

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NUMBER: 8301

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PROCEDURE TITLE: Student Appeal of Grades

STATUTORY REFERENCE: FLORIDA STATUTES 1001.64 and 1004.68

BASED ON POLICY: VII -31

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 6, 1976

LAST REVISION DATE: March 22, 2018

LAST REVIEW DATE: March 22, 2018

I. PURPOSE

To establish an orderly process for a student to appeal an assigned course grade in cases where a student challenges the equity of the grade.

II. INTRODUCTION

This College procedure for the student appeal of grades ensures that both students and faculty will be aware of the processes that are to be followed when a course grade is challenged. The responsibility for academic evaluation and the assignment of grades is that of the faculty member who has been assigned responsibility for a course. When a student believes that he/she has not been evaluated as prescribed in the course syllabus, an avenue of appeal must be provided.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Specifying the Grading and Evaluation Process

1. At the outset of the course, the faculty member has the responsibility to make clear to students the grading and evaluation process that will be employed; this process will be stated in writing in the course syllabus.
2. It is the responsibility of the student to seek further clarification if unclear of any portion of the stated evaluation and grading process.

3. Should any misunderstanding or disagreement arise regarding grades assigned in any portion of the work, a student should seek clarification with the instructor at once rather than waiting for the end of the term and the final grade.
 4. For situations with extenuating circumstances in which a student was unable to officially withdraw from a course by the appropriate deadline, [Procedure 4018 Student Petitions Process](#), specifies how a student may submit a written petition to the campus Petitions Committee for a grade change to “W”. In no instance is the Petitions Committee authorized to deal with grade changes that question the professional judgment of the faculty member of a student’s performance in the course.
- B. Appeal Process
1. *Informal:* When a student believes that he/she has not been graded according to the grading and evaluation process stated in the course syllabus, the first step is to informally appeal the grade through academic channels: first to the faculty member; if unresolved, to the Department Chairperson, and only then to the Associate Dean of Faculty/School Dean or equivalent. The administrator(s) to whom the student has informally appealed should solicit information from the faculty member prior to making a recommendation. If after discussing the student’s informal appeal, the administrator believes that the grade should be changed, the recommendation will be made to the faculty member. If the faculty member still believes the grade should stand, then the student will be informed by the last administrator to whom the informal appeal has been made. The student then has the option to file a formal grade appeal.
 2. *Formal:* A formal grade appeal must be filed by the end of the next major term following the assignment of the grade. Once the student has initiated a formal grade appeal, only the student can elect to terminate the process before a final decision has been reached by the Grade Appeal Committee. To formally appeal an assigned course grade, the student must: obtain a Grade Appeal Form from the Dean of Faculty’s Office, complete it, attach relevant documentation and return the Grade Appeal Form and attachments to the Dean of Faculty’s Office. The Dean of Faculty’s Office submits the Grade Appeal Form and attachments to the faculty member who assigned the grade in question. If the faculty member is not available to receive the form (on leave, retired, etc.), it should be submitted to the Department Chairperson who will attempt to obtain a response from the absent faculty member.

If a faculty response is not obtainable, the Department Chairperson will respond on behalf of the faculty member using documentation the department has on file. The faculty member has 5 business days, from the date in which the Grade Appeal Form and attachments were received by the Department Chairperson, to respond in writing to the grade appeal. This response will be communicated to the student by the Department Chairperson. If the student is not satisfied with the faculty member’s response or if the faculty member does not respond within the 5 business days from the date in which the Grade Appeal Form and attachments were received by the Department Chairperson, the

student may continue to formally appealing the grade to the Department Chairperson. This appeal to the Department Chairperson must be made within 5 business days of the faculty member's response or failure to respond.

The Department Chairperson responds in writing to the student's appeal on the Grade Appeal Form and submits it and the attachments to the Associate Dean of Faculty, School Dean or equivalent, within 5 business days from the date of receipt of the Grade Appeal Form and attachments from the faculty member. The Associate Dean of Faculty/School Dean or equivalent signs and responds in writing to the student's grade appeal on the Grade Appeal Form and submits it and the attachments to the Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent within 5 business days from the date of receipt of the Grade Appeal Form and attachments from the Department Chairperson. Once the Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent receives the Grade Appeal Form with the appropriate signatures, the Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent signs the Grade Appeal Form and requests a Hearing Officer to convene the Grade Appeal Committee within 10 business days from the date in which the Grade Appeal Form and attachments were received and provides the completed Grade Appeal Form with all attachments. The Dean of Faculty or equivalent may extend any of the timelines specified above if there are extenuating circumstances that make this necessary. The Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent will notify the student of the hearing date by certified mail.

C. Grade Appeal Committee

Each campus will have a Grade Appeal Committee, which makes final decisions concerning grade appeals on behalf of the College. The Grade Appeal Committee will be comprised of 3 full time faculty members, 2 administrators, including the Hearing Officer, and 2 students. An Administrator appointed by the Dean of Faculty will serve as Hearing Officer. This individual assures that the appeal is carried out according to College Procedure and does not vote unless to break a tie vote. The Grade Appeal Committee may be a standing committee that draws from a pool of prospective members, or an ad hoc committee to hear a specific appeal. In any case, the administrator and faculty are appointed by the Campus President; the students are appointed by the Student Dean.

D. Grade Appeal Hearing


A list of witnesses, if any, must be submitted by the student and faculty member to the Hearing Officer at least 3 business days prior to the hearing date. The Hearing Officer will approve witnesses based on the relevancy of their information to the grade appeal. Witnesses must accommodate to the Grade Appeal Committee's schedule, and participation in the hearing is limited to their testimony. At least one business day prior to the hearing, the student and faculty member will receive from the Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent copies of all documentation that will be considered at the hearing, including the Grade Appeal Form, attachments and list of witnesses. No further written documentation will be considered by the Grade Appeal Committee during the hearing. The faculty member and student may each have one observer present at the hearing; this individual does not participate in the hearing. Observers must accommodate to the Grade Appeal Committee's schedule. The student, faculty member and observers are allowed to be present throughout

the hearing. If the faculty member or student fails to appear at the hearing when scheduled, the Hearing Officer, unless aware of extreme circumstances, will hold the hearing with those present.

The hearing is conducted as follows:

- a. Introductions and instruction by the Hearing Officer
- b. Student presentation
- c. Presentations by student's witness(es) and questions by Grade Appeal Committee members
- d. Faculty member presentation
- e. Question and answer period conducted by the Hearing Officer
- f. Closed deliberations by Grade Appeal Committee members only (this excludes the student, faculty member and any observers) and vote by secret ballot; a tie vote will be broken by the Hearing Officer

The decision of the majority of Grade Appeal Committee members is communicated in writing within 5 business days after the hearing is concluded, provided there are no extenuating circumstances. The decision shall be written on part IV of the Grade Appeal Form and disseminated to all parties: the student (by certified mail), the faculty member, and academic administrators. The Committee's decision is final and not subject to further appeal within the College. If the Grade Appeal Committee votes in favor of the student, a grade change form will be generated by the Hearing Officer and co-signed by the Dean of Faculty or equivalent. The Grade Appeal Form and all attachments submitted to the Grade Appeal Committee will be retained in the Dean of Faculty's Office or equivalent.

	
PRESIDENT	3/22/2018 DATE