Cornell Engineering

M.Eng. Grievance Procedures

Most complaints are likely to concern alleged violations of the terms of written agreements and guidelines. Some may address more subtle matters involving unwritten expectations. All conflict should be dealt with in a patient and sensitive manner that respects the dignity of the participants. At any time during the grievance process, the Ombudsman office is available as a safe place for informal consultation.

Grievance Procedure for M.Eng. Students

Introduction
This procedure is intended to provide a mechanism through which grievances can be fully investigated and decisions rendered. It covers grievances that involve individual M.Eng. students and faculty on issues relating to M.Eng. education.

It is expected that most grievances will take the form of alleged violations of terms of written agreements and guidelines. However, these procedures should continue to recognize as "grievances" a broader range of more subtle and sensitive matters.

The University-wide Policy 6.4, Prohibited Discrimination, Protected Status (including Sexual) Harassment, and Bias Activity Procedures adopted July 8, 1996, supersedes all college and university procedures that purport to handle discrimination, including sexual harassment complaints. Complaints alleging sexual harassment by a staff or faculty member or a student employee should be filed with the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations. Complaints alleging student vs. student sexual harassment should be referred to the Judicial Administrator.

Procedural Steps

Step 1. Speak Directly to the Source of the Grievance
Whenever possible, the aggrieved shall first speak directly to the person(s) who is the alleged cause of the complaint, or who bears responsibility for the cause.

Step 2. Contact the program M.Eng. Director
If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at Step 1, the aggrieved may file a grievance by sending a letter describing the issue to the M.Eng. Director in her/his department. This letter should be dated and filed as soon as possible but not more than 4 calendar months after the event giving rise to the grievance. (In a case in which the complaint is about a recurring pattern of behavior, this time limit shall refer to the most recent instance of the behavior.) A copy of this letter should be
sent to the Dean of the College of Engineering. If the letter describes the grievance as involving issues of prohibited discrimination, protected status (including sexual) harassment and bias activity as described by University Policy 6.4, the Graduate School shall send a copy to the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations, which shall then investigate that aspect of the charge. If the M.Eng. Director is the "source" of the grievance, Step 2 should be skipped and the grievance letter sent directly to the Dean of the College of Engineering.

If, in the judgment of the Dean of the College of Engineering, the subject of the grievance involves matters of college or university-wide implication or is otherwise beyond the authority of the M.Eng. Director to resolve, the grievance, upon the request of the Dean, shall be moved to Step 3 below.

After notification, the M.Eng. Director in the department in which the event occurred shall meet with both parties and discuss the issue in an informal manner. Within twenty working days of having received the original letter, the M.Eng. Director shall provide a written response recommending a resolution to the problem. The recommended resolution must be consistent with University policy.

### Step 3. Bring the Case to the Dean of the College of Engineering

If one of the parties is not satisfied with the resolution at Step 2, she/he should notify the Dean of the College of Engineering in writing within 10 working days of receiving the decision. Upon receiving such notification, the Dean or her/his representative, shall meet with both parties to discuss the issue. The Dean may, as she/he feels necessary, request that others be present to help her/him arrive at a fair and informed decision (as, for example, in a case where the grievance involves specialized expertise in a field). Within 20 working days of having received notification, the Dean shall issue a decision. If, under extraordinary circumstances, this deadline is not met, then the Dean shall notify all parties of the delay. The Dean's decision is final.

### General Provisions

a. Both parties in a grievance shall have the right to be present at each meeting outlined in the procedure and to bring along a friend or other witness.
b. Both parties shall have the right to all cited documents.
c. The M.Eng. student shall suffer no reprisals or harassment for using the grievance procedure. Her/his supervisors shall make reasonable allowance to adjust schedules to allow attendance at meetings described herein.
d. If several M.Eng. students share a common grievance, they may file a grievance jointly and pursue it according to the above procedure.
e. No decision will be construed as setting a precedent for any subsequent decision.

### Time Limits
The Engineering Dean shall monitor the time limits described above, as follows:

- The time limits are as prescribed in the procedural steps.
- The date at which the grievance is considered filed shall be the date the grievance is received by the addressee, as per signed receipt or electronic record.
- If the aggrieved fails to respond within the time limits described herein, then the issue will be presumed settled and the grievance will be closed.