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| <br>AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY<br>الجامعة الأمريكية الدولية | Policy Main Title  | Faculty Grievance Policy            | Effective Date   | 14/06/2026 |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Category           | Faculty                             | Last Review date |            |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Policy Number      | FAC-002                             | Next Review date | 14/06/2029 |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Responsible Entity | Vice President for Academic Affairs | Approved By      | President  |

## Overview

AIU is committed to maintaining a professional, collegial, and fair academic environment in which every faculty member is treated with dignity, afforded genuine due process, and provided with a meaningful mechanism for raising and resolving grievances. This commitment is not aspirational language, it is a structural requirement of accreditation. Accrediting agency requires that institutions protect academic freedom through documented processes that provide real remedies for violations. Accrediting agency requires that faculty employment policies, including grievance procedures, be clearly written, consistently applied, and include fair review mechanisms with appeal rights.

A faculty member disciplined or dismissed without a documented, functioning grievance process is a violation regardless of whether the underlying action was substantively justified. Accrediting agency visiting teams routinely examine whether grievance processes are genuinely accessible, whether timelines are enforced, whether the hearing body has a faculty majority, and whether the Presidential review level is actually subject to further appeal in serious cases. This policy is designed to satisfy every one of those examinations.

## Scope

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time faculty members at AIU, including tenure-track, non-tenure-track, visiting, adjunct, clinical, professional practice, and research faculty. It governs grievances arising from:

- Employment-related decisions and administrative actions that directly and adversely affect a faculty member in their professional capacity
- Alleged violations of academic freedom as defined in ACA-002 (Academic Freedom Policy)
- Disciplinary actions up to and including suspension, reduction in rank, reduction in salary, and dismissal
- Alleged retaliation for protected activities including participation in faculty governance, filing of a grievance, or whistleblowing
- Contract interpretation disputes
- Workload allocation, teaching assignment, and academic duty assignment disputes
- Procedural irregularities in performance evaluation or promotion processes

This policy does not govern: promotion and tenure appeals, which are governed by FAC-009 (Faculty Academic Promotion Policy); general disagreement with University policy absent a specific adverse action against the grievant; matters solely within the jurisdiction of student conduct procedures; or discrimination and harassment complaints that are primarily governed by separate equal opportunity procedures. Where a grievance involves both a general employment matter and an allegation of discrimination or harassment, the parties agree at the outset which procedure governs the primary claim.

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## Purpose

The purposes of this policy are to:

- Provide every AIU faculty member with a fair, accessible, documented, and impartial process for raising and resolving grievances
- Protect academic freedom through a process that specifically addresses alleged violations and provides real remedies where violations are found
- Ensure that severe employment sanctions, dismissal, termination, suspension without pay, and reduction in rank, are subject to enhanced due process review with a faculty-majority hearing body before a final decision is made
- Establish a Faculty Grievance Committee with genuine independence, defined composition, elected membership, and authority to make recommendations that the President must consider and respond to in writing
- Define the multi-level grievance process, informal resolution, formal FGC hearing, Presidential review, and Board Academic Affairs Committee review, with binding timelines at each level
- Guarantee non-retaliation for all persons who participate in grievance proceedings in good faith
- Demonstrate compliance with academic freedom protection through due process, faculty employment policies with grievance procedures, and institutional integrity and operational fairness

## Definitions and Abbreviations

**Grievance:** A formal complaint by a faculty member alleging that an administrative action, decision, omission, or procedural irregularity has directly and adversely affected the faculty member's academic freedom, professional status, economic interests, working conditions, contractual rights, or other conditions of employment.

**Grievant:** The faculty member who files a grievance under this policy.

**Respondent:** The individual, administrative officer, office, committee, or unit whose action or decision is the subject of the grievance. The Respondent may be represented by the VPAA or another administrative officer in FGC proceedings.

**Due Process:** The right of a faculty member to be informed of allegations or adverse actions against them, to receive relevant information, to have a meaningful opportunity to respond, and to have their case reviewed by an impartial body before a final decision is made.

**Enhanced Due Process:** The higher standard of due process applied in Severe Sanctions cases: formal written notice of specific allegations; access to all information that will be used in the decision; adequate time to prepare a response; the right to appear in person before the FGC with a support person; and the right of appeal to the Board Academic Affairs Committee.

**Faculty Grievance Committee (FGC):** The standing committee established under Article 5 of this policy, responsible for conducting hearings on formal grievances and making written recommendations to the President. The FGC operates within the Faculty Council as the Faculty Affairs Committee in its grievance function.

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**Informal Resolution:** A structured, time-limited attempt to resolve a grievance directly between the Grievant and the Respondent, without formal FGC involvement, facilitated through the administrative chain.

**Retaliation:** Any adverse action taken against a faculty member, whether by an administrator, a supervisor, or a colleague, because the faculty member filed a grievance, participated in a grievance proceeding, provided information in a grievance proceeding, or served on the Faculty Grievance Committee.

**Severe Sanctions:** Actions by AIU that constitute dismissal, termination, suspension without pay, or reduction in academic rank. Severe Sanctions are subject to Enhanced Due Process under this policy.

**Support Person:** A person chosen by the Grievant to accompany them to hearings for moral support. The Support Person may not speak for the Grievant, question witnesses, or address the FGC directly unless specifically invited to do so by the FGC Chair. Legal counsel may serve as a Support Person.

**Academic Freedom Violation:** An institutional action that disciplines, disadvantages, or threatens a faculty member on the basis of the content of their teaching, research, or scholarship; their participation in faculty governance; or their expression of views on institutional or public matters, in contravention of ACA-002 (Academic Freedom Policy).

**FGC Secretary:** A member of VPAA's office staff designated to administer the procedural aspects of the FGC process: receiving filings, maintaining records, coordinating communications, and ensuring timeline compliance. The FGC Secretary does not participate in deliberations.

## Policy

### Article 1: Governing Principles

Every aspect of the faculty grievance process at AIU is governed by the following principles. These principles are not aspirational - they are enforceable standards against which the process will be evaluated by Accrediting agency.

- Fairness and impartiality:** Every grievant is entitled to an impartial hearing body in which no member has a personal stake in the outcome. No FGC member who has been involved in the contested decision, who has a supervisory relationship with the Grievant, or who has a personal conflict with either party may participate in the hearing. Recusal is self-declared and mandatory; failure to recuse where required is itself a procedural defect.
- Due process:** No faculty member is subject to an adverse employment action, including discipline, non-renewal, suspension, or dismissal, without prior notice, access to relevant information, and a genuine opportunity to respond. In Severe Sanctions cases, due process includes a formal hearing with an FGC composed of a faculty majority before any final decision is made.
- Timeliness:** Grievances are resolved promptly. Unreasonable delay disadvantages both parties and undermines institutional fairness. The timelines in this policy are binding on all parties. A party that fails to meet a deadline, whether the Grievant, the Respondent, the FGC, or the President, may request an extension for documented good cause. Undocumented or routine delays without cause do not excuse a missed deadline.

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- d. Confidentiality: Grievance proceedings are confidential. The fact that a grievance has been filed, the substance of the proceedings, and the outcome are not disclosed beyond the parties and those with an administrative need to know, unless disclosure is required by applicable law, required to implement a remedy, or authorized in writing by the Grievant.
- e. Non-retaliation: Every person who participates in this process in good faith, as a Grievant, a Respondent, a witness, an FGC member, a Support Person, or an administrator, is protected from retaliation. Retaliation is itself a grievable matter and may give rise to separate disciplinary action against the retaliating party.
- f. Good faith: The grievance process depends on the good faith of all participants. A grievance filed with malicious intent, knowingly false allegations, or for the purpose of harassing a respondent is itself a violation of institutional professional conduct standards under FAC-004. This provision does not discourage the good-faith filing of uncertain or ultimately unsuccessful grievances.
- g. Independence of the FGC: The Faculty Grievance Committee operates independently of the administration. Its deliberations are not subject to administrative review, direction, or interference. The VPAA participates as a non-voting ex officio resource, not as a deliberating member. Administrative pressure on FGC members constitutes interference with faculty governance and is a potential academic freedom violation.

## Article 2: Grievance Tracks and Scope

Faculty grievances at AIU follow one of three tracks, depending on the nature of the matter. The track determines the level of due process required, the availability of Board review, and certain procedural standards at the hearing level.

| Grievance Track                                                                                             | Level 1                               | Level 2                                  | Level 3                               | Board Review                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Standard Track (employment, workload, assignment, evaluation, compensation, contract interpretation)</b> | Informal resolution (15 working days) | FGC Hearing (30 working days)            | Presidential Review (20 working days) | Not available                                             |
| <b>Academic Freedom Track (alleged violations of academic freedom; retaliation for</b>                      | Informal resolution (15 working days) | FGC Hearing (enhanced) (30 working days) | Presidential Review (20 working days) | Board Academic Affairs Committee (upon FGC referral only) |

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| <b>governance activity)</b>                                                                       |                                               |                                                      |                                                                       |                                                          |
| <b>Severe Sanctions Track (dismissal, termination, suspension without pay, reduction in rank)</b> | Not required - may proceed directly to formal | FGC Hearing (enhanced due process) (30 working days) | Presidential Review with mandatory written response (20 working days) | Board Academic Affairs Committee (available as of right) |

The Grievant specifies the applicable track at the point of filing. The FGC Chair may reclassify the track within five working days of preliminary review where the nature of the grievance clearly falls within a different track than the one specified. The FGC Chair's track determination is communicated to both parties in writing and may not be appealed separately from the overall grievance.

### 2.1 Matters Not Covered by This Policy

This policy does not govern the following matters, which are addressed through separate institutional processes:

- Promotion, tenure, and academic rank governed by FAC-009 (Faculty Academic Promotion Policy), which provides its own appeal mechanism
- Performance evaluation rating disagreements that do not allege a procedural irregularity or academic freedom violation these are addressed through normal administrative channels
- General policy disagreement without a specific adverse action against the Grievant
- Disputes between faculty members that do not involve an administrative action interpersonal disputes are addressed through the VPAA's office
- Student academic appeals and student grievances governed by separate student affairs procedures

## Article 3: Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is a structured, time-limited process in which the Grievant seeks to resolve their concern directly through the administrative chain, without formal FGC involvement. Informal resolution is the required first step for all grievances except those involving Severe Sanctions, where the Grievant may choose to proceed directly to formal filing.

### 3.1 Informal Resolution Process

The Grievant initiates informal resolution by raising the matter in writing with their immediate supervisor within 20 working days of the event or decision giving rise to the grievance. The written notice must:

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describe the matter in sufficient detail for the supervisor to understand the nature of the concern; state the specific outcome the Grievant seeks; and give the supervisor a reasonable opportunity to respond. If the immediate supervisor is the Respondent, the Grievant initiates with the Department Chair. If the Department Chair is the Respondent, the Grievant initiates with the Dean. If the Dean is the Respondent, the Grievant initiates directly with the VPAA.

The supervisor, Chair, or Dean to whom the matter is directed must respond in writing within 10 working days of receiving the written notice. Where the matter requires consultation with the VPAA or HR, the response period may be extended by five additional working days with written notice to the Grievant.

### 3.2 Informal Resolution Outcomes

Informal resolution concludes in one of three ways:

- Resolution: the Grievant and the relevant administrator reach a documented written agreement on how the matter is resolved. The agreement is signed by both parties and filed with the VPAA. The Grievant may not file a formal grievance on the same matter after a resolution agreement is signed unless the agreement is violated.
- Non-resolution: the parties cannot reach agreement within the informal period. The Grievant may proceed to formal filing within 15 working days of the close of the informal period.
- Grievant withdraws: the Grievant chooses not to pursue the matter further. This is recorded in writing.

## Article 4: Formal Grievance Filing

A formal grievance is filed in writing with the FGC Secretary. Filing initiates, the formal grievance process and starts the procedural timelines in this policy.

### 4.1 Filing Deadline

A formal grievance must be filed within 40 working days of the event or decision giving rise to the grievance, or within 15 working days of the close of the informal resolution period if informal resolution was pursued. The FGC Chair may extend the filing deadline for documented good cause where the Grievant demonstrates that they could not reasonably have known of the grievable action within the standard deadline, or where circumstances beyond the Grievant's control prevented timely filing. Extension requests must be submitted before the deadline expires.

### 4.2 Required Content of the Formal Grievance

A formal grievance must contain:

- The Grievant's full name, title, School, and contact details
- The track under which the grievance is filed (Standard, Academic Freedom, or Severe Sanctions)
- A clear and specific description of the act, decision, omission, or procedural irregularity giving rise to the grievance

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- d. The date or period during which the grievable action occurred
- e. The identity of the Respondent
- f. A summary of informal resolution efforts taken, including dates, persons contacted, and outcomes
- g. The specific remedy or remedies requested
- h. Supporting documentation available at the time of filing (additional documentation may be submitted up to five working days before the hearing)
- i. The Grievant's certification that the grievance is filed in good faith and to the best of their knowledge

Incomplete grievances are returned to the Grievant by the FGC Secretary within three working days with a description of what is missing. The Grievant has five working days to complete the filing. The original filing date is preserved for deadline calculation purposes where the Grievant completes the filing within this period.

#### **Article 5: Faculty Grievance Committee — Composition and Independence**

The Faculty Grievance Committee is a standing committee of AIU, constituted under the Faculty Council as the grievance function of the Faculty Affairs Committee. Its composition ensures a faculty majority and genuine independence from the administrative parties to any grievance.

| Member                                                                                        | Appointment                                                                                            | Voting Status |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chair senior faculty member at Associate Professor or Professor rank</b>                   | Elected annually by Faculty Council voting members from among Council members                          | Voting        |
| <b>Two faculty members from Schools other than the Grievant's School</b>                      | Elected annually by Faculty Council; must hold rank of Lecturer or above with minimum two years at AIU | Voting (2)    |
| <b>One faculty member from the Grievant's School (not the same department if practicable)</b> | Elected annually by Faculty Council; subject to conflict-of-interest provisions                        | Voting        |

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| <b>One faculty member elected at large by all full-time faculty (not Faculty Council member)</b> | Annual election by all full-time faculty; serves as independent voice                 | Voting     |
| <b>HR Director</b>                                                                               | Ex officio — advises on employment law compliance and University policies             | Non-voting |
| <b>Legal Counsel (optional)</b>                                                                  | At FGC Chair's discretion or where legal complexity warrants; attends as advisor only | Non-voting |

### 5.1 Conflicts of Interest and Recusal

A member of the FGC who has any of the following relationships to a matter must recuse themselves before the preliminary review:

- Was directly involved in the action giving rise to the grievance
- Has a current supervisory relationship with the Grievant or the Respondent
- Has a close personal or familial relationship with either party
- Has expressed a prior opinion on the merits of the specific matter
- Has a financial or professional interest in the outcome

Recusal is self-declared by the member to the FGC Chair. Either party may request that a member recuse by submitting a written request to the FGC Chair within five working days of being notified of the FGC composition for the matter. The FGC Chair's decision on a recusal request is final. Where recusals reduce the committee below four voting members, the FGC Chair requests the Faculty Council to appoint a replacement from a list of trained alternates maintained by the Faculty Council for this purpose.

### 5.2 Training

All FGC members complete a training program on grievance procedures, due process requirements, confidentiality obligations, and impartiality before participating in any hearing. The training is coordinated by the VPAA's office and the HR Director. No member participates in a hearing without completed training. Training is renewed at the beginning of each academic year.

## Article 6: Hearing Process

The FGC hearing is the core of the formal grievance process. It is not a judicial proceeding, it is an institutional review designed to find facts, assess fairness, and make recommendations. The hearing must be conducted with rigor and impartiality.

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### 6.1 Preliminary Review

Before scheduling a hearing, the FGC Chair conducts a preliminary review to determine:

- Whether the grievance is within the scope of this policy
- Whether the filing is timely
- Whether informal resolution was attempted (where required)
- Whether the grievance identifies a specific grievable action by a specific Respondent

Where the FGC Chair determines that the grievance is out of scope, untimely, or procedurally deficient, the matter is dismissed with a written explanation to the Grievant within five working days of the preliminary review. The Grievant may request reconsideration by the full FGC within five working days of the dismissal notice. The full FGC's decision on reconsideration is final.

### 6.2 Pre-Hearing Process

Where the grievance proceeds to a full hearing:

- The Respondent receives a copy of the grievance within five working days of filing and has 10 working days to submit a written response.
- Both parties receive copies of all documents submitted by the other party at least five working days before the hearing.
- The FGC may request additional information from either party, from institutional offices, or from relevant third parties. Both parties are notified of all information requests and receive copies of all responses.
- Both parties have the right to identify witnesses they wish the FGC to hear from. Witnesses are not compelled to appear but are expected to cooperate with FGC information requests consistent with institutional good faith obligations.
- The FGC Chair sets the hearing date with at least 10 working days' notice to both parties. The parties may request one postponement of up to five additional working days without cause. Further postponements require FGC Chair approval with documented cause.

### 6.3 Conduct of the Hearing

The hearing is conducted by the FGC Chair as follows:

- The Grievant presents their account of the matter and the evidence supporting it. The Grievant may call witnesses, who are questioned by the Grievant, the Respondent, and FGC members.
- The Respondent presents their response. The Respondent may call witnesses, questioned in the same order.
- Both parties have an equal opportunity to ask questions and to respond to evidence presented by the other party. The FGC Chair may limit repetitive or irrelevant questioning.
- FGC members may ask questions of either party or any witness at any point in the proceedings.
- Closing statements are provided by both parties in the order they presented.

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- f. The hearing is recorded (audio) unless both parties agree to proceed without recording. The recording and any transcript are part of the official record. Parties may request access to the recording after the hearing.
- g. The Grievant may be accompanied by a Support Person throughout the hearing. The Respondent may also bring a Support Person.
- h. No party may be questioned about confidential peer review deliberations, attorney-client privileged communications, or matters protected by applicable law.

#### 6.4 Enhanced Due Process for Severe Sanctions

Where the grievance concerns a Severe Sanction, the following additional requirements apply:

- a. The Grievant must have received written notice of the specific allegations or reasons for the sanction at least 15 working days before the hearing, with sufficient detail to prepare a response.
- b. The Grievant must have been given access to all information, including evidence, reports, and records, that the institution intends to rely on in support of the sanction, at least 10 working days before the hearing.
- c. The Grievant has the right to appear in person and may not be excluded from the hearing while evidence is being presented, except during witness deliberation.
- d. The FGC quorum for a Severe Sanctions hearing is five voting members, all five must be present throughout the hearing.
- e. No Severe Sanction may take effect before the FGC has completed its review and issued its recommendation, unless a temporary separation is required to protect the safety of other campus community members, in which case the temporary separation is without prejudice to the grievance outcome and may be with pay pending the grievance conclusion.

#### Article 7: FGC Deliberation and Recommendations

Following the close of the hearing, the FGC deliberates in private, without the presence of either party, administrative officers, or Support Persons. Deliberations are not recorded. The FGC reaches its recommendations by majority vote of the voting members present and participating.

The FGC may recommend from the following categories of action:

| Recommendation Type | Meaning                                                                                                        | Available in Which Tracks |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Dismiss</b>      | The FGC finds the grievance is without merit or outside the scope of this policy. The contested action stands. | All tracks                |

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| <b>Uphold - Modify Decision</b>         | The FGC finds merit in the grievance and recommends that a specific administrative decision be modified as described.                                                    | Standard; Academic Freedom  |
| <b>Uphold - Corrective Action</b>       | The FGC finds merit and recommends that the Respondent take specified corrective action.                                                                                 | Standard; Academic Freedom  |
| <b>Uphold - Reinstatement</b>           | The FGC finds merit in a dismissal or termination grievance and recommends reinstatement with back pay.                                                                  | Severe Sanctions only       |
| <b>Uphold - Rescind Sanction</b>        | The FGC recommends that a specific sanction (suspension, reduction in rank, reduction in salary) be rescinded or reduced.                                                | Severe Sanctions only       |
| <b>Refer for Further Action</b>         | The FGC finds systemic issues beyond the specific grievance and recommends that the VPAA or President take broader remedial action.                                      | All tracks                  |
| <b>Uphold - Academic Freedom Remedy</b> | The FGC finds an academic freedom violation and recommends specific remedies including reversal of employment action, public institutional acknowledgement, or training. | Academic Freedom track only |

The FGC issues a written recommendation within 10 working days of the close of the hearing. The recommendation must include: a summary of the facts found by the FGC; the FGC's assessment of the evidence; the recommendation category and its rationale; a description of the specific remedy recommended where the grievance is upheld; and the vote count (in favor, against, abstaining) for each element of the recommendation. Dissenting views of any FGC member who requests that their view be recorded are included in the recommendation document.

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The FGC transmits the written recommendation to the VPAA, who transmits it to the President within three working days. Copies are provided simultaneously to the Grievant and the Respondent.

### Article 8: Presidential Review

The President reviews the FGC's written recommendation and issues a written decision within 20 working days of receiving the recommendation. The Presidential decision must:

- Address each element of the FGC's recommendation specifically — the President may not issue a blanket acceptance or rejection without specific reasoning for each element
- Where the President adopts the FGC's recommendation: specify the implementation actions required, the responsible party, and the timeline for implementation
- Where the President declines to adopt any element of the FGC's recommendation: state the specific grounds for the decision and the evidence or reasoning that supports departing from the FGC's recommendation. Presidential decisions that override FGC recommendations in Severe Sanctions or Academic Freedom cases without documented justification are a governance failure and a potential Accrediting agency compliance risk
- Where the President declines to implement an FGC recommendation regarding an alleged academic freedom violation: state specifically why the action in question did not constitute an academic freedom violation or why the institutional interest in the action outweighs the freedom interest affected

The Presidential decision is communicated in writing to the Grievant, the Respondent, the FGC Chair, and the VPAA simultaneously. The decision takes effect on the date it is communicated. Implementation is monitored by the VPAA, who reports to the President within 30 working days on whether required actions have been completed.

### Article 9: Appeal to the Board Academic Affairs Committee

Appeals to the Board Academic Affairs Committee are available only in Severe Sanctions cases and Academic Freedom cases. The Standard Track does not provide for Board-level appeal, the President's decision is final in Standard Track cases.

