The Student Fairness Committee:
The charge of the SFC is to hear and investigate disputes between a student and one or more university employees that may either be:

a) alleged violations of student rights in instructional and curricular matters, including grade appeals; or

b) non-instructional student grievances concerning individual members of the faculty, administration or staff.

When appropriate, the SFC will make recommendations for redress (S14-3).

Students interested in serving on the Student Fairness Committee may find more information under “Join a Committee” at http://as.sjsu.edu/

Grade Appeals:
There is a presumption that grades assigned are correct. It is the responsibility of anyone appealing an assigned grade to demonstrate otherwise (EO 1037).

Grievances:
A grievance is an allegation of an unauthorized or unjustified act or decision by a member of the faculty or staff that in any way adversely affects the status, rights or privileges of a student.

Complaints may be filed no later than the end of the semester following that in which the alleged cause of the dispute occurred.

GRIEVANCE/GRADE DISPUTE PROCESS

Informal Resolution Process
The student may consult with the Ombudsperson at any step in this process.

1. Student must first attempt to resolve the matter with the other party.

2. If an acceptable resolution is not reached, the student should contact the chair or director for assistance.

3. If a resolution is not reached after consultation with the chair or director, the student should contact the appropriate associate dean or associate vice president.

If this informal process fails to resolve the matter, the student may initiate a formal grievance.

Formal Resolution Process

1. Student meets with the Ombudsperson to discuss the formal complaint process.

2. Petition is submitted to the University Ombudsperson’s office no later than the end of the semester following that in which the alleged cause of the dispute occurred.

3. Petition is forwarded to the Student Fairness Committee (SFC) by the Ombudsperson.

4. A subcommittee of the SFC investigates the claim and submits its findings to the full SFC for consideration.

5. The SFC offers a recommendation/judgment in the matter.

The Student Fairness Committee (SFC) will hear grade appeals when petitions are deemed to be appropriate and include evidence related to one of the following conditions:

1. When there is evaluation of students that differs from announced requirements.

2. When there are belated impositions of requirements.

3. When grades are based on criteria other than academic performance in the course.

4. When grading criteria do not provide a clear and consistent method of evaluating students’ work or performance.

5. When students’ requests for information during the semester regarding their academic progress in the course are not responded to in a reasonable time (two weeks after the request is made).

6. When students’ requests for an explanation of how the posted course grades for a term were determined are not responded to in a reasonable time (the later of two weeks after the request is made or one week before the add deadline for the fall or spring semester following the term in question).

7. When students are penalized for expressing opinions.

8. When students are removed from a course without due process of a hearing.
The University Ombudsperson is an advocate for procedural fairness who supports the integrity of the campus policies and procedures and ensures the equity of their application.

The Ombudsperson provides a neutral, confidential, and informal place to discuss a concern with the assurance that no action will be taken, nor will the visit be disclosed to anyone without consent.

**The Ombudsperson**

- Provides impartial and confidential consultation to members of the campus community who are concerned about a situation or issue.
- Assists in interpreting SJSU policies and procedures.
- Provides assistance by clarifying issues and generating options for resolution.
- Recommends actions to be taken to reduce reoccurrence.
- Conducts informal fact-finding in order to better understand an issue from all perspectives.
- Makes referrals to existing SJSU problem resolution channels.
- Works for fairness but does not set policy.

**Neutral** - The Ombudsperson is an advocate of procedural fairness who maintains impartiality.

**Confidential** - Communications with the Ombudsperson will not be shared without permission unless there is an imminent risk of serious harm.

**Informal** - The Ombudsperson does not conduct investigations or replace formal processes.

Located in the Administration Building

Contact the University Ombudsperson
Administration Building 269
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95129-0031
(408) 924-5995
ombuds@sjsu.edu