

To: Susan Fettes, Chair
Academic Policies Committee

From: Rameen Mohammadi, Associate Provost

Re: Policies and Procedures on Grade Appeals

SUNY Guidance on Campus Grading Policies and Procedures points to a need to update and post our policy related to Grade Appeals in the college catalog. Please review the current language in the Student Handbook available at http://www.oswego.edu/Documents/student_handbook/pdf/p41-124CollgPolicies.pdf providing the current policy for Academic Appeals.

The language for the Grade Appeal identifies a similar path to what has been in place already for Academic Appeal in the Student Handbook. The role of those in the hierarchy that review such cases is made more clearly.

The new language makes it clear that only the faculty member who originally assigned the grade can change a student's grade. The expectation that all appeals beyond the faculty member be done in writing is another key feature of the change as is the addition of deadlines for the student to take action and for others involved to respond in a timely fashion. The guidelines from SUNY also encourage adding language that clarifies what action can be taken in the event that the faculty member is not available to consider the appeal, such as, the faculty member leaves campus for another job. So, we have added language that defines such exceptional conditions and the remedy we will employ if the circumstance arises.

Attached, you'll find the process for appealing grades.

Grade Appeal

The instructor of record has the responsibility to assign/change the final grade for the course. The purpose of the appeal process is to ensure that college policies have been followed and that the treatment of a student has been fair and consistent with guidelines established in the course syllabus.

The first step in the resolution of any dispute between a student and an instructor concerning an academic matter should be that the student meets with, or makes a determined effort to meet with, the instructor in order to discuss the problem. Most often, the dispute can be resolved through such discussion between faculty and student; should it not lead to a satisfactory resolution, the student may further pursue an appeal process.

The following describes the steps and deadlines for such an appeal process:

1. This process begins with a written appeal letter to the chair of the department offering the course. The written appeal must be submitted no later than **the end of the sixth week of** the following semester. The student is encouraged to seek a mentor, their advisor or any other member of the faculty and staff, to assist in the appeal process.
2. Within a week of the receipt of the student's written appeal, an acknowledgement will be sent to the student by the chair. The department chair will need time to look into the issue(s) raised by the student. The chair's evaluation may involve review of course records, communications between the faculty and the student, or any other document offered by the student or the faculty member deemed pertinent to the case. The discovery process may also require face to face meetings, phone conversations, or email communications between the chair and the student.
3. The student should expect a written response to the appeal within two weeks of submitting the appeal unless circumstances delay the conclusion of the case. If the appeal is denied, the written response by the chair must outline the reasons.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the review from the department chair, he or she may then appeal to the appropriate academic dean. This is where the role of a mentor becomes most critical as the student's appeal to the dean must appropriately offer responses to the written reasons of denial of the appeal by the department chair. The process described in step 2 applies, except that the student will have two weeks to submit a written appeal to the dean. There would be the same set of expectations regarding acknowledgment of receipt of the appeal letter and deadlines to review and respond to the student by the dean.

5. Written response from the dean concludes the grade appeal process.

In the event that the faculty member who had assigned the final grade is not available to consider the student's appeal, the chair of the department responsible for offering the course shall assign a qualified faculty member to review the merits of the appeal in place of that original instructor. This faculty member assigned to review the case will have the authority to change the grade. This exception is only exercised in extraordinary cases where the faculty member, for example, is no longer working for SUNY Oswego and is not responding to the student's appeal or queries from the department chair or the dean as they review the case.

Revised November 18, 2013