

Faculty Grievance Policy Draft 2025-2026

1. PURPOSE

The Faculty Grievance Policy is designed to provide a fair, transparent and prompt process for resolving disputes. This policy will apply anytime a grievance is filed by a UHCL faculty member or members against members of the faculty or administration where no other UHCL policy is appropriate. Faculty are encouraged to attempt all informal avenues of resolving disputes before pursuing a formal grievance.

2. DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

2.1 Respondent – an individual against whom the grievance is filed.

2.2 Grievant – a faculty member initiating the grievance.

2.3 Faculty – includes faculty who hold adjunct (Faculty Handbook 2.6), non-tenure track (Faculty Handbook 2.4), and/or tenure-track/tenured (Faculty Handbook 2.1) positions.

2.4 Administrator – the person with whom the grievance is filed. See 4.2.2 for additional specifications.

2.5 Grievance Pool – a panel consisting of elected representatives from each college (see 5.2.1). This panel serves as the basis for development of the Faculty Grievance Committee.

2.6 Faculty Grievance Committee – a committee of five faculty members selected from the Grievance Pool to hear appeals to grievance decisions (see 5.2). UHCL official in the position of dean, provost, or that official's designee.

3. POLICY

3.1 The University of Houston – Clear Lake (“University”) encourages fair, efficient and equitable solutions for problems or disputes arising out of the employment relationship.

3.2 Although grievances can concern any action affecting a faculty member, they might include post-tenure review, work assignments, violations of academic freedom, merit raises, and committee assignments. Grievances may also be for violations of University policies, college by-laws or other policies as appropriate. The following actions are not addressed by this policy because there are other policies or processes in place. These include:

3.2.1 Sexual misconduct ([SAM.01.d.08](#))

3.2.2 Discrimination and harassment ([UHCL Anti-Discrimination Policy](#))

3.2.3 Dismissal for cause ([UHCL Dismissal Policy](#))

3.2.4 Promotion and tenure ([UHCL Promotion and Tenure Policy](#))

3.2.5 Grievance outcomes.

While it is possible to file a grievance for a clear violation of the grievance *process*, grievances will not be accepted against an individual for their recommendation or decision in a grievance.

3.2.6 Discontinuance of a program (Program Discontinuance Policy).

However, adverse employment actions resulting from a program discontinuance may be grieved within 30 calendar days of notification as outlined in the program discontinuance policy. These grievances begin with formation of the grievance committee in 5.2.2.

3.2.7 Financial exigency (Financial Exigency Policy).

However, adverse employment actions resulting from financial exigency may be grieved within 30 calendar days of notification as outlined in the program. These grievances begin with formation of the grievance committee in 5.2.2.

3.3 No faculty member will be penalized or disciplined for filing a grievance or for aiding another faculty member in the presentation of a grievance. Any acts or threats of retaliation in response to grievances will result in disciplinary action ([UHCL Faculty Disciplinary Procedures](#)). Persons who file grievances in bad faith, with reckless disregard for the truth, or in willful ignorance of the facts, as determined by the Grievance Committee's review of the facts, are not afforded protection under this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action. Any action taken in this regard will be administered in accordance with the UHCL Disciplinary Policy or other applicable university policies.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Informal Resolution

The University encourages communication between faculty members and administrators to resolve workplace concerns promptly. If an agreement is not reached through informal efforts to resolve workplace concerns, the faculty member may pursue the grievance procedure outlined below.

4.2 Formal Grievance

4.2.1 A faculty member ("grievant") initiates a formal grievance by submitting a written complaint to the appropriate administrator ("grievance administrator") (see 4.2.2). The grievant must use the Grievance Form provided on the Academic Affairs XXXX website. The grievance, at a minimum, should include (1) identification of the action with which the grievant disagrees and the person/body who took the action, (2) a timeline of the activity leading to the action with which the grievant disagrees, (3) identification of any provisions from UHCL or UHS policy under which redress is sought, and (4) a statement of the desired remedy, and (5) relevant documents or any other information pertinent to the matter. Grievances must be filed electronically no later than 60 business days after the action by the other party ("respondent") that is the subject of the grievance

Attempts at informal resolution must be complete by this deadline. For grievances against administrators, the “date of the action” will often be the date of notification of the action. For example, a grievance regarding an annual evaluation score should be filed within the time limit starting from the date the faculty member receives their copy of the scores. Once the grievance has been submitted in writing, it cannot be changed, except to end the grievance due to informal resolution.

