

Institutional Grievance and Appeals Policies and Procedures

Procedures for Initiating Grievances

Except for specific matters for which a designated procedure for issue resolution is otherwise provided in School policy (e.g., harassment complaint procedures), students may submit a written grievance against action or inaction by the School which the student believes violates School policy. All such grievances must be presented in writing (not by e-mail) and addressed to the office of the PAU Provost within 30 days of their occurrence.

Informal Procedure:

The grievant should first discuss the complaint with his or her advisor, or other appropriate campus officer, who will attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If the circumstances of the complaint prevent such informal resolution, or it is not resolved informally, the grievant should file a written complaint to PAU's Provost. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Provost will forward a copy of the complaint to the relevant Program Director and to the individual against whom or related to whose action or decision the complaint is made, and will advise the grievant that an investigation and discussion will begin within 14 calendar days of receipt of the complaint, except where additional time is required for good reason.

Formal Procedure:

All grievances will be heard by the Institutional Appeals Committee, which is composed of faculty and staff members selected by the President, with consultation and recommendations of the faculty and staff members. The Institutional Appeals Committee shall hear the complaint and receive testimony and information from such witnesses as it deems appropriate in order to evaluate the complaint. After the hearing is complete, the Committee will forward its findings and recommendations to the President and to the parties. The Committee will attempt to do this within 14 days of the Committee's conclusion of hearings. Either party may forward to the President his or her comments on the findings and recommendations of the Committee. Such comments must be submitted within seven days following receipt of the panel's recommendations. The President will make a decision within 14 days of receipt of the panel's recommendations and findings.

Arbitration:

If the student disagrees with the decision of the President and wishes to challenge that decision, he or she must submit the issue to binding arbitration under the Rules of the American Arbitration Association. The costs of the arbitrator's fees or any administrative fee imposed by the American Arbitration Association shall be split equally by the student and the School. The arbitration process under this Institutional Appeal Procedure is the exclusive method of external review and is final and binding on both PAU and the student and the arbitrator's award shall be final, binding and conclusive upon the parties and may be entered in any state or federal court having jurisdiction.

In the event a student believes they have been unfairly treated by Palo Alto University they should follow the PAU grievance procedures. In the event a student feels it cannot be resolved by the methods outlined in the University's publications and Web site– they have the right to contact the accrediting organizations and related governmental agencies.

An individual may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at:

**2535 Capitol Oaks Drive STE 400
Sacramento, CA 95833
Phone: 916-431-6924
FAX: 916-263-1897
Website: <http://www.bppe.ca.gov>**