

Academic Complaint Procedure

This section is designed to provide students an orderly procedure for addressing and/or appealing academic actions or decisions made by their instructors when the student alleges the action or decision is erroneous, arbitrary or capricious.

Definitions:

Erroneous – Something incorrect, a mistake, a wrong calculation

Arbitrary or Capricious – An action taken without regard to applicable facts and circumstances or that represents a substantial departure from accepted academic norms, such as class policies stated in the syllabus and/or communicated by the instructor with the class.

Academic Complaint shall refer to a claim by a student that:

1. A grade assigned to the student by the instructor that was calculated in error or is a result of an arbitrary or capricious application of otherwise valid standards of academic evaluation, or
2. The standards employed by an instructor in evaluating the academic progress of the student are erroneous, arbitrary or capricious, or
3. An instructor has taken an erroneous, arbitrary or capricious action or made an erroneous, arbitrary or capricious decision, which adversely affects the student's academic standing or academic career, or
4. An academic unit (college department or program area) has reached an erroneous, arbitrary or capricious decision or taken an erroneous, arbitrary or capricious action, which adversely affects the student's academic standing or academic career.

Academic Complaint Procedure:

Step One (Complaint):

Students with an academic complaint should contact the relevant instructor or program representative within ten (10) business days of the incident to attempt to resolve the issue. Students with an academic complaint regarding a final grade have one quarter from when the final grade was issued to file the complaint. See "Time Limitation to Change a Grade" in the College Catalog. During the meeting the student will present the instructor with evidence supporting the complaint. The instructor will listen to student's complaint and communicate a decision for addressing the complaint. The instructor also notifies the student of their right to appeal.

Best Practices for resolving the complaint:

1. Contact the instructor by phone or email to schedule an appointment.
2. Prepare a written statement that contains the date the action occurred, what your concern is, the class or program policy/procedure listed in the class syllabus or program handbook that pertains to your complaint, and how you would like your complaint resolved.

Provide any other supporting documentation or relevant information to help inform the conversation.

3. When meeting with the instructor, seek to identify points of agreement and disagreement. In many instances, complaints will be resolved at this stage.

Academic Complaint Appeal Procedure

Step Two (Appeal):

1. If the student and the instructor are unable to resolve the student's academic complaint at step one, the student can file an appeal of their academic complaint to the appropriate division chair* within five (5) business days of meeting with the instructor and being informed of the instructor's decision on the student's academic complaint. Or, if the instructor does not meet with the student, the student can file an academic appeal to the division chair within five (5) business days of first contacting the instructor. A list of academic divisions and their respective division chairs is available on Big Bend Community College's website, at <https://www.bigbend.edu/academics/programs-degrees/>.
2. The student should prepare and provide the Division chair with an Academic Complaint Appeal Form and any other supporting documentation or relevant information.
3. The division chair * will review and seek to facilitate a resolution. The division chair's review may result in a decision to overturn, modify, or uphold the original decision.

*Students in certain programs may have program specific procedures that are required to be followed. Please refer to any applicable program handbook for guidance. To the extent these programs specify an appeal process, that process may be considered step two in this procedure.

Step Three (Appeal):

1. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at step two, the student can file an academic appeal to the appropriate academic dean or director within five (5) business days of being informed by the division chair of the decision on the student's academic complaint.
2. The student should update the Academic Complaint Appeal Form and provide as well as any other supporting documentation to the dean or director.
3. The dean or director can decide to overturn, modify, or uphold the decision of the division chair. The dean or director will communicate the decision in writing to the student, instructor, and division chair. The dean or director is the final appeal authority for academic complaints and the dean or director's decision is the College's final decision.

Academic Complaint Appeal Form

Date & Time of Meeting:	
Student Name & ctcLink ID:	
Instructor's Name:	
Class Name, Number, & Term:	
Please Describe Your Academic Complaint:	
What is the solution you are seeking?	
What was the outcome of the meeting with your instructor?	
Any additional information that would be helpful.	

Decision from Division Chair Meeting:

Division Chair printed name and signature

Date

Student Acknowledges participation in this meeting and receipt of the form. Signature does not indicate agreement with the contents of the form.

Student printed name and signature

Date