

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Student Grade Appeals

Scope

This rule shall apply to all student appeals of:

1. Grades or other academic action taken by an instructor.
2. Grades resulting from an instructor's:
 - a. Alleged deviation from established and announced grading policy;
 - b. Alleged errors in application of grading procedures;
 - c. Alleged lowering of grades for non-academic reasons.

Note: The professional judgment exercised by an instructor in assigning a grade or in conducting a class are excluded from the provisions of this rule except as noted in (1), (2) a, b and c above.

General Policy – The Following Assumptions Are Adopted

1. Students are entitled to a fair, prompt, and open resolution of complaints.
2. Faculty members are entitled to a fair, prompt, and open forum in defense of their action.
3. Students have access to published materials and student government representatives to help them become familiar with and understand procedures for handling complaints.
4. Faculty members have access to published materials and the university staff to help them know and understand procedures through which charges against them will be addressed.
5. Resolution of student appeals should be made as speedily and informally as possible.
6. The university as an institution and its faculty are entitled to procedures which ensure the maintenance of academic standards.
7. The appropriate forum for discussion or alteration of academic matters is the unit responsible for these matters.

For grade appeal details managed by each college/school, please use the links below:

- College of Arts and Sciences (<https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/studentresources/#StudentGradeAppeal>)
- College of Education (<https://www.fgcu.edu/coe/gradeappeal/>)
- Lutgert College of Business (<https://www.fgcu.edu/cob/gradeappeal/>)
- Marieb College of Health and Human Services (<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/gradeappeal/>)
- U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering (<https://www.fgcu.edu/eng/gradeappeal/>)
- School of Nursing (<https://www.fgcu.edu/nursing/gradeappeal/>)

Academic Grade: Appeals Committee

1. Each college shall establish an Academic Grade Appeals Committee whenever required for the purposes of this rule.
2. This Committee shall be made up of at least three and no more than five faculty members and two students.
3. Student members shall be selected by the Dean of Students from a list of ten (10) students furnished by the President of Student Government.

4. Any member may be challenged for cause by either party. The validity of such challenges shall be decided by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If a challenge is upheld by the VPAA, the College Dean shall appoint a replacement from the college's faculty and for the Student Panel.
5. The instructor and the student may each exercise peremptory challenge of one member of the initial committee.

Resolution of Student Appeals: Department Level

1. All student grade appeals or allegations of specific wrongful academic action(s) by an instructor shall first be brought to the attention of the instructor of the course. This action must be initiated within one semester of the alleged wrongful action or grade, or as soon thereafter as the student becomes aware of such action. The parties should attempt to resolve the problem in as speedy and satisfactory manner as possible. If dissatisfied with the instructor's decision, or if the instructor is not available, the student may continue to pursue an informal solution with the Chair/Team Leader of the department in which the course is housed.
2. The Chair/Team Leader and instructor should make every effort with the student to solve the problem at the informal level. This resolution shall take place within ten (10) school days of the complaint being brought to the Department Chair/Team Leader. At the time the Chair/Team Leader notifies the student of this decision, he/she should also inform the student of the formal procedure for appeal. The Chair/Team Leader's decision must be in writing.
3. When the instructor is not available to discuss the problem, if at all possible, the resolution should wait until such time as the instructor can return to the campus, but not longer than one semester. If the Department Chair/Team Leader determines that an emergency exists requiring that the problem must be solved prior to the availability of the instructor (e.g. in a case of probable delayed graduation), the Department Chair/Team Leader shall make every reasonable effort to apprise the instructor of the situation. The instructor may elect to submit a written statement and to designate a faculty replacement to aid in solving the problem. If the instructor cannot be reached or does not elect to designate a replacement and the complaint must be dealt with promptly, then the Chair/Team Leader shall act on behalf of the instructor.
4. If the appeal or allegation is made against the Chair/Team Leader in the role of instructor, then the student shall treat the initial appeal as the appeal to the Chair/Team Leader of the department and proceed accordingly.

Resolution of Student Appeals: College Level

1. If not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint proposed by the Chair/Team Leader, the student may proceed within ten (10) school days of receipt of the Chair/Team Leader's decision to file a written appeal with the Office of the Dean of the College in which the course is housed. The written appeal to be introduced at the college level only after informal resolution has failed must clearly specify the action which the student perceives as wrong. The purpose of any subsequent hearing at the college level is to determine whether a broader segment of the campus represented by the committee also judges the action as wrong. If so, they are to suggest a resolution for the action. Before filing the complaint, the student should consult with the Dean of Students, or designee, who shall furnish advice as to the student's rights and responsibilities with respect to this rule. The written appeal shall include the basis of the original complaint, the dates when the instructor and/or Chair/Team Leader met with the

student to discuss the problem, and the suggested resolution at that time.

2. The College Dean shall call the Academic Grade Appeals Committee together and ascertain the availability of the instructor or instructor's replacement (see paragraph (4) (c) below).
3. In conducting a formal review, the Academic Grade Appeals Committee shall adhere to the following guidelines:
 - a. The time limits specified in the following review procedure may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties.
 - b. The student and the instructor or instructor's replacement shall be permitted to have a representative to appear with them before the committee if they so choose. If the student has legal counsel, the university shall provide legal counsel for the faculty member, without charge, at the discretion of the faculty member.
 - c. The committee shall not be officially convened to review the appeal until the faculty member involved, or replacement, has received a copy of the appeal or complaint and had at least five (5) school days to submit, if desired, any information. The student will be provided with a copy of any material submitted by the instructor at least five (5) school days before the committee meets to review the case.
 - d. The committee should make every reasonable effort to meet for review of the case within 15 school days after receipt of the student's written appeal and any information provided by the faculty member and/or Chair/Team Leader.
 - e. The committee will function as an objective, fact finding body when examining all available and relevant information concerning the student's appeal of academic action by the instructor. Such information shall include the student's written appeal, written and/or oral information provided by the instructor, statements made by both parties before the committee, and any other information the committee may deem relevant.
 - f. The student and faculty member shall be invited to meet with the committee. Each shall be allowed adequate time to respond to the appeal (and material) as submitted as well as any questions from committee members. Additionally, each shall be able to present information needed to clarify the issues involved.
 - g. After meeting with both parties, the committee shall develop its recommendations by majority vote. The committee chair shall designate a member to record the committee's recommendations. These recommendations concerning the disposition of the case shall be submitted to the College Dean.
 - h. The College Dean shall render a decision within ten school days of the conclusion of the committee hearing. Copies of the committee's recommendation and the Dean's decision shall be made available to both parties concerned, to the Provost, and all other involved parties and departments.

Final Appeal

1. If dissatisfied with the College Dean's decision, the student may, within ten (10) school days, file a written request for review with the Provost stating the basis for review and the resolution sought by the student.
2. Acting as the University President's representative, the Provost shall make final decision on the matter within ten (10) school days of receipt of the student's request for review. Copies of the Provost's written decision and the basis therefore shall be sent to the student, the College Dean, the chair, the Dean of Students, the instructor involved, and other involved parties.