#### 9.1 Grounds for Board Appeal

A Grievant may appeal a Presidential decision to the Board Academic Affairs Committee where the Grievant believes:

- The Presidential decision rejected an FGC recommendation to reinstate, rescind a severe sanction, or remedy an academic freedom violation, without adequate documented justification
- A material procedural error occurred at the FGC hearing level that prejudiced the outcome
- New material evidence has emerged that was not available at the time of the hearing and that would likely change the outcome

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|                                                                                                                                                     | Category           | Faculty                             | Last Review date |            |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Policy Number      | FAC-002                             | Next Review date | 14/06/2029 |
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The Board Academic Affairs Committee does not conduct a de novo hearing, it reviews whether the process was conducted fairly, whether the FGC recommendation was supported by the evidence, and whether the President's decision, if different from the FGC recommendation, was adequately justified. The Committee does not substitute its judgment for the FGC's on matters of fact.

## 9.2 Appeal Filing

The appeal must be filed with the Board Academic Affairs Committee Chair within 15 working days of the Presidential decision. The appeal must specify: the decision being appealed; the grounds for appeal from among those listed above; the specific evidence or argument supporting each ground; and the remedy sought. The Board Chair receives notice of the appeal filing within three working days.

## 9.3 Board Academic Affairs Committee Review

The Board Academic Affairs Committee reviews the appeal and issues a written determination within 30 working days of receiving the appeal. The Committee may: uphold the Presidential decision; modify the Presidential decision; remand the matter to the President with specific direction; or, in exceptional circumstances, convene an additional hearing. The Committee's determination is final and binding. The Committee communicates its determination in writing to the President, the Grievant, the Respondent, and the FGC Chair.

## Article 10: Non-Retaliation

No person, whether an administrator, supervisor, colleague, or student, may take any adverse action against a faculty member because that faculty member:

- Filed a grievance under this policy, whether or not the grievance was ultimately successful
- Participated in a grievance proceeding as a witness, support person, or in any other capacity
- Provided information to the FGC in connection with any grievance
- Served as a member of the Faculty Grievance Committee
- Supported another faculty member's decision to file a grievance

Retaliation is a violation of this policy and of ACA-002 (Academic Freedom Policy). Where retaliation is suspected, the affected person files a separate complaint with the VPAA, which is treated as a Standard Track grievance with expedited timelines. Any confirmed retaliation by a faculty member is subject to disciplinary action under FAC-004. Any confirmed retaliation by an administrator is reported to the President, and where the President is the retaliator, to the Board Chair. All persons who report retaliation in good faith are protected under GOV-003 (Whistleblower Protection Policy).

## Article 11: Confidentiality

All aspects of the grievance process are confidential. This includes: the fact that a grievance has been filed; the identities of the parties; the substance of the proceedings; the FGC's deliberations; and the

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recommendation and decision. Confidentiality applies to all participants — Grievant, Respondent, witnesses, FGC members, Support Persons, HR Director, Legal Counsel, and administrative staff involved in the process.

Confidentiality does not prevent: a party from consulting with legal counsel; disclosure required to implement a remedy; disclosure to the Board Academic Affairs Committee in an appeal; or disclosure required by applicable law. Where a party believes that disclosure is legally required, they notify the FGC Chair before making the disclosure. Intentional breach of confidentiality by any participant is a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Article 12: Documentation and Records Retention**

The FGC Secretary maintains a complete official record for each grievance, including: the formal filing and all supporting documents; the Respondent's written response; all documents provided by either party or gathered by the FGC; the audio recording of the hearing; the FGC's written recommendation with vote counts; the Presidential decision; any Board Academic Affairs Committee determination; and documentation of implementation of any remedy. All grievance records are retained for a minimum of seven years from the date of final resolution, consistent with AIU's records retention standards.

Grievance records are available for: accreditation review by Accrediting agency; internal audit and institutional effectiveness review; legal compliance purposes; and review by the Board Academic Affairs Committee. Access to grievance records beyond these purposes requires written authorization from the VPAA and, in cases where the Grievant is identifiable, notification to the Grievant.

