

Procedure on Grade Disputes

(A) INTRODUCTION

1. The College strives to provide every student with a successful and positive educational experience. As part of its effort to resolve student grade concerns, the College maintains this grade disputes procedure. This procedure does not apply to issues covered by the student conduct code or student judicial system. Issues related to student conduct are addressed in a separate process that the College may initiate in parallel to this grade dispute procedure.
2. In this procedure, “days” means weekdays other than College holidays, winter leave days or days the College is closed due to weather, emergency or another reason.

(B) GRADE DISPUTES

1. Grade disputes are challenges to recorded grades.
2. In most circumstances other than as described in this procedure, responsibility for academic evaluation rests with the faculty member.
3. Students are responsible for achieving academic performance standards established for each course in which they are enrolled.
4. The grade dispute process is comprised of three levels (Levels 1-3).
5. If a student fails to take the required steps in the process in a timely manner, the right to dispute the grade is automatically and permanently waived.
6. Level 1 grade disputes: Instructor
 - i. All Level 1 grade disputes must be filed by a student no later than 60 days after the disputed grade is recorded.
 - ii. The student must notify the instructor of the grade dispute and request a discussion. The instructor must schedule the discussion for a mutually agreed-upon date no later than 10 days after receiving the notice. Notification and discussion can take place in person, via email or by phone. If resolution satisfactory to the student is not achieved, or the instructor does not respond to the student within the time frame allotted, the student may proceed to Level 2.
7. Level 2 grade disputes: Peer review panel
 - i. If the student wishes to pursue the grade dispute at Level 2, the student shall file a written notice of the grade dispute with the instructor’s academic dean or designee within 10 days of the last meeting with the instructor. If the instructor fails to respond to the student’s request for a discussion, the 10-day period would begin starting with the date on which the original request for a discussion was made. The notice must state the student’s reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of Level 1, provide some evidence to support the grade dispute, and clearly and completely state requested changes.
 - ii. A copy of the written notice shall be provided by the academic dean or designee to the instructor within ten days of receipt. The academic dean or designee shall request a written response from the instructor, who shall provide it within 10 days.
 - iii. The academic dean or designee will appoint and convene, within 20 days of receipt of the student’s written notice, a peer review panel composed of three tenured faculty members, preferably from the field of the disputed class.
 - iv. In cases in which there are no tenured faculty members in the field, tenure-track faculty members will be chosen. At least one faculty member will be from another campus. Faculty members who may have had responsibility for the grade in dispute should not be appointed to the peer panel. The panel will select its chairperson, who may remove or replace panel members.
 - v. All members must be present at each panel meeting, or the meeting must be rescheduled.
 - vi. The peer review panel must offer the student and the instructor the opportunity to meet with the panel and deliver oral testimony. The panel may meet with both the student and the instructor present or may meet with them separately. The chairperson of the peer review panel will provide a minimum of seven days’ written notice to the student and instructor of any meeting they are required to attend. The student, instructor or any panel member may request that the chairperson postpone a panel meeting if the requester is unable to attend due to causes beyond the requester’s control.
 - vii. The panel shall have sole discretion to approve or deny the request(s) made. It may meet with other parties as deemed necessary by the panel. It may independently investigate and gather evidence as it deems appropriate.

- viii. When possible, the chairperson will report the panel's decision in writing to the academic dean or designee within 15 days of the panel's receipt of the charge to review the Level 2 grade dispute. In reporting its decision, the review panel will address each main point that the student has raised, state a rationale for the decision, and provide copies of all documents reviewed and considered to the academic dean or designee.
 - ix. The academic dean or designee shall notify the student and instructor in writing of the official decision and the action taken or to be taken in the matter within 10 days of receipt of the written report from the peer review panel. The academic dean or designee shall provide copies of the decision and all documents reviewed and considered to the campus president (or their designee).
 - x. (x) The panel's decision will end the matter unless it is appealed to Level 3.
8. Level 3 grade disputes: Collegewide academic appeals board
- i. If the student or instructor wishes to appeal the decision to Level 3, they must file a written notice of the appeal with the campus president (or their designee). This notice must be filed within 10 days of the date the written Level 2 official decision is sent. The notice will explain the reasons for the appellant's dissatisfaction with the decision. A copy of the written notice of appeal shall be provided by the campus president (or their designee) to the chairperson of the peer review panel and the student or instructor. The chairperson of the peer review panel and/or the instructor may choose to respond to the appeal notice in writing.
 - ii. The campus president (or their designee) will request that the executive vice president of academic and student affairs convene, within 10 days of receipt of notice of appeal, a Collegewide academic appeals board. The board will be composed of three tenured faculty members, one academic administrator and one student affairs administrator. Appeals board members will be selected annually by the executive vice president of Access, Learning and Success from a pool of faculty candidates nominated by the Joint Faculty Senate Council (JFSC) who are acceptable to the executive vice president and academic and student affairs administrative nominees who are acceptable to the JFSC. The academic administrator will chair the Collegewide academic appeals board.
 - i. The academic appeals board will review the Level 2 decision but will not consider any new issues.
 - ii. If it does not conclude its review within 30 days of its first meeting on the case, the academic appeals board will issue a status report to all parties involved in the case.
 - iii. The academic appeals board will report its decision to the campus president (or their designee) and the executive vice president of Access, Learning and Success no later than 60 days after having been convened. The academic appeals board's decision may deny or affirm the appeal. If the appeal is denied, the decision of the board is final. If the appeal is affirmed, the board will refer the matter for a new peer review panel.
 - iv. The campus president (or their designee) will notify relevant parties of the academic appeals board decision within 10 days of receiving the decision. Relevant parties are the student, the instructor, the peer review panel, the academic dean or designee, the dean of student affairs and the executive vice president of Access, Learning and Success.

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