

Joseph F. McCloskey School of Nursing

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Date: 3/2026	Academic Grievance #212	Pages: 1 of 5
Reviewed: 3/2026	 Tina VanBuren, DNP, MSN, RN, CNS Director, School of Nursing	Student Affairs Committee

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide students with a fair, consistent, and objective process for reviewing concerns related to academic decisions, including but not limited to grades, academic progression, course failures, and dismissal decisions. This policy ensures students have a formal avenue to seek review when they believe academic evaluations or academic decisions were made in a manner inconsistent with established policies, procedures, or standards of the Joseph F. McCloskey School of Nursing (JFMSON).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled at JFMSON. It governs grievances specifically related to academic matters, including course grades, academic progression decisions, clinical evaluation decisions, and academic dismissal outcomes. Concerns unrelated to academic decisions, such as harassment, discrimination, or interpersonal conduct, are addressed under the Non-Academic Grievance Policy #203, not this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Grievance: A written formal assertion that a student believes an academic decision, such as a grade, course failure, clinical evaluation, denial of progression, or dismissal, was made in violation of established academic policies, evaluation criteria, or procedures.

Academic Decision: Any official determination related to a student's academic standing, including grading, clinical evaluation, progression, and graduation eligibility, as defined in the Academic Progression and Graduation Policy #202.

Burden of Proof: The responsibility of the student (grievant) to demonstrate that the academic decision was inconsistent with written standards, procedures, or evaluation criteria published by JFMSON.

School Days: Monday through Friday, excluding published holidays and breaks

Grievant: The student filing the academic grievance.

POLICY

Step 1: Informal Resolution

Before filing a formal academic grievance, the student must attempt to resolve the concern informally within five (5) school days of receiving the academic decision. The student must meet with the faculty member(s) responsible for the academic decision (e.g., theory instructor, clinical instructor). If unresolved, the student must follow the chain of command by meeting sequentially with the Course Coordinator and the Director of Nursing. If the concern remains unresolved after informal attempts, or if the Director is directly involved in the disputed academic decision, the student may proceed to the formal grievance process.

Step 2: Formal Academic Grievance

A formal grievance must be submitted within five (5) school days following the conclusion of Step 1.

Written submission requirements. The student must submit the Academic Grievance Form (Form A, attached) to the Director of Nursing (or designee). The grievance must include: the specific academic decision being disputed; the relevant course, instructor(s), and date(s); the policy, procedure, or evaluation criteria alleged to have been incorrectly applied; and a summary of informal resolution efforts.

Formation of the Academic Grievance Committee. Upon receipt of the grievance, the Director (or designee) will appoint an Academic Grievance Committee consisting of two (2) faculty members and one non-faculty team member appointed as Committee Chairperson. Committee members shall not be individuals directly involved in the disputed academic decision. The grievant may request reconsideration of committee membership if a conflict of interest is believed to exist.

Committee review. The Committee will attempt to convene within five (5) school days of receiving the grievance. If the grievance is submitted during a semester break, review may occur during the first two weeks of the next academic term. The Committee will review all submitted materials and sign the grievance form to document receipt and review; conduct a meeting with the student (grievant), the faculty member(s) involved in the academic decision, and additional witnesses or content experts as necessary; evaluate whether the academic policies and criteria were applied correctly; and maintain written records and confidentiality throughout the process.

The Committee will issue a written decision to the student within ten (10) school days of the grievance meeting.

Step 3: Escalation to the Associate Vice President, Nursing Education

If the student believes that the Academic Grievance Committee's decision did not adequately address the concern, or that procedural standards were not followed, they may submit a final appeal to the Associate Vice President, Nursing Education within five (5) school days of receiving the Committee's decision.

Required contents of appeal: the specific grounds for appeal; alleged procedural errors or policy misapplication; new evidence, if applicable; and all prior grievance materials and decision letters.

Review procedure. The Associate Vice President, Nursing Education will review all grievance documentation, including committee findings; request additional clarification from the student,

faculty, or Committee Chair as needed; and, at their discretion, meet with the student and/or involved parties.

Final decision. The Associate Vice President, Nursing Education will issue a written decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal. The decision may affirm the Committee's findings, modify the outcome, or overturn the decision. The decision of the Associate Vice President, Nursing Education is final and concludes the academic grievance process.

RETALIATION

No student will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or adverse treatment for filing a grievance in good faith or for participating in a grievance proceeding. Concerns about retaliation should be reported to the Director of Nursing or, if the Director is involved, to the Associate Vice President, Nursing Education.

DOCUMENTATION

All grievance documentation, committee notes, and appeal materials will be stored in the student's official file. The student may access the formal documentation consistent with FERPA. Access by faculty and staff is limited to those with a legitimate educational interest in the grievance.

ATTACHED FORM

Form A: Academic Grievance Form.

REVIEW and APPROVAL

This policy is reviewed annually by the Student Affairs Committee.

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Academic Grievance Form - Policy #212

Academic Grievance Policy #212, Step 2. Submit to the Director of Nursing or designee within five school days of concluding Step 1.

Use this form to request formal review of an academic decision you believe was made inconsistently with published policies, procedures, or evaluation criteria. Concerns unrelated to academic decisions are addressed under the Non-Academic Grievance Policy #203.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: **Student ID:**

Program Year: **Site:** ☐ Pottsville ☐ Center Valley **Track:** ☐ Day ☐ Evening/Weekend

School Email: **Phone:**

ACADEMIC DECISION BEING DISPUTED (check one)

☐ Course grade ☐ Clinical evaluation ☐ Progression decision ☐ Dismissal ☐ Other

Course number and title: **Date of decision:**

Instructor(s) involved:

Policy, procedure, or evaluation criteria you believe were applied incorrectly (cite the policy number where possible):

Describe the decision and why you believe it was inconsistent with the policy or criteria cited:

STEP 1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION (required before filing)

Met with faculty member(s): **Met with Course Coordinator:**

Met with Director of Nursing: ☐ Director of Nursing is directly involved in the decision (Step 1 meeting with Director of Nursing)

Summary of informal resolution efforts and outcome:

Remedy requested:

I certify that the information provided is accurate and that I have completed Step 1 as required. I understand that the Academic Grievance Committee may meet with me, the faculty involved, and any witnesses, and that a written decision will be issued within ten school days of the grievance meeting.

Student Signature: **Date:**

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Academic Grievance Form - Policy #212 (continued)

For school use only.

RECEIPT

Date received by Director of Nursing or designee:

Received by:

☐ Filed within five school days of concluding Step 1☐ Required contents complete**ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

Faculty member 1:

Faculty member 2:

Non-faculty Chairperson:

Appointed on:

☐ No committee member was directly involved in the disputed decision ☐ Membership reconsideration requested**Committee review of submitted materials (signatures document receipt and review):**

Chairperson:

Date:

Faculty member 1:

Date:

Faculty member 2:

Date:

Grievance meeting date:

Attendees:

Committee decision issued to student on:

(within ten school days of the meeting)

Decision summary:**STEP 3: APPEAL TO THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, NURSING EDUCATION**

Appeal received on:

Final decision issued on:

Outcome:

☐ Affirmed☐ Modified☐ Overturned

Chairperson Signature

Date:

Retain the completed form and all grievance records in the student file. Access is limited under FERPA to those with a legitimate educational interest.