



FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

STUDENT GRADE APPEAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the administrative process through which students may seek resolution of grade appeals during their enrollment at FAMU in the CoPPS, IPH.

Section I defines the grade appeal threshold requirement and the eligibility to use these procedures.

Section II describes the informal pathways and the formal pathway for grade appeals.

Step 3 outlines the hearing process before the PCC.

This policy provides students with the procedure to seek redress (corrective action) for believed unfair, improper, or unfounded decisions or actions affecting them directly or their matriculation through the program.

Retaliation. All students have the right to appeal grades without fear of coercion, harassment, intimidation, or reprisal from faculty, staff, administrators, or other students in the College. Therefore, no retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student who articulates a grade appeal request.

False charges/allegations. It should also be completely understood that false charges or allegations made against another student, faculty, or staff member will not be tolerated. If it is believed that a student has brought forth false allegations, the matter will be referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for appropriate action.

Purpose

The purpose of the grade appeal policy is to ensure that students enrolled in the FAMU CoPPS, IPH understand their right to have a structured process for resolving issues related to the execution of institutional policies. The following procedures apply only to cases involving a perceived impropriety.

SECTION I. Grade Appeals - Definitions and Eligibility

Definition of Grade Appeal

Appeal of a Course Grade (hereinafter, Grade Appeal). A student's grade appeal is a claim by a student that an improper, unfair, or arbitrary grade has been assigned by a faculty member of the College of Pharmacy that should result in a grade change. The grade appeal must be filed within 10 business days of receipt of the unsatisfactory grade in the course.

Eligibility

These procedures for grade appeals may only be used by students regarding academic matters during their

enrollment in the College of Pharmacy and may not be used by applicants for admission.

Filing a Grade Appeal

Students who have a complaint about a grade should first discuss the grade with the course coordinator of the course and/or faculty member who assigned it. If the grade is determined to be correct (i.e. no miscalculation) the grade will stand unless assigned by fraud or bad faith. If the grade was issued in error, the faculty member will correct the grade through Student Affairs and the student will be notified.

A grade appeal can only be initiated if the instructor used arbitrary grounds or inconsistent methodology in assigning it rather than legitimate grading methods.

Withdrawal or Resolution of Grade Appeal

A student may withdraw a grade appeal at any time in writing on the Resolution of Grade Appeal Form.

SECTION II. Student Grade Appeals Process

Pathways for Grade Appeals

The grade appeals process in CoPPS, IPH engages two pathways: 1) an informal pathway and 2) a formal pathway. It is preferred that resolution can be achieved in the informal pathway wherein misunderstandings and concerns could be resolved through productive discussions.

Definitions/Terminology

The basic terminology used for these processes include the following:

- **Complainant:** the author of a grade appeal.
- **Respondent:** the person against whom the grade appeal is filed against.
- **Professional Conduct Committee (PCC):** the designated body in the College that is responsible for receiving and potentially resolving student grade appeals.
- **Investigating Officer:** the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee assigned to investigate a grade appeal.
- **Timeline:** the time frame for these procedures are working (business) days rather than calendar days. The timeline indicated at each step in the process shall be considered a maximum time, however, every effort will be made to expedite the process before this maximum time is attained. The time frames set forth may be extended by the relevant officer in his or her discretion for good cause (e.g. illness, medical emergency, etc.).

STEP 1 - THE INFORMAL PATHWAY

The College encourages all parties to participate in good faith discussions and other activities that are designed to bring amicable resolution to the issue(s) giving rise to a grade appeal. Interactions between both parties should always remain professional and under all circumstances.

Prior to filing a formal written grade appeal as outlined in Step 2, students are encouraged to first address their grade appeal informally with the party involved, and if a course, then with the course coordinator if necessary, as soon as possible, preferably within 10 business days of action causing the grade assigned. In the event there is concern by either party with the meeting alone, the complainant or respondent may request that an academic advisor, the course coordinator, faculty, staff, or Division Chair be present for the meeting.