4.2.2 Grievances concerning faculty should be directed to the respondent’s department chair; grievances against a department chair or other sub-dean college academic administrator should be directed to the respondent’s dean; grievances concerning a dean or other university-level academic administrator should be directed to the Provost. Grievances concerning the Provost should be directed to the President or designee. In all cases, the faculty member filing the grievance must also send a copy to the Provost’s office. The Provost’s office will be responsible for notifying the dean’s office of the respective college, handling requests for extensions, and maintaining official records related to the grievance. If a faculty member files a grievance at a level higher than the one specified in this policy, the grievance will be returned to the appropriate level for review.

If the Provost is the respondent, the President of the University will assume the responsibilities assigned to the Provost in this Grievance Policy. In such an instance, the University President shall not delegate responsibilities and role within the grievance process to an individual below the organizational level of the respondent.

If the Faculty Council Presiding Officer is the grievant or respondent, then the Faculty Council Associate Presiding Officer takes the place of the Faculty Council Presiding Officer in the grievance process.

4.2.3 The administrator initially in receipt of the grievance will immediately forward a copy of the grievance to the respondent. The respondent must respond in writing and submit documents or materials in support of his or her position within 15 business days of receipt of the copy of the grievance from the administrator. The administrator will make a decision and respond to the grievance within 10 business days of receipt of the reply from the respondent.

4.2.4 Failure to respond to a grievance within the time limit results in an automatic appeal of the grievance to the next administrative level.

4.2.5 A single grievance may be filed by multiple faculty regarding the same issue. Likewise, multiple similar grievances may be bundled together into a single grievance with the agreement of all parties at any stage of the process.

5. Appeals

If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant (or also respondent, in faculty vs. faculty grievances) by the grievance administrator, or was not responded to in accordance with the

timelines outlined in this policy, the faculty member (or either faculty member in faculty vs. faculty grievances) has 10 business days to appeal the grievance to the appropriate dean or designee, and, if necessary, to the Provost or designee, who will then act as the grievance administrator.

5.1 Timeline

Appeals must be filed with the appropriate administrator within 10 business days of receipt by the faculty member of the lower-level decision. Appeals must be responded to in accordance with the following time limits:

Deans shall respond within 10 business days following receipt of the appeal and the Provost shall respond within 20 business days of receipt of the appeal (unless the appeal is forwarded to the Committee, see Section 5.2 below).

Extension requests may be made to the Provost in cases of unexpected emergencies that render a party to the grievance unable to fulfill their responsibilities on time (e.g. weather emergency, documented illness of the grievant), and where automatic movement to the next stage of the process would burden the process. If the Provost requires an extension, the President will evaluate the request.

Unless the Provost is the respondent, the decision of the Provost is final. If the Provost is the respondent, the decision of the President is final.

5.2 Faculty Grievance Committee

Grievances that are appealed to the Provost level or where the Provost is the respondent may be submitted to the Faculty Grievance Committee (“Committee”) for an inquiry at the request of the grievant, respondent, or Provost within 10 business days of receipt of notification of the Dean’s decision or of submission if the Provost is the respondent.

5.2.1 Grievance Pool

Each college in the spring semester elects four faculty to serve in the grievance pool. The sixteen faculty will be randomly ordered by the Faculty Council Chair of Faculty Affairs by August 1 to form the “roster order” for that academic year.

5.2.2 Faculty Grievance Committee (“Committee”) Role and Structure

5.2.2.1. Role

The Committee is an ad hoc advisory committee appointed by the Faculty Council (“FC”) from the Grievance Pool. The Provost will notify the chair of the FC Faculty Affairs Committee, copying the FC Presiding Officer, to constitute a Committee and provide sufficient information, such as the college and/or department of the grievant, to avoid conflicts of interest. The FC will constitute this duly appointed Committee with the next nine members from the Grievance Pool within 5 business days of the request for a Committee from the Provost. If any member of the Committee needs to

recuse themselves for any reason, they may do so and be replaced by the next person on the Committee roster. The committee shall notify the grievant and respondent of the Committee membership and advise them of the procedure for challenging committee member participation. The respondent and grievant must each select 2 names for removal within 5 business days after notification of committee members. If the grievant or respondent do not respond, or they select the same member for removal, the chair of the FC Faculty Affairs Committee will select, in roster order, the top 5 remaining members to serve as the Committee.

