

Guidelines for Conduct of Academic Appeals Board Cases

The Academic Appeals Board is a Faculty Senate committee composed of up to six faculty or staff and one to three students. The Board reviews appeal requests from students who believe they have received a prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. If an appeal meets the committee's purview, the Board conducts a hearing and makes recommendations to the Provost regarding the outcome. These guidelines define the functions of the Board, outline the appeal process, and give instructions for the format of the appeal.

Prior to lodging a formal appeal with the Academic Appeals Board, the student must make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter with the instructor. If an agreement cannot be reached, the student must attempt to resolve the issue with the Department Chair. If the issue is still not resolved, the student must attempt to resolve the issue by consulting the College Dean before filing an official complaint with the Academic Appeals Board.

An appeal should be submitted no later than one year of issuance of the disputed grade.

The Appeal

1. The appeal should concisely state the specific facts or occurrences that give rise to the student's belief that the academic evaluation was prejudiced or capricious.
2. The appeal should state what remedy the student proposes.
3. If the student has other written materials to support the appeal, these materials should be submitted with the appeal.
4. The course syllabus must be included as part of the written materials.
5. The student's name, email address, phone number and student identification number must be listed on the appeal.
6. The written appeal and supporting materials should be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Student Life for review within one year of the disputed grade.
7. Upon receipt of the appeal, all documents will be forwarded to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board. Upon receipt, the Chair will then distribute all materials to a member of the Board of the Chair's choosing. Once selected and distributed, both parties will review and discuss the case in order to evaluate the possibility that either capricious or prejudicial behavior might have occurred.

Prehearing Procedure

1. Should it be decided that the appeal should move forward, with the assistance of the Office of the Dean of Student Life, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board will set a date for a hearing, notify both parties of the date, and send a copy of the student's appeal to the instructor and each Board member. The date for the hearing will usually take place during the last two weeks of the term in which the appeal was submitted. Note: Attendance is not required by either party (student or instructor) in order for a hearing to take place.
2. Through the Office of the Dean of Student Life, the Chair will also notify both parties of the date of the hearing at which time both parties have the opportunity to provide any relevant documentation.
3. Both student and instructor may invite other persons whom they feel have knowledge of the matter to appear at the hearing in order to assist. While those parties may be present at the hearing, only the student and the instructor in question will be permitted to testify at the hearing. Said parties are only present to assist and support.
4. In order to provide accurate documentation, the hearing will be recorded. The Board will accommodate all reasonable requests from either party for logistical and procedural arrangements. .

Hearing Procedures

1. During the hearing, the Board will consider the facts alleged in the student's appeal from the viewpoint of whether either prejudiced or capricious behavior occurred as it relates to the academic evaluation of the complainant.
2. Once the hearing begins, the student will be allowed twenty minutes to present his/her/their evidence. Upon conclusion, the instructor will be allowed twenty-minutes to present his/her/their evidence. After both parties have presented, the student will be allowed ten-minutes to either rebut or present further evidence.
3. Board members may ask questions at any time during either party's presentation.
4. Upon conclusion of the presentations, both parties will be asked to depart in order to allow the Board to confer. Once adequate discussion has occurred among the Board, a recommendation will be decided upon.

The Board's Report and Recommendation

1. A member of the Board will write a report based on the issues involved in the investigation.
2. The report is to be a letter or memorandum to the Provost, sent if possible within two weeks of the hearing. The document will contain an objective summary of the evidence presented by both parties, the Board's evaluation of the evidence, and a recommendation.

3. The report is to be sent to the Provost along with the appeal, other written materials received by the Board, and the recording of the hearing.
4. Neither the student nor the instructor is in any way to be advised of the outcome of the Board's recommendation until after the Provost has made a final ruling.

Decision of the Provost

1. The Provost will review the written materials sent by the Board, and may, if necessary, consult with the Board and review the recording of the hearing.
2. After consideration of the materials submitted by the Board, the Provost will write a decision and send copies to the Board Chair, the student and instructor, and the University President.
3. The Provost's decision is to be final.
4. All documentation of the disputed grade will be destroyed by Board members, but will remain in possession of the Provost.

Accessibility of the Academic Appeals Board Process:

If a student with a disability requires (or believes that they may require) accommodations in order to have full access to this process, the request should be sent directly to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board. No information about the diagnosis or type of disability/condition is required to accompany the request. All attempts will be made to provide the requested accommodations. After submitting the request and receiving a response from the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board, the student may consult with the Disability Resource Center for additional support if needed. The Chair of the Academic Appeals Board will keep all information related to the request confidential except when others have a need to know in order to provide the student with their requested accommodation.

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