

INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON

Recommendations to Departments on SAA Grievances

(Formerly the Recommendations to Departments on AI Grievances)
(By Action of Bloomington Faculty Council, March 4, 2003)

Preamble: Because the wide variation in the nature of graduate student appointments on the Bloomington campus resists unified policies governing responses to graduate student employee complaints and grievances, the procedures outlined here are framed as strong recommendations of minimal standards.

Terminology: In this document, "SAA" refers to any graduate student academic appointment.

"Complaint" and "Grievance": "Complaint" is used as both the originating and the encompassing term; a complaint that is resolved through mutual agreement with the immediate supervisor remains a complaint, while one that must be pursued through an appeal to a third party is considered to rise to a "grievance." Every grievance begins as a complaint, but not every complaint becomes a grievance. This document is concerned only with procedures for reviewing those grievances and complaints related to the terms and conditions of Graduate Student Academic appointments. When referring to the set of procedures themselves, these guidelines will employ the term "procedures for reviewing SAA grievances and complaints."

Guidelines: The Faculty Council, through the Provost of the Bloomington campus, recommends to all departments and academic units involved in supervising graduate student academic appointments (student academic appointees, graders, lab assistants, et al.) that internal procedures be established and maintained for reviewing graduate student grievances and complaints related to the terms and conditions of their academic appointments. In order to ensure fairness, as well as a measure of consistency across the campus, departments and professional schools are encouraged to address issues of timeliness, confidentiality, notification and avenues of appeal; we urge all units to adhere to the following standards in adopting or revising SAA grievance procedures:

1. Procedures should insure a timely response to SAA complaints. They should clearly indicate a structure of appeal for those disputes that cannot be resolved through mutual agreement by the graduate student academic appointee and his or her immediate supervisor (e.g., procedures should specify the appropriate departmental administrator, such as Chair or Associate Chair, to whom graduate student instructors may bring their grievances).
2. All student academic appointees should receive a written copy of the procedures for reviewing SAA grievances and complaints at the time of their appointment. All supervising faculty and administrators, as well as any unit administrators with responsibilities for reviewing and adjudicating SAA grievances, should receive a written

copy of the procedures at the time when they begin their supervisory duties or assume their office.

3. The procedures should aim to protect confidentiality and to protect the rights of all involved. In particular, procedures for reviewing SAA grievances and complaints should be sensitive to the complexities of graduate student instructors' dual status as teachers and students, and the potential for the pursuit of teaching related grievances to have negative ramifications on other aspects of their education and professional lives.

4. Procedures should ensure that once a graduate student academic appointee initiates a complaint, he or she is notified in a timely manner whenever information regarding that complaint is placed in his or her personnel file.

5. In the event that the department or unit finds the grievance to be without merit, the graduate student academic appointee should be informed of avenues of appeal beyond the departmental or unit level, pursuant to BFC circulars establishing a SAA mediation committee and a SAA Board of Review.