

Grievance Process for Academic Matters

The UGA Geography department is a diverse learning community with high standards for both academic achievement and professional conduct. When a grievance or formal complaint is raised by a graduate student, the venue for the grievance depends on the nature of the complaint. As indicated in Table 1, grievances related to:

- sexual misconduct or discrimination based on a protected characteristic are reviewed by the UGA Equal Opportunity Office (EEO).
- workplace violence is reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.
- academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, theft) are addressed by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction.
- academic appeals follow a process established by the University which begins at the department level and moves to the graduate school if not resolved within the department.

Graduate students who have a concern may consult with the Student Ombudsperson (706-542-8544) to determine the nature of the grievance and the most appropriate process to follow.

The purpose of grievance program as outlined below is to provide a prompt and fair resolution of a complaint related to professional or academic matters. The expectation is that before invoking this policy, both parties will have made a good faith attempt to resolve the issue in question. It should be noted that as faculty members, the Department Head, Associate Head and Graduate Coordinator are mandatory reporters under UGA's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (see pp. 4-5 of the NDAH Policy for more information on mandatory reporters). This means that should they learn of an action or event that they believe falls under the purview of the Equal Opportunity Office (EEO), at any step of the process described below, they will report it to the EEO immediately.

Step 1: Reporting. The graduate student reports a grievance to the Graduate Coordinator in writing. The Graduate Coordinator will meet in person with the graduate student in order to better understand the nature of the concerns. Following the meeting, the grievance will be shared with the complaine(s) unless an outside policy applies.

Step 2: Mediation. The purpose of mediation is for the Graduate Coordinator to guide both parties toward their own resolution of the grievance. The process will be guided by relevant documents and policies such as a mentoring compact, academic honesty policy, etc. Successful mediation will result in a mutually agreed upon resolution to the grievance. Unsuccessful mediation will lead to Step 3.

Step 3: Arbitration. The departmental leadership team (Head and Graduate Coordinator) will collect further documentation related to the grievance from all relevant parties, interview each party separately, and will subsequently develop written recommendation(s) for resolution of the grievance. Recommendations may include behavioral changes, organizational changes and/or institutional responses.

Step 4: Graduate School Involvement. If the student is not satisfied with the recommendations resulting from Step 3, he/she may contact the Dean of the Graduate School for further review (graddean@uga.edu; 706-542-1739).

Caveats: If the Graduate Coordinator is a party to the grievance, then the graduate student should report their concern directly to the Head, who will then serve as the mediator in Step 2. If the Head is a party to the grievance, the process moves directly to step 3. The Associate Head will replace any member of the leadership team who may be a party to the grievance.

Table 1: Avenues for grievances related to discrimination or harassment, workplace violence, or academic matters related to grade appeals or misconduct.

Office	Type of Grievance	Contact Information
Equal Opportunity Office	Discrimination or harassment based on the basis of race, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status	Ph: 706-542-7912 http://eoo.uga.edu/policies/non-discriminationanti-harassment-policy
Associate Vice President for Human Resources	Workplace violence (e.g. intimidation, bullying, stalking, threats, physical attack, property damage, or domestic and family violence)	Ph: 706-542-9756 http://policies.uga.edu/Human-Resources/Employment/Employment-Related-Policies/Workplace-Violence/
Office of VP for Instruction	Issues related to student plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, theft	Ph: 706-542-4336 https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Introduction/
Office of VP for Instruction	Academic appeal process (e.g. grade appeals)	Ph: 706-542-4336 https://honesty.uga.edu/Student-Appeals/Process/

What resources are available to discuss any concerns and consider options?

Academic support or problem solving:

- [Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs](#) - (706) 542-3564
- [Office of Dean of Students, including Student Care and Outreach](#) - (706) 542-7774
- [Division of Academic Enhancement](#) – (706) 542-5436
- [UGA Regents’ Center for Learning Disorders](#) – (706) 542-4589
- [UGA Disability Resource Center](#) – (706) 542-8719/(706) 542-8778 (tty) or dsinfo@uga.edu
- [UGA Human Resources](#) – (706) 542-2222 or hrweb@uga.edu
- [Office of Legal Affairs](#) – (706) 542-0006
- [Ombudsperson Program](#):
 - For Students – Charisse Harper at (706) 542-8544 or charper@uga.edu

Cultural support:

- [UGA Office of Multicultural Services and Programs](#) – (706) 542-5773
- [UGA Office of Institutional Diversity](#) – (706) 583-8195 or diverse@uga.edu
- [UGA Disability Resource Center](#) – (706) 542-8719/(706) 542-8778 (tty) or dsinfo@uga.edu
- [UGA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) Resource Center](#) – (706) 542-4077
- [Student Veterans Resource Center](#) – (706) 542-9629
- [UGA International Student Life](#) – (706) 542-5867
- [International Student, Scholar and Immigration Services](#) – (706) 542-2900 or issis@uga.edu
- [UGA Women's Resources](#)

Individual support, consultation and referral services:

- [UGA Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) – (706) 542-2273
- [UGA Office of Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention \(RSVP\)](#) (provides 24-hour crisis support, information, advocacy, education and outreach) – (706) 542-7233 or (706) 542-8690
 - [Survivor Support Group](#) for student survivors of sexual and/or relationship violence - contact Caron Hope, chope@uhs.uga.edu, 706-542-7233
- [UGA Center for Counseling and Personal Evaluation](#) – (706) 542-8508
- [UGA Psychology Clinic](#) - (706) 542-1173
- [Aspire Clinic](#) (offers individual, couple, and family therapy) – (706) 542-4486
- [UGA Family Violence Clinic](#) - (706) 369-6272
- [The Cottage Sexual Assault Center and Children’s Advocacy Center](#) (provides interventions, referrals, support and resources for survivors of sexual assault and child abuse) – (706) 546-1133
24-hour Crisis Line – (877) 363-1912
- [Project Safe](#) (24-hour confidential information and domestic violence services) – (706) 543-3331; Textline - (706) 765-8019
- [UGA School of Law Veterans Legal Clinic](#) (706) 542-6439; veteranslegalclinic@uga.edu