

Academic and Non-Academic Grievance Policy

The Faculty of Dentistry at King Abdulaziz University (KAUFD) is committed to continuously enhancing and advancing the quality of its educational services to the highest level of efficiency, in alignment with its goals and strategic plan. Recognizing the importance of evaluating teaching and learning standards through appropriate methods—such as utilizing feedback—KAUFD administration places special emphasis on the opinions of its students, considering them key stakeholders and partners in the development of student services provided by KAUFD.

In line with this principle, KAUFD has established a policy for documenting, following up on, and promptly addressing grievance submissions (academic/non-academic) while maintaining strict confidentiality.

The Faculty of Dentistry is committed to upholding students' rights and promoting fairness through a structured approach that supports a cohesive and inclusive academic environment. This is implemented through an academic administrative framework that ensures a safe, just, and productive learning atmosphere. All academic and non-academic grievances are addressed promptly and objectively, with due consideration for the rights and perspectives of all parties involved, in accordance with the principles of fairness, justice, and King Abdulaziz University (KAU) policies.

Objectives:

1. To inform students of the designated entity responsible for receiving grievance submissions within KAUFD and to guide them on how to claim their full rights from academic and administrative bodies through a fair and just system.
2. To support students' rights based on the regulations and policies in force at KAUFD and KAU, while promoting awareness of their university rights and assisting them in exercising those rights.
3. To facilitate the submission of grievance requests through the official email, paper form, or the electronic system.
4. To give due attention to academic grievances by reviewing them and finding appropriate solutions, ensuring that each request is handled seriously, transparently, impartially, and confidentially, without affecting the relationship with the student who submitted the grievance.
5. To uphold equality and ensure that every individual receives their due rights in accordance with applicable regulations.
6. To uphold academic integrity and ensure that students' rights are recognized and respected.

7. To ensure grievances are followed up within the specified time frame and to track actions taken in response.
8. To identify and address any deficiencies in the academic procedures subject to grievance, if present.

Scope of Application:

This policy applies to all affiliates of the Faculty of Dentistry at King Abdulaziz University, including students, trainees, and postgraduate students — both Saudi and non-Saudi.

Definitions of Terms:

- **Student:** Refers to any male or female student (including students, trainees, and postgraduate students) enrolled at the Faculty of Dentistry, King Abdulaziz University.
- **Grievance:** A student's expression of dissatisfaction related to decisions or actions affecting them, or harm experienced involving any other party (including students, faculty members, technicians, administrative staff, or patients), whether academic or non-academic in nature.
- **Academic Grievance:** Any grievance pertaining to academic matters.
- **Non-Academic Grievance:** Any grievance pertaining to matters outside the academic scope.
- **Discrimination:** The act of treating an individual unfairly or differently based on differences such as gender, race, nationality, skin color, age, or disability.

First: Academic Grievances

Academic grievances include all of the following:

1. Review of exam grades.
2. Cheating.
3. Plagiarism.
4. Course content.
5. Quality of teaching.
6. Academic dismissal decision.

Procedural Steps for Submitting an Academic Grievance Request

In accordance with the University Study and Examination Regulations and the approved executive rules of King Abdulaziz University, Article No. (36) from Article Seventeen (Amendment of Student Grades):

1. The student must fill out the required information in the **Grade Review Request Form (Form 1)** and submit it to the course coordinator for grade review. The review period depends on the type of exam:

1.1 Periodic Quiz: The student has the right to request a review within one week of the exam.

1.2 Midterm Exam: The student has the right to request a review during the first week of the second semester.

1.3 Final Exam: The student has the right to request a review within the first month of the following academic year, as per Article Seventeen, Paragraph (2), Page (22) of the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations.

2. The course coordinator reviews the exam paper of the student who submitted the request.
3. If a grade amendment is warranted, the course coordinator refers the matter to the department head, who then completes the necessary procedures.
4. If no grade change is modification is needed, the student is informed that the grievance is invalid.
5. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the course coordinator, the student may appeal to the relevant department head for further review.
6. In accordance with Article (34) of the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations, the department head has the right to refer the student's quiz/exam paper to another faculty member in the same specialty for re-grading:

6.1 If a grade modification is required, the department head proceeds with the necessary procedures.

6.2 If the review results in a lower grade than the original previously given, the lower grade will be officially recorded.

6.3 If no grade modification is needed, the student will be informed that the grievance is invalid.

7. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the following must be done:

7.1 Submit an **Academic Grievance Form (Form 2)** to the Educational Affairs Unit after completing all required fields. The request is placed in a sealed envelope and handled with strict confidentiality and urgency.

7.2 The Educational Affairs Unit staff forwards the grievance requests to the designated Vice Dean. Anonymous requests will not be considered.

8. A subcommittee derived from the Student Performance Committee shall be formed, headed by the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs and the Vice Dean for the Female Section comprising of the Admissions and Registration Supervisor, Head of the Relevant Department (or a designated representative), and the relevant Student Affairs Supervisor (Male or Female):

8.1 The committee members have the right to reject a grievance on **procedural grounds**, if the submission procedures were not followed, if the request lacks seriousness, or if supporting evidence is insufficient.

