Must be aware of University policies, and exhaust all other avenues of conflict resolution. If no resolution can be obtained at or below the level of a department or school, the student may submit a grievance to the Graduate School using the Graduate grievance form. The Graduate grievance form must be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days of the most recent event directly related to the subject of the grievance, if the student wishes to formally file a grievance with the Graduate School.

Assistant dean of the Graduate School - Reviews the Graduate grievance form for completeness, determines if the grievance will be heard by the Graduate Grievance Committee, convenes the Graduate Grievance Committee, and acts as the non-voting chair of the Graduate Grievance Committee.

Graduate Grievance Committee – Reviews the grievance submitted by the student, participates in the hearing of the grievance, and prepares a written report to the dean recommending action the dean can take to resolve the grievance.

Dean of the Graduate School - Reviews the report prepared by the Graduate Grievance Committee, and works with the appropriate University officers and offices to take necessary action.

Procedures

In support of this policy, the following procedures are included:

- Submitting and hearing a graduate grievance

Forms and Instructions

In support of this policy, the following forms/instructions are included:

- Graduate Grievance Form (grievance.docx)

Appendices

NA

Additional Information

NA

History

Adoption Date: