

SCHOOL OF LAW
INTER AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
PROTOCOL FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The Inter American University of Puerto Rico and the School of Law value their students as essential elements of academic life. For this reason, the General Regulations for Students of the Inter American University (hereinafter regulations) establish the rights and duties of the student body in order to guarantee the right to a comprehensive education. The regulation establishes clear and specific procedures to deal with complaints against students, but it is not as precise as regards complaints from students. In cases of decisions that affect students, the regulations provide (Article 2-C-1):

In the event that a student considers that their rights have been violated by a member of the faculty or has a claim of an academic nature, they may channel their complaint through the director of the academic department to which said member of the faculty belongs. If you are not satisfied with the decision taken, you may appeal through the following channels, as appropriate, following this order: dean of division, dean of academic affairs, chief executive of the academic unit, president of the university.

The American Bar Association (hereinafter ABA), an institution that accredits law schools in the United States and Puerto Rico, requires in various standards that schools have and publish clear policies to address student complaints. The 308 B standard requires:

A law school shall adopt, publish, and adhere to written due process policies with regard to taking any action that adversely affects the good standing or graduation of a student.

And the 510 standard requires:

A law school shall establish, publish, and comply with policies for addressing student complaints.

To meet these requirements, the following protocol is adopted.

Types of complaints

This protocol applies to three types of complaints:

- a) Grades
- b) Actions that concern academic “good standing” or graduation.
- c) Allegations about possible breaches to any ABA standard by the School of Law.

As stated in the introduction, all matters related to for disciplinary issues will be managed under the procedures established in the student regulations.

Procedure for complaints related to grades or grades

Any student who wants to request the revision of a grade or grade that he or she understands is unfair must follow the following steps:

1. Ask the professor for a reevaluation of the final grade within 30 days of the beginning of classes for the next semester (School of Law Catalog)
2. The professor will have 30 days to resolve the matter and, if appropriate, recommend a change in the final grade. (School of Law Catalog)
3. The catalog establishes that grade changes are justified for the following reasons:
 - a. Professors may request a grade change from the Dean only in cases where there has been a mathematical or typing error, omission in the correction or grading of an answer, or instances in which the professor reviews the exam or a question therein, and said revision applies to all students.
 - b. Omission in correcting or grading an answer includes cases in which the professor considers that they must alter the evaluation criteria used to determine the answer. However, in these cases, the professor must review the question for all students.
4. If the professor's decision is not favorable to the student, the professor or the student may request intervention from the Dean of Academic Affairs, who will try to resolve the matter informally.
5. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the student may submit a written complaint to the Dean of Academic Affairs.
6. The Dean of Academic Affairs must notify the professor with a copy of the written complaint and request that they present a written response including all the documents they deem necessary (medical records, exams, rubrics, etc.).

7. The Dean of Academic Affairs may resolve the matter with the documents, or if they deem it necessary, appoint an ad hoc committee of professors who teach the subject concerned, to issue an external evaluation of the grade. The committee must issue a written recommendation. The Dean of Academic Affairs or the committee to which the matter is referred must investigate and resolve the complaint within 45 days
8. The Dean of Academic Affairs will inform both the student and the professor of their decision in writing.
9. A copy of the complaint and the decision will remain in a file (physical or digital) in the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs for a period of no less than 5 years.
10. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they may file an appeal with the Dean of the School, who must follow the same steps above and notify the student of their decision in writing.

Procedure for complaints about actions that affect academic "good standing" or graduation

Any student who understands that their "good standing" or graduation has been affected by a decision of a teaching or non-teaching employee, may file a complaint with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

1. Initially, the Dean of Academic Affairs may meet with the student and suggest a solution to the matter.
2. If the proposed solution is not satisfactory, the student may file a written complaint with the Dean of Academic Affairs. The complaint must include:
 - a. A description of the incident and its effect.
 - b. Identification of the person who took the adverse action.
 - c. Full name and contact information of the complainant.
3. The Dean of Academic Affairs may resolve the matter or refer it to a committee of the Academic Senate, the faculty or create an ad hoc committee to address the specific matter.
4. The Dean of Academic Affairs or the committee to which the matter is referred must investigate and resolve the complaint within a term of 45 days. If they cannot resolve it within that term, they must inform the complaining student in writing of the status of their complaint and give an approximate date of resolution.

5. The Dean of Academic Affairs must notify the student in writing of the decision made.
6. A copy of the complaint and the decision will remain in a file (physical or digital) in the Office of the Dean or Dean of Academic Affairs for a period of no less than 5 years.
7. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they may file an appeal with the Dean of the School, who must follow the same steps above and notify the student of their decision in writing.

Procedure in cases of complaints related to allegations about possible breaches of the School with any standard of the ABA

Any student who understands that the Inter American University School of Law has substantially failed to comply with any of the ABA standards, may file a written complaint with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

1. The complaint must include:
 - a. A description of the incident and its effect.
 - b. Identification of the ABA standard that the student claims has not been substantially met.
 - c. Full name and contact information of the complainant.
2. The Dean of Academic Affairs may resolve the matter or refer it to a committee of the Senate, the faculty or create an ad hoc committee to address the specific matter.
3. The Dean of Academic Affairs or the committee to which the matter is referred must investigate and resolve the complaint within 45 days. If they cannot resolve it within that term, they must inform the complaining student in writing of the status of their complaint and give an approximate date of resolution.
4. The Dean of Academic Affairs must notify the student in writing of the decision made.
5. A copy of the complaint and the decision will remain in a file (physical or digital) in the Office of the Dean or Dean of Academic Affairs for a period of no less than 10 years.
6. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may file an appeal with the Dean of the School, who must follow the same steps above and notify the student of their decision in writing.

The terms established in this protocol refer to calendar days. However, the days that are excluded from the academic calendar, due to academic breaks or institutional determinations, will not be counted.

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