Resolving Problems

The Department of History is committed to strong support of graduate students in their coursework, teaching, exam preparation, and dissertation writing, as well as to making inclusion a central aspect of our wider departmental culture.

Graduate students are encouraged first to try and resolve the problem with the faculty or staff member most concerned through informal conciliation. All parties should keep written records of their meetings and of what was said during these sessions.

If you are not comfortable talking with the other party involved in the matter, or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may ask the History Graduate Program Coordinator or Chair to mediate any grievance that originates in the Department.

Students may wish to consult the Department’s Graduate Liaison Committee (GLC), which functions as a graduate student voice to the rest of the Department and a source of peer advice about any concerns students may have.

The Graduate Program Coordinator, the Chair, and the GLC will treat the matter with strict confidentiality unless the student gives permission to do otherwise. However, students should be aware that the GPC and the Chair are required to report cases of sexual harassment to the appropriate authorities.

If the attempt at an informal resolution within the Department is unsuccessful, the student may file a formal complaint.

Sources of Information

University procedures for filing formal complaints differ depending upon the nature of the complaint. The information provided below directs students to University sources that outline grievance procedures for a variety of complaints.

(a) Students contesting individual grades or academic evaluations should refer to the Change of Grade Procedure contained in the University Policy Directory.

(b) Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran should refer to the Resolution of Complaints Against University Employees Procedure contained in the University of Washington Operations Manual, D 46.3, available in Smith 308B.

(c) Students subject to disciplinary proceedings for misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating, fall under the provisions of the Student Conduct Code contained in the University Policy Directory.

(d) Students who believe that they have been subjected to unfair treatment in the administration of academic policies may seek resolution of their complaints as outlined in Graduate School Memorandum 33. This memorandum applies to, but is not limited to, the application of departmental, college or Graduate School policies, deviations from stated grading practices (but not individual
grade challenges), unfair treatment, and related issues. Students seeking resolution of their complaints under this policy must initiate either an informal conciliation or file a formal complaint within 3 months of the incident of grievance.

Where to Get Help

Students may seek assistance from the History Department's graduate advisers, and also from a number of offices outside the Department. Some of these are listed below with a brief description of what services they can provide and the types of complaints they handle.

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate can help clarify procedures, and refer the student to appropriate authorities and support services, and a GPSS representative can accompany the student to meetings, all in the strictest confidentiality.

The Graduate School can help clarify a grievance, provide the student with relevant policies and memoranda, and explain grievance procedures. The Graduate School can mediate between the student and the Department, and is responsible for coordinating formal hearings for both work-related and academic grievances (see below).

The Office of the Ombudsman and UW Health and Wellness are available, at the request of a concerned party, to act as an impartial conciliator on academic issues (including academic misconduct, course accessibility, faculty evaluations, and grade concerns), departmental employment issues (including RA/TA/SA appointments), and harassment and mistreatment (including sexual harassment in the classroom and workplace). The Ombudsman's Office protects students, faculty and staff against unfair actions or lack of appropriate action. The Ombudsman will help the student define the conflict, research the applicable policies, and develop a planned approach to managing or resolving the situation.

The Office of Scholarly Integrity can help students with issues such as giving student researchers due credit for their work.

The University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office will have a neutral investigator interview the individual making a complaint, the employee who is the subject of the complaint, witnesses, and other appropriate individuals. Relevant documents and University policies and procedures are also examined to determine the facts of a dispute in an attempt to resolve it.

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