

**Department of Marine Sciences
Graduate Student Conflict Resolution Policy**

Approved by the Faculty 8/22/11

Personal and ethical concerns: A student who cannot resolve serious problems with a faculty member, staff member or another student directly may consult with his or her major professor, the graduate coordinator, or any other faculty member. If the issue is not resolved at this point, then the student should formally meet with the Graduate Coordinator, who may assemble the Graduate Affairs Committee to consider the issue and make recommendations to the Head. The Head's decision represents the final decision at the departmental level. No faculty member with a conflict of interest (e.g. having a personal connection with the issue at hand, having a spouse with such a connection, etc.) will participate in any deliberations related to the appeal. If the Graduate Coordinator or Head has a conflict of interest, the other will act in his/her stead.

Academic concerns: Disagreements concerning course grades or policies should be taken up with the instructor of record as prescribed by University policy. Unresolved course disputes and complaints involving qualifying exams or degree requirements may be appealed to the Graduate Affairs Committee. Members of the Committee with conflicts of interest will not participate in any deliberations related to the appeal. If the Graduate Coordinator has a conflict of interest, the Department Head will act in his/her stead. The decision of the Graduate Affairs Committee will represent the final decision at the departmental level.

University procedures govern grievance cases that cannot be resolved within the Department. Specific policies and procedures can be found on the following UGA websites. Excerpts are taken from those specific sites.

University System Hotline: Ethics and Compliance Reporting System hotline
(www.uga.edu/legal/hotline.html or 1.877.516.3467)

“The Board of Regents has established an ethics and compliance reporting system for University System institutions. Therefore, in cooperation with the Board of Regents, the University is establishing a hotline as one way through which faculty and staff may report apparent incidents of wrongdoing on campus that need to be addressed. The University of Georgia's existing procedures will remain in place for anyone wishing to pursue reports or complaints through established channels. You can continue to report improper activities through your supervisor, or to the office charged with the responsibility for ensuring compliance with a specific policy. In addition, UGA has implemented an Ethics and Compliance Reporting System hotline as of January 1, 2008. The hotline will be independently operated; will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and will allow you to voice your concerns and to

remain anonymous if you prefer. It is important for you to know that retaliation for voicing such concerns is a violation of University policy.”

UGA Graduate School, Academic Regulations & Procedures

(<http://www.uga.edu/gradschool/academics/regulations.html#Appeals>)

“University of Georgia students have the right to appeal academic decisions. Usually the appeal goes first to the unit responsible for the decision (for example, grades or departmental requirements to the department; college or school requirements to the school; university requirements to the Educational Affairs Committee). An unfavorable ruling at one level can be appealed to the successive levels (viz. a department ruling can be appealed to the college in which the institutional unit is located; a college-level ruling can be appealed to the University Council Educational Affairs Committee; the Educational Affairs Committee ruling can be appealed to the President of the University; and the President's ruling can be appealed to the Board of Regents).”

Office of Legal Affairs, Dispute Resolution Policy

(<http://www.uga.edu/legal/pdfs/Dispute.pdf>)

The University’s Dispute Resolution Program “provides members of the University community with the resources necessary to resolve disputes informally and pursue mediation of disputes... First, a Dispute Resolution Coordinator will serve as the initial point of contact for persons seeking to use the Program’s resources and will provide guidance about what dispute resolution alternative may work best to settle a particular dispute. Second, a Mediation Coordinator will be available to advise parties about the different dispute resolution techniques available through mediation (for example, one-to-one meetings between two people to discuss personal differences affecting a work relationship, or group discussions to evaluate issues affecting an entire work unit).”

For more information, contact a Dispute Resolution Coordinator in the Office of Legal Affairs at 542-0006 or the Office of Human Resources at 542-9756.

Office of Instructional Support and Development

Guidelines for teaching assistant duties including roles and responsibilities for faculty-teaching assistant supervision and teaching assistant-student relationships appear in the Teaching Assistant handbook. Assistance regarding grievances and complaints relevant to teaching assistant functions may be found by contacting the Office of Instructional Support and Development (<http://www.isd.uga.edu>).

Disability Resource Center: A Division of Student Affairs

(<http://www.dissvcs.uga.edu>)

“Should a student registered with the DRC feel he/she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner with regard to accommodations,” the student can follow the procedures listed in the DRC’s Policies and Procedures manual.

Office of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost: Academic Affairs Policy Manual

(<http://bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/ind/appeals.html>)

“University of Georgia students have rights to appeal decisions on academic matters.” The information on this website “is designed to indicate where to begin appeals and how the appeal process works.”

UGA Ombudspersons Program (<http://www.uga.edu/ombudsperson/>)

“The University of Georgia Ombudspersons are designated individuals who serve as independent, neutral, and informal resources for UGA students, faculty, and staff. Rather than serving as advocates for individual members of the University community, these individuals are advocates for fairness, and they function as a source of information and referral. They assist, to the extent possible, in informally resolving concerns brought to their attention. They serve as third-party information providers who remain neutral while assisting individuals in having their concerns addressed through appropriate channels, including those related to discrimination and harassment.

Ombudspersons supplement, but do not replace, the University’s existing policies and procedures for processing and resolving student, faculty, and staff complaints and grievances.”