

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Overview

Los Angeles Pacific University provides a means by which students may file a grievance for academic and student life issues. The process described below is to be used after all informal means have been exhausted. In the area of academics, protocol requires that student concerns or grievances about course content, grading, teaching style, and the like, be taken up first with the instructor of the given course. To dispute a final grade in a course, see the Grade Appeal policy. Failure to resolve the matter at that point may require a meeting with the assistant dean.

In the event that the informal procedures, including meeting with the assistant dean, fail to resolve the problem, the student may file a formal grievance if a justifiable cause exists. Justifiable cause for grievance shall be defined as any act that, in the opinion of the student, adversely affects the student and is perceived as prejudicial or capricious action on the part of any instructor or staff member, or any arbitrary or unfair imposition of sanctions.

To file a grievance, the student will indicate in writing the nature of the grievance, the evidence upon which it is based, and the redress sought, and submit the document(s) to the Office of Academic Affairs. At that time, a Grievance Committee will be formed by the chief academic officer and proceed according to the guidelines stated below. The grievance procedure shall act as a vehicle for communication and decision making between students, administration, and instructors, and provides, through prescribed procedures, a process through which a student-initiated grievance can be resolved internally.

Organization

1. Membership:
 - a. Assistant dean
 - b. Instructor
 - c. Director of Student Success
2. Chair: For academic grievances, the assistant dean shall preside. For nonacademic grievances, the Director of Student Success shall preside.
3. Impartial Representative: The chair shall ensure that at least one of the other two committee members involved is an impartial representative of the institution who has not been directly involved in the complaint.
4. Voting: All members have equal vote and there shall be no alternates or substitutes unless one member must disqualify him/herself due to conflict of interest.
5. Meeting Time: The meeting will be scheduled within seven working days following the filing of a written petition.

Committee Guidelines and Meeting Format

1. The formal grievance procedure shall be initiated only after other attempts to resolve the matter have been exhausted (i.e., conferring with individual instructor, assistant dean, or staff member as appropriate). The student has no more than 10 working days after meeting with the individual they believe has given them cause for grievance or 15 working days after the incident that occasioned the grievance (whichever is later) in which to file his or her written petition. The formal procedure must be initiated within these time limits. The time limit may be extended by the assistant dean, at his or her sole discretion, upon presentation of good cause.
2. The grievance petition must include:
 - a. Names of the parties involved
 - b. A clear statement of the nature of the grievance
 - c. A narrative of the incident including
 - What occurred
 - When it occurred
 - Where it occurred
 - Who was present
 - d. The evidence on which the grievance is based
 - Why this constitutes capricious or arbitrary action on behalf of a staff member or instructor
 - What has been done to resolve the grievance
 - The desired outcome(s)
 - Any supporting documentation
3. The chair of the Grievance Committee will submit a copy of the grievance to each person who will serve on the Grievance Committee for this incident, and to the instructor or staff members involved.
4. A meeting of the Grievance Committee will be scheduled to consider the matter within seven working days of the date when the petition was received. The involved student, instructor, or staff member may testify in person at the committee meetings. The meetings shall be held at times when both parties are available to testify either in person or electronically.
5. Either party may invite an advisor. The function of the advisor shall not include that of advocacy and the advisor will not have a role in the committee's meetings. The student may not bring legal counsel, nor have a student represent him/ her as counsel. The Grievance Committee may not have legal counsel present.
6. Meetings of the Grievance Committee shall be attended only by the parties named in the grievance and their advisors, members of the Grievance Committee, and witnesses invited by the Grievance Committee. Witnesses may only be present during the time they are presenting their testimony. No one other than members of the Grievance Committee may be present during deliberations.
7. Accurate minutes of the grievance procedure shall be written and kept in a confidential file of the committee's proceedings. Such minutes shall include the committee's findings and decision. No other printed materials or notes may be taken from the meeting. At the option of the grievance committee chair, the proceedings may be recorded.
8. Except for communications with the involved student(s) and involved instructor(s) or staff member(s), advising them of the Grievance Committee's final decision, the parties and committee members may not discuss the case outside the meeting.
9. If a committee member is approached prior to a meeting by a student whose case is to be heard, the member should refuse to discuss the issue and should disclose, at the time of the meeting, that he or she has been approached.
10. Any committee member who has a potential conflict of interest, or who holds a bias or preconceived notion as to the facts of the case and has formed an opinion about them, or who may hold ill will toward a particular involved party, must disclose to the chair the nature of such feelings, bias, or potential conflict. He or she may disqualify him/herself and be replaced with a substitute committee member, selected by the chair, of comparable station to the extent possible under the circumstances.

11. The chair of the committee may request testimony from additional witnesses having information pertinent to the grievance.
12. The committee will decide on the matter by vote. Both parties will be notified, in writing, within one week of the decision. The committee's decision shall be final.

Student Complaint Process

LAPU takes complaints and concerns regarding the institution very seriously. If a student has a complaint regarding LAPU, the university has established the following complaint process for students.

If a student has a complaint not addressed by the grievance processes identified here, or has questions regarding the proper process for addressing a complaint, the student may contact:

- The Director of Student Success at avpstudentsuccess@lapu.edu.
- The Chief Academic Officer at academicaffairs@lapu.edu.

These contacts will provide guidance on the process for addressing particular issues.

If a complaint is associated with the institution's compliance with academic program quality and accrediting standards, and the student believes that her/his complaint warrants further attention after having exhausted all the steps and appeals outlined by the Director of Student Success, or the Chief Academic Officer, the student may present the complaint to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at wascsenior.org/comments (<https://wascsenior.org/comments/>). WSCUC is the agency that accredits Los Angeles Pacific University.

If a student believes that a complaint continues to warrant further consideration after exhausting the review of either administrators at Los Angeles Pacific University or WSCUC, the student may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at:

2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95833
bppe.ca.gov (<https://bppe.ca.gov>)
(916) 431-6924 (phone)
(916) 263-1897 (fax)

The Student Complaint Information document (<https://www.lapu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Student-Complaint-Process-2021-LAPU.pdf>) provides students and prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with state officials or agencies that would handle any student complaints outside of California.

Nothing in this disclosure should be construed to limit any right that students may have to take civil or criminal legal action to resolve their complaints. Los Angeles Pacific University has provided this disclosure in compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, as regulated in CFR 34, sections 600.9(b)(3) and 668.43(b). If anything in this disclosure is out of date, please notify:

*Chief Academic Officer
Los Angeles Pacific University
300 North Lone Hill Avenue #200
San Dimas, CA 91773*