



LEARNER GRADE APPEAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the administrative process through which learners may seek resolution of grade appeals during their enrollment at Florida A&M University (FAMU) in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Institute of Public Health (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.

Section III outlines the hearing process before the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC).

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

False charges/allegations. It should also be completely understood that false charges or allegations made against another learner, faculty, or staff member will not be tolerated. If it is believed that a learner 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 learners enrolled in the FAMU CoPPS, IPH understands 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 learner's grade appeal is a claim by a learner 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 learners regarding academic matters during their enrollment in the College of Pharmacy and may not be used by applicants for admission.

Filing a Grade Appeal

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

SECTION II. Learner 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 learner grade appeals.
- **Investigating Officer:** the Associate Dean of 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 remain professional at all times and under all circumstances.

Prior to filing a formal written grade appeal as outlined in Step 2, learners 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 Director be present for the meeting.

If the issue is resolved, the course coordinator and/or faculty, staff, or administrator, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee, and the learner should submit an “Informal” Resolution of Grade Appeal Form to the Office of Student Affairs for filing in the learner’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 learner to meet with the faculty, staff, or administrator, and the appropriate Division Director. If the issue is resolved, the Division Director, the course coordinator and/or faculty, staff, or administrator, Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee, and the learner should submit an “Informal” Resolution of Grade Appeal Form to the Office of Student Affairs for filing in the learner’s records within 10 business days of resolution.

If no resolution is found, the learner 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 (learner) 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 through the FAMU CoPPS, IPH website ([insert website link here](#)).
2. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee (Investigating Officer) shall convene a meeting with the respondent (faculty, staff, or administrator), appropriate Division Director, and applicable learner 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 learner’s records. If not resolved, the matter should be forwarded to the PCC for formal adjudication (hearing) by the Investigating Officer.
3. The Division Directors of fourth professional year Doctor of Pharmacy learners on rotations will forward unresolved matters directly to the PCC for a formal hearing and will copy the Associate Dean of Student Affairs on all correspondences

STEP 3 - PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE (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 learner 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 learner's most recent address of record on file in the Office of the Registrar.

HEARING GUIDELINES

1. The learner may inspect all information that will be presented at least three (3) business days before the disciplinary hearing.
2. The learner may present information on his/her behalf during the hearing.
3. The faculty/staff/administrator will then present information during the hearing.
4. The learner may have an advisor of their choice at the hearing who is authorized to have access to the learner's academic files as designated on a properly executed FERPA form. The learner must provide notice of the attendance of such person at least 72 hours (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 learner. He/she is not allowed to deliberate or delay the proceedings.
6. If the learner 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 learner.
7. After the committee hears all evidence, a resolution will be determined and communicated to the learner 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. Learner Name/Campus
 - ii. Degree program
 - iii. Year
 - iv. The allegation
 - v. Committee ruling

- I. COLLEGE APPEAL PROCESS** The granting of an appeal is not automatic. A learner 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 a "Grade Appeal Letter of Appeal" 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 learner's academic advisor is to immediately contact the learner to ensure that he/she knows of the components of a business letter (see Appendix E).

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 learner 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 learner'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 learner 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 learner 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 learners:

