

Academic Rights and Responsibilities

Summary

Temple University students who believe that instructors are introducing extraneous material into class discussions or that their grades are being affected by their opinions or views that are unrelated to a course's subject matter can file a complaint under the university's policy on academic rights and responsibilities (Temple Policy 03.70.02).

The policy encourages students to first discuss their concerns with their instructor. If a student is uncomfortable doing so, or if discussions with the instructor do not resolve the student's concerns, an informal complaint can be made to the Student Ombudsperson for the student's school or college. Unresolved complaints may be referred to the dean for handling in accordance with the school or college's established grievance procedure. Final appeals will be determined by the Provost.

Go to the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of this *Bulletin* for additional information.

See below for the full policy text.

Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities

(Policy # 03.70.02)

Scope of Policy and Rationale

As an academic institution, Temple University exists for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. The university and the faculty have a responsibility to provide students with opportunities and protections that promote the learning process in all its aspects. Students similarly should exercise their freedom with responsibility.

Temple University therefore reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom, and adopts the following statement of academic freedom principles applicable to faculty and students.

Policy Statement

1. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial (or other) matters which have no relation to their subject. The faculty member is responsible, however, for maintaining academic standards in the presentation of course materials.
2. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth.
3. Faculty members in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
4. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the information or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but students are responsible for learning the content of the course of study in which they are enrolled. The validity of academic ideas, theories, arguments, and views should be measured against the relevant academic standards.
5. Students should have protection through orderly grievance procedures against prejudice or capricious evaluations that are not intellectually relevant to the subject matter under consideration. At the same time, students are responsible for complying with the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

Procedures

Student Grievance Procedure

Except in cases in which a student challenges a grade received in connection with a course, the following procedures shall apply when a student believes that a faculty member has infringed upon the student's academic rights as set forth in this policy. In cases in which the student is challenging a grade in connection with a course, the student shall follow the grade appeal procedure applicable to the school or college in which the course is offered.

1. If a student grievance for an alleged violation of academic rights cannot be resolved between the faculty member and the student, or if the student does not feel comfortable in discussing the matter directly with the faculty member, the student may bring an informal complaint to the student ombudsperson of the school or college to try to affect an informal resolution.
2. If a resolution satisfactory to the student is not obtained through an informal mediation process with the student ombudsperson, the student may submit a formal, written grievance to the dean or the dean's designee.

3. The dean or the dean's designee may attempt informal resolution through discussion with the student and faculty member. If a mutually agreeable resolution is not achieved through informal discussion, the dean shall refer the matter for consideration in accordance with the procedures for resolution of student grievances as set forth in the bylaws of the school or college.
4. The dean will consider the recommendation of the school or college's student grievance committee and issue a written decision and remedy. Appropriate precautions should be developed to safeguard the confidentiality of the grievance proceedings, including information about the outcome.
5. Either party to a grievance may appeal the decision of the dean to the provost, in writing, within ten (10) days following notice of the dean's decision. A written reply by the other party must be filed within ten (10) days after receipt of the appeal. The dean's decision shall be held temporarily pending appeal. The provost has discretion to determine the information and procedure that he/she will utilize in deciding each appeal. The decision of the provost shall be in writing and shall be final.

Recordkeeping and Reporting

The officers should develop mechanisms and procedures for developing and maintaining records in a confidential manner of all grievances brought pursuant to this policy. In addition, the officers shall provide a report on all grievances pursuant to this policy each semester to the chairs of the Academic Affairs, Student Success, and Diversity Committees of the Board of Trustees, and establish a mechanism for annual reviews of this policy and its effectiveness by appropriate university officials and the board.

Notes

1. History:

Last Amended:

Adopted by the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees on July 19, 2006.
November 2022: Updated to reflect current Bylaws and job titles.

Initial Policy Effective Date:

August 1, 2006

2. Cross References/Appendix:

None