8.2 The committee reviews and verifies the grievance before making a final decision.

8.3 The committee's recommendations are submitted to the Dean of the Faculty for approval or for a final decision deemed appropriate based on the investigations conducted.

8.4 Upon approval by the Dean, the committee's decision is **final and binding**.

9. The student shall be provided with a copy of the committee's decision.

Second: Non-Academic Grievances

Non-academic grievances include all matters related to a student's interaction with another student, faculty member, technician, administrative staff, or patients, as follows:

1. Being subjected to ridicule, insult, or verbal threats that undermine the dignity of the student.
2. Being subjected to verbal abuse or physical harm.
3. Being subjected to abusive or arbitrary behavior.
4. Discrimination.

Procedural Steps for Submitting a Non-Academic Grievance

1. Initially, the student should make every effort to resolve the issue amicably at the earliest opportunity by discussing the grievance directly with the other party involved.
2. If amicable resolution is not possible, the student must fill out the **Non-Academic Grievance Form** completely and submit it within **three (3) working days** from the incident. The form must be delivered to the relevant Educational Affairs Unit in a **sealed envelope** and will be handled **confidentially and urgently**.
3. The designated staff member in the Educational Affairs Unit will forward the grievance requests to the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs and to the Vice Dean of the female section. Anonymous submissions will **not** be considered.
4. The Grievance Committee members will review all submitted grievances, examine each case individually, and verify the reasons for the grievance.
5. The Committee has the right to reject a grievance on **procedural grounds** if submission procedures were not followed, or **substantively** if the claim is deemed unserious or lacks sufficient evidence. In such cases, a justified dismissal decision will be issued and once approved by the Dean, becomes **final and not subject** to further appeal.
6. The committee shall meet with the other party involved to verify the causes of the grievance.
7. If the grievance is unsubstantiated, the request shall be returned to the student and filed in the **non-academic grievances record**.
8. If the grievance is found to be valid, the following procedures will be taken:
 - 8.1 Refer the grievance resolution procedures internally to the relevant department or administration to implement the committee's decisions.
 - 8.2 The committee will respond to the complainant with a **written statement** outlining its decision within **15 to 30 working days** of receiving the grievance. If additional time is needed, the student will be notified along with the reason for the delay.

8.3 If the grievance is against a department head or a vice dean, the grievance shall be submitted directly to the **Dean**, who will form a committee as deemed appropriate to review the case.

8.4 If the grievance is against the Dean or any vice deans, it will be referred directly to the **University President**.

9. **Malicious Complaints:** If it is determined that the complaint was intentionally false or malicious, the committee may recommend referring the student to the appropriate disciplinary committees.
10. The committee's recommendations will be submitted to the Dean for approval or for the Dean to make a final decision based on the findings.
11. The student has the right to **appeal** the committee's decision within **15 working days** from the date of receiving the decision.

Methods for Submitting an Academic / Non-Academic Grievance

1. Using the Paper Form:

1.1 The **Complaint and Suggestion Form** is available on the official website of KAUFU.

1.2 Printed copies of the form can also be obtained from:

- The **Educational Affairs Office** (Female Campus),
- The **Student Affairs Supervisor's Office** (Male Campus),
- Or the **Postgraduate Studies Coordinator's Office**.

1.3 Complaints or suggestions must be written in **Arabic or English**, ensuring that **all required fields** are filled out and the grievance is explained clearly and in detail.

1.4 Once completed, the form must be submitted in person to:

- The **Educational Affairs Office** (Female Campus),
- The **Student Affairs Office** (Male Campus),
- Or the **Postgraduate Studies Coordinator's Office**.

1.5 After submission, the form should be placed in a **sealed envelope** while ensuring **complete confidentiality** is maintained and delivered to:

- The Office of the **Vice Dean (Female Campus)**,
- Or the Office of the **Student Affairs Supervisor** (Male Campus),
- Or the Office of the **Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research**,
while

2. Via Email:

Complaints and suggestions from students are received via the official complaint email address:

- **For the Female Campus:** den-cssg@kau.edu.sa
- **For the Male Campus:** den-cssg@kau.edu.sa
- **For Postgraduate Students:** Through the Office of the Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research.

To maintain **complete confidentiality**, access to the complaint email inbox is limited as follows:

- For **female students**, only the **Vice Dean of the Female Campus** has access.
- For **male students**, only the **Vice Dean for Educational Affairs** has access.
- For **postgraduate students**, only the **Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research** has access.

3. Through the Electronic System (OVR – “Balligh”):

This is the system used by KAUPD and the University Dental Hospital at King Abdulaziz University (KAUDH) for reporting incidents that affect:

- Students,
- Patients,
- Staff,
- Faculty members,

- Healthcare providers,
- And visitors.

These incidents may have a negative impact on the **quality of education** or **patient care**. The system was developed to streamline the process of complaint tracking, resolution, and performance monitoring through reports and performance indicators. Complaints are submitted **confidentially** to the responsible department, and an email confirmation is sent to acknowledge receipt of the report and to inform the student of its status.

Mechanisms and Procedures for Handling Complaints Received Through the OVR ("Balligh") System