If the issue is resolved, the course coordinator and/or faculty, staff, or administrator, the Associate Dean

for Student Affairs or designee, and the student should submit an “Informal” Resolution of Grade Appeal Form to the Office of Student Affairs for filing in the student’s records within 10 business days of resolution.

If there is no resolution after the initial meeting, the next step in the informal process is for the student to meet with the faculty, staff, or administrator, and the appropriate Division Chair. If the issue is resolved, the Division

Chair, the course coordinator and/or faculty, staff, or administrator, Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee, and the student should submit an “Informal” Resolution of Grade Appeal Form to the Office of Student Affairs for filing in the student’s records within 10 business days of resolution.

If no resolution is found, the student should proceed to follow the formal pathway noted below.

STEP 2 - THE FORMAL PATHWAY VIA THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The following steps are required for the formal filing of a grade appeal:

1. The complainant (student) should obtain a Grade Appeal Form from the CoPPS, IPH website, or the Office of Student Affairs in the College of Pharmacy and fill in the relevant information within 10 business days of final informal non-resolution and submit to the Office of Student Affairs electronically via email (coppsinh@famu.edu)
2. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee (Investigating Officer) shall convene a meeting with the respondent (faculty, staff, or administrator), appropriate Division Chair, and applicable student advisor to assemble all relevant information to resolve the matter within 10 business days from submission of the grade appeal by the complainant. A joint meeting with the parties may be held if warranted. During this process, if the issue is resolved, an “Informal” Resolution of Grade Appeal Form will be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs and placed into the student’s records. If not resolved, the matter should be forwarded to the PCC for formal adjudication (hearing) by the Investigating Officer.
3. The Division Chairs of fourth professional year PharmD students on rotations will forward unresolved matters directly to the PCC for a formal hearing and will copy the Associate Dean for Student Affairs on all correspondences

STEP 3 - PCC HEARING

The Investigating Officer shall consult with the PCC and forward all relevant documents to the PCC related to the specific grade appeal. Within 10 business days, the Chair of the PCC will notify the student of the date and time for the formal hearing and will identify the specific grade to be appealed. This notification shall be sent via university email to the student's most recent address of record on file in the Office of the Registrar.

HEARING GUIDELINES

1. The student may inspect all information that will be presented at least three (3) business days before the disciplinary hearing.
2. The student may present information on his/her behalf during the hearing.
3. The faculty/staff/administrator will then present information during the hearing.
4. The student may have an advisor of their choice at the hearing who is authorized to have access to the student’s academic files as designated on a properly executed FERPA form. The student must provide notice of the attendance of such person at least three (3) business days prior to the hearing. If no notice is given, the hearing will be rescheduled to allow proper notice of attendance by an outside party, if necessary. This allowance will not be abused.
5. An advisor is not allowed to address the committee during the hearing and shall not be allowed

to attend an initial meeting between the faculty member and/or administrator and the student. He/she is not allowed to deliberate or delay the proceedings.

6. If the student presents with legal counsel, official notice must be provided in writing to the University's General Counsel and the Office of Student Affairs of CoPPS, IPH at least three (3) business days before the disciplinary hearing. A copy of such notice must also be sent to the Office of the Provost by the student.
7. After the committee hears all evidence, a resolution will be determined and communicated to the student and their academic advisor within 10 business days.
 - a. A summary table is to be constructed by the committee and forwarded to the Dean, Executive Assistant to the Dean, and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs by the PCC Chair. The summary table should include the following:
 - i. Student Name/Campus
 - ii. Degree program
 - iii. Year
 - iv. The allegation
 - v. Committee ruling

COLLEGE APPEAL PROCESS

The granting of an appeal is not automatic. A student who wishes to appeal a decision rendered by the PCC must write a formal business letter to the Dean of the College outlining the reasons for and nature of the appeal. This letter must have Academic, Dishonesty, Professional, or Non-Academic Misconduct, as applicable in the subject line and be delivered to the Dean of the College within 10 business days from the date of the PCC resolution letter. The PCC Committee Chairperson is to be copied on the message and letter.

The letter should include instructions about appealing to the Dean and the requirement of a business letter. In addition, the student's academic advisor is to immediately contact the student to ensure that he/she knows of the components of a business letter.