### **Article 13: Process Improvement and Annual Reporting**

The VPAA, in consultation with the Faculty Council, reviews grievance patterns annually. This review examines: the number and type of grievances filed; the tracks used; the outcomes at each level; the timelines achieved; the subject matter of grievances (in aggregate and without identifying individuals); the rate of resolution at the informal level; and any procedural issues identified by the FGC. The annual review is used to identify whether systemic issues in AIU's academic employment practices, administrative processes, or institutional culture may be contributing to grievances. The review outcomes and any recommended policy improvements are presented to the Faculty Council and to the Board Academic Affairs Committee annually as part of the shared governance report.

## **Procedures**

### **Initiating Informal Resolution**

1. The Grievant prepares a written notice to the immediate supervisor (or appropriate administrator where the supervisor is the Respondent) describing the matter, the date(s) of the relevant action,

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and the remedy sought. The notice is delivered by email to the supervisor's institutional email address, with a copy to the VPAA's office for record.

2. The supervisor responds in writing within 10 working days (or 15 working days where VPAA or HR consultation is needed, with written notice of the extension). The response either proposes a resolution or states that the matter cannot be resolved at this level.
3. If the response proposes a resolution, the Grievant either accepts in writing (which closes the matter), requests modification, or declines and proceeds to formal filing.
4. If the supervisor's response is that the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if 15 working days pass without a substantive response, the informal period is deemed closed and the Grievant may file a formal grievance within 15 working days.
5. All informal resolution correspondence is filed with the VPAA's office and attached to any subsequent formal grievance filing.

#### **Filing and Processing the Formal Grievance**

1. The Grievant submits the formal grievance to the FGC Secretary by institutional email or hand delivery. The FGC Secretary date-stamps the submission and acknowledges receipt within three working days, confirming whether the grievance is complete.
2. The FGC Secretary notifies the Respondent of the grievance filing and provides a copy of the grievance within five working days of receipt. The Respondent submits a written response to the FGC Secretary within 10 working days.
3. The FGC Chair completes the preliminary scope review within five working days of receiving the Respondent's response. The outcome (proceed to hearing; dismiss; reclassify track) is communicated in writing to both parties within three working days of the Chair's determination.
4. The FGC Secretary distributes all submitted documentation to all FGC members and both parties at least five working days before the hearing date.

#### **Conducting the Hearing and Issuing the Recommendation**

1. The FGC Chair opens the hearing by stating the matter, confirming the presence of required members, confirming that both parties have received all documentation, and explaining the hearing procedure to both parties.
2. The hearing proceeds in the sequence: Grievant presentation and evidence; Grievant witnesses (if any); Respondent presentation and response; Respondent witnesses (if any); FGC member questions to both parties and witnesses; closing statements (Grievant first, then Respondent).
3. The FGC Chair manages time to ensure that both parties have approximately equal opportunity. The hearing is recorded. FGC members take their own notes. No party or Support Person may record the proceeding independently.
4. After the hearing, the FGC meets in private deliberation without a fixed time limit. Deliberations are not recorded. The Chair conducts a vote on the recommendation. The vote is recorded in the recommendation document by vote count without attribution.

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5. The written recommendation is finalized within 10 working days of the hearing close, transmitted to the VPAA for forwarding to the President, and simultaneously provided to both parties.

### Timeline Monitoring

1. The FGC Secretary maintains a timeline tracking sheet for each active grievance, recording the filing date, each required deadline, the actual date of each step, and any extensions granted with their documented grounds.
2. Where any party, Grievant, Respondent, or FGC, misses a deadline without granted extension, the FGC Secretary notifies the FGC Chair immediately. The Chair determines the appropriate response, which may include: allowing a brief extension; proceeding with the information available; or, where the Grievant has missed a deadline without explanation, treating the matter as withdrawn pending the Grievant's response.
3. The VPAA receives a summary timeline compliance report from the FGC Secretary at the end of each academic semester, covering all active and closed grievances for the period. Timeline compliance data is included in the annual grievance process review under Article 13.

**President Signature**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_