

Triangle Bible Institute (TBI) Policy

Policy Number: 404-16

Policy Title: STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Responsible Person: Executive Director

Responsible Office: TBI Administration

Effective Date: January 1, 2016

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Triangle Bible Institute (TBI) is an academic community committed to fostering spiritual and intellectual inquiry in a climate of academic freedom and integrity. Its members are expected to uphold these principles and to exhibit tolerance and respect for others. Accordingly TBI condemns all forms of misconduct and works strenuously to assure that its students are accorded tolerance, dignity and respect. Any student in TBI who believes that he or she is a victim of misconduct may make use of the mediation and grievance procedures developed by the TBI administration. The TBI Procedure for Student Grievances governs cases in which a student has a complaint against any individual subject to the authority of the Pastor of Star Ministries, and Executive Director of Triangle Bible Institute, such as Administrators, faculty, or a fellow TBI student.

Note: In the text of this document "complaint" is used in the most general sense to cover all the types of issues requiring mediation and/or resolution that are addressed herein. Complaints as specific actions brought by a student are distinguished procedurally by "informal complaint" or "informal resolution" on the one hand and "grievance" or "formal grievance" on the other. Students with questions about the procedures described herein should contact the TBI Administrative Office and specify a Student Affairs issue.

II. RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is establish, and inform students and the Institute Community, and to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in academic management practices.

III. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy is applicable to all full-time, and part-time students enrolled at TBI.

IV. TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Types of complaints that may be addressed by the TBI Procedure for Student Grievances include, but are not limited to:

- Violation or misapplication of departmental academic rules and regulations so as to be unfair or in conflict with any TBI policy.
- Unfair or inappropriate decisions concerning financial matters, grades, and unreasonable assignments.

- Excessive or unreasonable academic demands made by a faculty member or TBI administration.
- Violation of TBI rules and regulations or misapplication of School policy.
- Disrupting, refusing to comply with or preventing another's free expression or dissemination of ideas in the performance of his or her responsibilities as a student or faculty member (e.g. conducting research, teaching).
- Other interpersonal conflicts that negatively and unfairly affect the student's academic environment and progress.
- Academic dishonesty among students, including cheating, plagiarism and improper acknowledgement of collaboration.
- Retaliation against a student arising from bringing a complaint or concern to an office, program, or department at TBI.

In some cases, an initial review of the complaint may determine that the matter is more appropriately addressed as a violation of TBI policies on discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment.

TBI PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCES

Informal Resolution

If possible, the student should discuss the matter with the responsible individual. If no resolution results, the student should consult his or her advisor, or an appropriate dean or administrator at TBI. The Executive Director may help with informal resolutions and offer suggestions about resolving the matter if applicable. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at an informal level without escalating the complaint to the status of a formal grievance. Discussions aimed at informal resolution must remain confidential and generally last for no more than 30 working days.

Mediation

Any student who has not reached an informal resolution and prefers to avoid escalating the complaint to the status of a formal grievance may request a mediation. Mediation is an informal and confidential process through which the grievant and the accused student can participate in a search for a fair and workable solution. Mediation requires the consent of both parties and suspends the grievance procedure for up to 30 working days, which can be extended at the discretion of TBI upon the consent of both parties. Complaints that are addressed through mediation need not be made in writing. The parties may agree to a variety of solutions ranging from the modification of an issue to an apology. A written document, which will remain confidential to both parties, may be produced to memorialize the agreement.

Filing a Formal Grievance

If no informal resolution occurs and the student wishes to make a formal grievance, the student should, within two weeks of the abandonment of attempts at informal resolution, inform in writing the Executive Director that he or she has rejected any offer made during the informal process of resolution (if such was made) and that he or she intends to file a formal grievance. Within two weeks following such notice, the student should submit a written statement to the Academic Dean documenting and describing the source of the complaint, its consequences, and

the informal efforts at resolution made to date. This statement must also include a description of the remedy sought.

Review of the Grievance Statement

The Academic Dean will review the written statement and consult with the Executive Director to suggest the appropriate action: either (a) to refer the grievance to the Grievance Committee or (b) with the agreement of the grievant, to refer the complaint to the appropriate department or office if the issue seems not to be one that falls within the purview of the Dean's office.

Formation and Proceeding of the Grievance Committee

If the complaint is forwarded to the Grievance Committee, the Executive Director convenes a proceeding of the committee to review the written statement. Such a proceeding may involve one or more meetings, depending on how long it takes to collect, present and evaluate the evidence needed to review the grievance.

A TBI dean appointed by the Executive Director will chair the Grievance Committee, which will consist of a second TBI staff member and, depending on the nature of the case, a faculty member included for expertise and present through the hearing until the point of deliberation.

The grievant attends the proceeding and, if he or she wishes, may select a faculty member, student or TBI administrator to attend the meeting and serve as his or her advocate. The advocate may not pose questions or intervene in the proceedings, but may talk quietly or pass notes to the grievant in a non-disruptive manner. The advocate is not privy to deliberations and does not vote. If the grievant chooses not to attend, he or she will be informed that the committee will proceed to a decision.

The merits of the grievance are evaluated within the context of the TBI policy, a consensus is reached by a majority vote and, when appropriate, a remedy is recommended. The Committee responds with a written decision in a timely fashion, that is, no later than the end of the semester following that in which the grievance was filed.

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Informal Process

1. A student who believes that he/she has been aggrieved must first attempt to seek an informal resolution with the other party involved in the dispute, e.g., grade dispute with the instructor.
2. If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the primary party of the dispute, then the student is advised to seek the intervention of his or her Advisor.
3. All disputes which are not resolved at the departmental level are then brought to the Executive Director's Office, whereupon the Executive Director or his/her designee will seek to reach an informal resolution through mediation between the parties.

4. If the mediation at the Executive Director level fails, then the student's grievance is consigned to the committee designated by the school to address student grievances herein referred to as the Student Grievance Committee.

The Formal Process

1. Student grievances which are consigned to the Student Grievance Committee must be specified in writing and given to the Executive Director or his/her designee.
2. A student's written statement, along with supportive evidence, constitutes a case document, which will be submitted to each member of the committee.
3. The second party to the dispute is also requested to provide the Executive Director with his or her account of the matter in dispute which becomes a part of the case document that is forwarded to the committee.
4. The Student Grievance Committee is then required to set a date for convening a meeting to hear the case(s) as expeditiously as possible.
5. After the date has been set, each party to the dispute is sent a certified letter which informs him or her of the charges, and date of the meeting as well as a statement requesting his or her presence.
6. During the hearing, the student presents his/her case; after, the accused party is allowed to present the other side. Each side is permitted to have witnesses.
7. Following the hearing, members of the committee after deliberation on their assessment of the case reach a decision as to how the case should be resolved.
8. The committee's decision is sent to the Executive Director in the form of a recommendation.

The Executive Director then informs the student in writing of the decision, which may be based upon the committee's recommendation or upon a modification of it.

Appeal

If the grievant is not satisfied with this decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Administrative Dean. This appeal must be submitted within 30 working days of the decision to the Dean who will decide the matter, ordinarily within 30 days. If the student is unsatisfied with the School resolution in a matter related to faculty misconduct, he or she may consult the grounds and procedures for appeal to Administrative Dean.

IV. SANCTIONS

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.