No person may hear or decide an appeal if they conducted or participated in the proceeding being reviewed on appeal. Deference is given to the original hearing body's outcome; thus, the burden is on the student filing an appeal to demonstrate cause to alter the decision of the hearing body.

The written appeal must specify the reason(s) why consideration should be granted and are limited to the following:

- i. The student's due process rights, as outlined in University Regulation 2.013, were violated in the conduct proceeding;
- ii. New information exists that was not known to the student and could not have reasonably been known or discovered at the time of the original proceeding and which would have substantially affected the outcome of the proceeding. This does not include statements from an individual or student who did not appear for a proceeding;
- iii. The information presented during the proceeding does not support the decision; or
- iv. The sanction(s) imposed is not commensurate with the violation(s), with consideration given to any aggravating and mitigating circumstances.

The Dean of the College may uphold the decision and/or sanction(s); modify the decision and/or sanction(s); remand the case to the original hearing body for reconsideration of the decision and/or sanction(s) subject to any instructions or remand the case for a new hearing.

The Dean will respond to a letter of appeal to acknowledge receipt and schedule an appeal meeting within ten

(10) business days. Upon receipt of the appeal, the PCC Chair is to send to the dean all information used in its hearing. Scheduling occurs only after the receipt of an appeal in the form of a business letter with an acceptable basis for the appeal. The following factors will determine the scheduling of students:

1. Order of committee ruling.
2. The proximity of APPE or NAPLEX examination – this is a compelling factor that will shift a student ahead of others.
3. Date and time of appeal submission.
4. Should a hearing be scheduled for a student becomes affected by legitimate factors such as graduation certification and matriculation, the Dean may then schedule another student whose case is ready to be heard.

The final decision concerning the decanal appeal shall be communicated to the student, Executive Associate Dean, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and professor/instructor involved within 10 business days of the scheduled meeting with the Dean.

PCC RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Conduct hearing after reviewing the documentation
2. Call and question witnesses
3. Render decisions on grade appeals and levy penalties for misconduct charges upheld by the Committee
4. File Hearing Resolution form with the Office of Student affairs

The College reserves the right to modify or make exceptions to this policy and apply any such modification, or exception applicable to any student without regard to the date of application, admission, or enrollment. This policy is neither a contract nor an offer to enter into a contract. Each student is responsible for knowledge of the College's policies as well as for changes promulgated by the College as addenda to this Policy. This policy supersedes all previous versions of this Policy. Any changes made in the College's PharmD Student Handbook or University's Honor Code will automatically be incorporated into this policy.



The following describes the resolution agreed upon by all parties:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Associate Dean of Student Affairs (or designee)_____ Date_____



Grade Appeal Form I

I, _____, a learner in professor _____ course PHA _____ during the _____ semester of the year _____, acknowledge meeting with the professor regarding an issue in the course. Unfortunately, a resolution has not been obtained from this meeting. The following describes the specific incident in which the learner is disputing:

I do acknowledge that Step I of the grade appeal process has been completed by the Learner.

Professor/Course Coordinator _____ Date _____

Learner Name _____ Date _____

Associate Dean of Student Affairs (or designee) _____ Date _____



Grade Appeal Form II

The Office of Student Affairs received a grade appeal Form I from learner _____ in the course PHA (if applicable) _____ during the _____ semester of the year _____.

We acknowledge (by initialing) the following:

_____ *Form I was properly signed, and documentation was provided by the professor/course director, staff, or administrator and the learner.*

_____ *There is a disputable issue that the learner is presenting and has been clearly outlined with documentation from the learner in an objective way (i.e. grade miscalculation, unfair treatment, course text, etc.)*

_____ *There is no disputable issue (This form will be filed in the Learner's record).*

The following describes the incident that is still unresolved between the parties:

*We acknowledge that a resolution has **not** been obtained from this meeting and that Step II of the grade appeal process has been completed by the learner.*

Professor/Course Coordinator _____ Date _____

Learner Name _____ Date _____

Associate Dean of Student Affairs (or designee) _____ Date _____