If the Provost is the respondent, the President or designee assumes all responsibilities of the Provost above.

5.2.2.2. Structure

The Committee will choose a chair from among its members who will be responsible for scheduling a time and place for the inquiry. Such inquiry must take place no later than 45 business days from the date on which the FC was notified of the need for Committee review. The chair will also request the grievant and respondent submit written statements of their positions with regard to the grievance and provide the names of persons with relevant information and copies of relevant documents concerning the grievance to the chair at least 10 business days before the inquiry. The chair will also request all documents from lower levels of review of the grievance. The chair will ensure relevant documents are identified and distributed to Committee members and notify other persons with information relevant to the inquiry of the need to appear at the inquiry and all parties of the agenda. The Committee will receive administrative support from the Provost Office. If the Committee decides that grievance provides no basis for redress or that there is insufficient evidence to support holding an inquiry, it may at any time recommend the grievance be dismissed.

5.2.2.3. Limitations

This Faculty Grievance Committee will consider all documentation and statements from all parties and provide a written recommendation (see 5.2.3 below). The Faculty Grievance Committee cannot review matters unrelated to the scope of its duties. The Faculty Grievance Committee is an advisory body that makes recommendations; it does not have the authority to enforce the recommendations.

5.2.3 Inquiry

During the inquiry, members of the Committee may ask questions of the parties and of other persons with information relevant to the inquiry. The parties may bring an advisor; If an advisor is appearing with any party in the grievance, the Chair must be

informed at least 5 working days before the hearing. If an advisor is appearing with any party in the grievance, then all parties to the grievance may have their advisor present during their testimony, and an attorney from the University Office of General Counsel may attend as well. However, the advisor cannot ask questions or otherwise advocate at the hearing directly, but they may observe and pass notes. The parties will not be allowed to question witnesses except at the discretion of the chair. It is the responsibility of the grievant or respondent to communicate hearing procedures to their advisors.

5.2.4 Recommendation by Committee

After the inquiry, the Committee will deliberate and provide a written report to the grievant, respondent, lower-level administrator, if applicable, and Provost, including a minority report, if necessary, within 10 business days from the date of the inquiry meeting. The report should outline deliberations, concerns, and findings, along with a recommendation. All materials and records concerning the grievance inquiry will be forwarded to the Provost with the recommendation. The Provost will respond to the grievant and respondent within 5 business days of receipt of the recommendation from the Committee.

If the Provost is the respondent, the President or designee assumes all responsibilities of the Provost.

6. Records

The inquiry will be recorded. These recordings will be saved in the XXX electronic archive. Transcriptions of recordings are not the responsibility of the University. Upon completion of the grievance process, all recordings, documents and materials related to the formal grievance will be forwarded to Human Resources for storage, according to guidelines set by UH System policy.

7. Timeline

The following table provides a timeline for a grievance between two faculty members, which represents the longest anticipated duration for these cases. Note that grievances filed against a dean or department chair will be escalated directly to the relevant higher-level submission stage.

Event	Deadline
Grievable event occurs / first notification of grievable event	(not applicable)
Formal grievance must be submitted to department chair, who acts as grievance administrator (4.2.1)	60 business days
Grievance administrator forwards grievance to respondent (4.2.3)	Immediately
Respondent responds to grievance administrator (4.2.3)	15 business days

Grievance administrator submits decision to grievant and respondent (4.2.3)	10 business days
Grievant or respondent may appeal to dean or designee, who now acts as the grievance administrator (Section V)	10 business days
Dean or designee submits decision to grievant and respondent (5.1)	10 business days
Grievant or respondent may appeal to Provost, who now acts as the grievance administrator (Section V)	10 business days
Grievant, respondent, or Provost may submit to the Faculty Grievance Committee (5.2)	10 business days
Inquiry held (5.2.2.2)	45 business days
Report due to Provost (5.2.3)	10 business days
Provost responds to grievant and respondent (5.2.3)	5 business days