


<b>Category</b>	Graduate Studies	<b>Policy Number</b>	ACA-GRA-212	 جامعة زايد ZAYED UNIVERSITY
<b>Distribution</b>	Internal	<b>Version</b>	1.0	
<b>Responsible Office</b>	Provost	<b>Policy Owner</b>	Graduate Studies	
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<b>Date Last Reviewed</b>	New Policy	<b>Due Date for Next Review</b>	31 July 2025	

## **POLICY**

### **Graduate Student Complaints and Grievances**

#### **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines the guiding principles to ensure that graduate students' complaints and grievances are addressed in a timely and professional manner in line with Zayed University policies and procedures.

#### **2. Scope of Application**

**2.1** This policy applies to all complaints and grievances made by actively enrolled Zayed University (“**University**”) graduate students.

**2.2** This policy does not apply to decisions as a result of official decrees, University policies or procedures, or academic appeals.

#### **3. Definitions**

<b>Complaint</b>	An informal expression of dissatisfaction with a service, activity, and/or employee or student at the University.
<b>Grievance</b>	A formal, written expression of dissatisfaction with a service, activity, and/or employee or student at the University.
<b>Working Day</b>	A day (Monday to Friday) when the University is officially open.

#### **4. Policy**

**4.1** In furtherance of its educational mission and vision, the University has established processes to address graduate student complaints and grievances regarding non-academic and academic issues of concern not covered by the academic policies and bylaws.

**4.2** Student complaints and grievances will be evaluated to determine ways in which the University, department, service, activity, and/or employees can improve.

**4.3** The Deanship of Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring that the information contained in this policy remains relevant and up to date; and for ensuring that the information is disseminated to all relevant parties in a timely fashion.

## **5. Complaints**

- 5.1** It is expected that most complaints will be resolved at the individual level by the student bringing the concern to the attention of an appropriate member of staff or faculty (depending on the nature of the complaint: academic vs non-academic), who will work to resolve the issue informally.
- 5.2** The recipient of the complaint is responsible for addressing the issue in a timely manner, usually within five (5) working days.
- 5.3** If steps are required to address the complaint appropriately, the recipient of the complaint must notify the student in writing of the progress, steps, and timeframe required to resolve the issue.
- 5.4** If the student is not satisfied with the proposed outcome, they have the right to submit a formal, written grievance to the Dean of Graduate Studies, or designee, within five (5) working days of receipt of the notification of the outcome of the informal resolution.

## **6. Grievances**

- 6.1** Grievances may be submitted either:
  - a)** when a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their informal complaint, or
  - b)** when a student considers the concern to be too complex or too serious for an informal resolution.
- 6.2** All grievances must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, or their designee, if the Dean of Graduate Studies needs to recuse themselves given the nature of the grievance raised, for review and investigation.
  - 6.2.1** The grievance must be submitted with supporting information as appropriate to the circumstances of the grievance.
  - 6.2.2** Grievances must be submitted either:
    - a)** within five (5) working days of receipt of the notification of the outcome of an informal complaint, or
    - b)** within five (5) working days of the incident that caused the student concern.
- 6.3** All student grievances will be addressed in a fair, transparent, confidential, and consistent manner.
- 6.4** In instances where several students submit grievances about the same issue, their concerns will be addressed as a single grievance.
- 6.5** The Dean of Graduate Studies, or designee, must acknowledge receipt of the grievance submission to the student(s) concerned within three (3) working days of its receipt, and forward the grievance to the Graduate Student Case Committee (“**Committee**”) at that time.

- 6.6** The Committee will investigate the grievance and submit its recommendations to the graduate student within ten (10) working days of having received the reported grievance.
  - 6.6.1** If the Committee decides that the grievance is justified, it must also recommend actions to resolve the issue.
  - 6.6.2** If the Committee decides that the grievance is not justified, it must explain its decision.
- 6.7** The Deanship of Graduate Studies is responsible for maintaining all records of student grievances and the subsequent investigations and findings.
- 6.8** At the end of each semester, the Dean of Graduate Studies will submit a report to the Provost or designee detailing all the grievances heard, the decisions made, and the subsequent actions taken. The report is not to include any names but is to include all appropriate data so that plans can be made for the enhancement of University performance. The report is to be included in the HR complaints and grievances report to the Vice-President.

## **7. Grievance Appeal**

- 7.1** The student who reported the grievance and the party against whom the grievance was made retain the right to appeal the Committee's findings and subsequent recommendations within five (5) working days of notification of the same on condition that they can provide at least one (1) of the following:
  - a)** Evidence of a procedural error in the conduct of the investigation that causes doubt about the findings of the investigation.
  - b)** New evidence related to the case which was not available at the time of the investigation.
  - c)** Evidence of bias during the investigation that causes doubt about the findings of the investigation.
- 7.2** Appeals must be submitted with appropriate evidence to the Office of the Provost.
  - 7.2.1** The Office of the Provost must notify all parties involved that an appeal has been received.
  - 7.2.2** The Provost reviews the appeal and has the authority to decide if there are valid grounds for appeal or if the appeal is to be dismissed in accordance with Article 7.1 of this policy.
  - 7.2.3** The Office of the Provost must notify all parties involved if an appeal is dismissed within three (3) working days of the appeal having been received.
  - 7.2.4** For valid appeals, the Provost will nominate two (2) faculty/staff members who have hitherto been uninvolved in the investigation to review the appeal and make recommendations to the Provost within five (5) working days.
  - 7.2.5** The Provost retains the authority to issue the final decision, which is communicated to all the parties concerned. The Provost's decision is not subject to any further appeal.

**8. Related Policies and Laws**

- ACA-GRA-208 Academic Appeals for Graduate Programs
- ACA-GRA-211 Graduate Student Code of Conduct
- ACA-STU-201 Student Code of Academic Integrity

**9. Administration**

This policy is administered by the Deanship of Graduate Studies.

**10. Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision</b>
1 April 2024	Approved by the Board of Trustees (CBoTD#11 of 2024) (v.1.0).
7 February 2024	New policy drafted