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

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

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

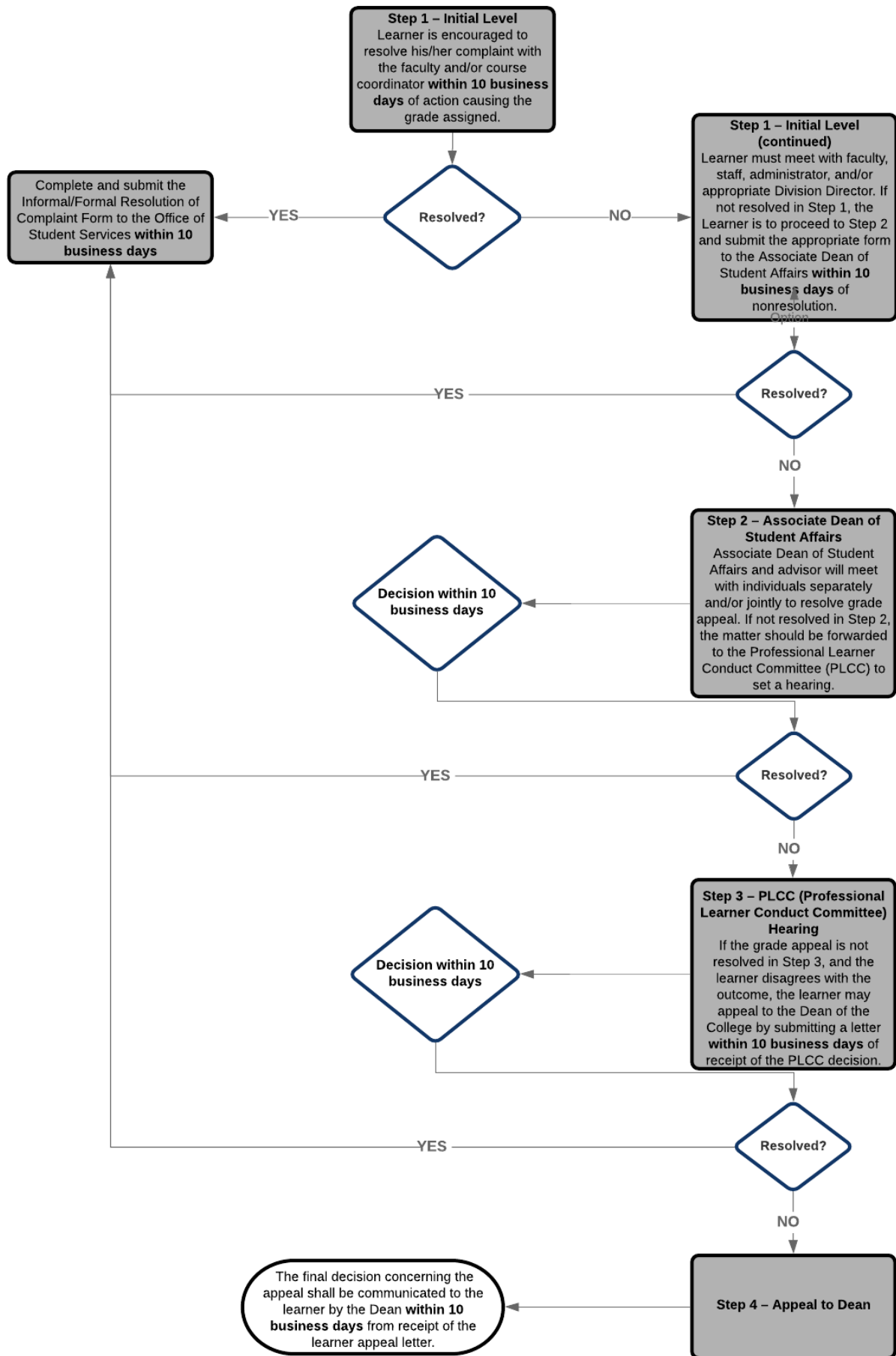
- 1. Conduct hearing after reviewing the documentation
- 2. Call and question witnesses
- 3. Render decisions on grade appeals
- 4. File Hearing Resolution form with the Office of Student affairs

The College reserves the right to modify or make exceptions to this policy and apply any such modification, or exception applicable to any learner 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 learner 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 Learner Handbook or University’s Honor Code will automatically be incorporated into this policy.

Policy and Procedure Review and Revision History	
Creation Date:	
Reviewed Date:	
Revised Date:	

Approval Date:	
Effective Date:	

APPENDIX A: Grade Appeal Flow Chart and Response to Incident



APPENDIX E: Student Business Letter Template

[Insert return address of letter writer]

[Insert Date]

Johnnie L. Early, II, PhD, RPh, Fellow NPhA
Dean and Professor
Florida A&M University
College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Institute of Public Health
1415 S. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32307

Dear Dr. Early:

RE: ACADEMIC [ADD APPEAL TYPE, I.E., SUSPENSION, DISMISSAL, DISHONESTY, GRADE, COMPLAINT, ETC] APPEAL

[Insert the body of your letter. When writing a business letter, be careful to remember that conciseness is very important. In the first paragraph, consider a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point.]

[The next paragraph should begin justifying the importance of the main point.]

[In the next few paragraphs, continue justification with background information and supporting details.]

[The closing paragraph should restate the purpose of the letter and, in some cases, request some type of action.]

[Enclosures, if any]

Sincerely,

[Your signature goes here in blue ink]

[Insert your name]

[Insert your title]