



GRADE APPEAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY

- 1.01 It is the responsibility of the faculty members of the Oklahoma State University (“OSU”) College of Osteopathic Medicine (“COM”) to communicate to students early in the term a clear statement of the grading practices and procedures that will be used to determine the student's final grade. If a student believes those practices and procedures were not consistently and accurately followed when the faculty member determined the student's final grade, the student has the right to appeal the grade to the Grade Appeal Board (“Board”) if informal discussions fail to resolve the issue.
- 1.02 The deadline for filing grade appeals is no later than three (3) weeks after the date the grades are officially due in the Registrar’s Office. All calendar dates are included in calculating the filing deadline.
- 1.03 Grade appeals may only be filed for a final grade in a course. The basis for filing a grade appeal for a final grade in a course is limited to the bases set forth below:
 - 1.03.1 The student was not adequately informed of the details of the requirements of the course, the prerequisites for the course, and/or the grading system.
 - 1.03.2 The evaluation system was not consistently and fairly applied to all students.
 - 1.03.3 Criteria for determining the final grade were changed during the course of the semester, and the students were not adequately notified of this change. It is important to note that changes in syllabi need not be made in writing as long as students are given adequate notice of the changes.
 - 1.03.4 All students did not receive equal notification and consideration of extra credit or other grade adjustment opportunities that were provided during the course of the semester.
 - 1.03.5 Items such as attendance, participation, and/or attitude were criteria for determining the final grade and were not made clear in advance to the student.
 - 1.03.6 The student was not adequately informed in advance of criteria used in making subjective evaluations of academic activities such as essay examinations, papers, projects, speeches, and clinical performance.
 - 1.03.7 There were errors in calculating the final grade.
 - 1.03.8 The student was subjected to arbitrary and discriminatory treatment in the course, which affected the student’s final grade.
- 1.04 When evaluating a final grade appeal, the Board makes no attempt to establish whether a grading system is academically sound; that is, the Board is not in a position to decide the case on the instructor's choice of one particular grading system over another. Rather, the Board must base its decision upon whether the grade was assigned fairly within the grading system adopted and announced by the faculty member. The following guidelines have been developed to guide the Board in making these decisions:
 - 1.04.1 Was the student accurately informed, in writing, of the instructor's grading system; that is, was the student clearly and precisely informed of the decision-making process the instructor was using in determining the final grade for the course?
 - 1.04.2 Student absence is not to be considered a valid excuse for being unaware of the details of the grading system.
 - 1.04.3 Subjective criteria are recognized as valid in determining a grade. The grading system can be subjective but not arbitrary, capricious, or personally biased.

- 1.04.4 Did the instructor consistently and fairly apply the grading system to all students? Did the instructor change the grading system during the course of the semester in such a way that it put the student at a serious disadvantage or without adequately communicating the change to the students in the class?
- 1.04.5 Were all students given a chance to improve their grades when grade adjustment opportunities were made available during the course of the semester?
- 1.05 It is important to note that the Board, while considering all the above issues does not engage in the following activities:
 - 1.05.1 Grading papers or examinations or challenging the instructor's evaluation of oral participation in class.
 - 1.05.2 Making decisions on the basis of the academic soundness of the instructor's teaching methods or grading system.
 - 1.05.3 Basing decisions on a general consideration of "good" or "bad" instruction.
- 1.06 When a student files a grade appeal, the process is not an adversarial process. The policy is intended to provide a forum in which honest differences of opinion may be discussed rationally and peacefully.
- 1.07 The burden of proof rests with the student. The burden of proof shall be a preponderance of the evidence, which means the student must prove it is more likely than not that their final grade should be changed for any of the above-listed reasons.

PROCEDURES

- 2.01 To appeal a final course grade where allegations of academic dishonesty or misconduct are not involved, the student must adhere to the following procedures:
 - 2.01.1 Prior to filing a grade appeal, students are expected to seek resolution through informal means. Students should begin the informal process by discussing the matter directly with the Associate Dean of Curriculum who will discuss the matter with the Instructor and/or Course Director. If during these discussions it becomes clear that a grade change is necessary, the Associate Dean of Curriculum will submit a grade change to the Registrar. If the attempt to resolve the matter is successful, no further progression through this policy is warranted.
 - 2.01.2 If an attempt at informal resolution is not successful, the student must complete and submit a Grade Appeal Form to initiate the formal appeals process. Grade Appeal Forms are available to students in the Office of Enrollment Management or on the OSU COM website under [Academic Policies, Forms and Handbooks](#). To complete the form, the student must discuss the grade appeal with and obtain signatures from the Instructor, Course Director, and Associate Dean of Curriculum. If during these discussions it becomes clear that a grade change is necessary, the Instructor, the Course Director, or the Associate Dean of Curriculum can submit a Change of Grade Form to the Registrar.
 - 2.01.3 The student must submit the Grade Appeal Form to the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management with a written description of the grounds for the appeal. The description of the appeal must set forth:
 - a. A full description of the complaint;
 - b. The rationale for considering the decision to be in error; and
 - c. The specific remedy requested.

The Associate Dean of Enrollment Management verifies completion of the form and all other supporting documents before assembling the Board. If a student has conferred with and delivered the appropriate form to a faculty member, but the faculty member

has not returned the form within five (5) business days, the Board may hear the case without that faculty member's signature. In such a case, the Board should hear the case without prejudice, and the Board should not restrict the rights of the faculty member to present testimony and evidence before the Board.

- 2.01.4 The Academic Appeal Board Panel consists of five (5) basic science faculty, five (5) faculty members who are licensed physicians, and five (5) students. The Associate Dean of Enrollment Management, in consultation with the Dean or designee and faculty senate, regarding faculty appointments, and the Student Senate President, regarding student appointments, will appoint the members of the Academic Appeal Board Panel who shall serve on the Panel for two (2) years.
- 2.01.5 After a student properly files a grade appeal, the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management shall select a Board to hear the matter. The Board will consist of two (2) basic science faculty, two (2) faculty members who are practicing physicians, and two (2) students. To afford due process, the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management should pay careful attention to assembling an objective board. The student filing the appeal has the right to refuse up to five (5) Board member appointments in the event of any conflict of interest (e.g., a Course Director or Instructor cannot serve on a Board for an appeal relating to their course, or a student may not serve on a Board relating to a course for which they have also filed a grade appeal). At the first Board meeting, the Board will elect one (1) faculty member to serve as Chair. The Chair will vote only in case of a tie vote.
- 2.01.6 The Chair or Office of Enrollment Management may schedule meetings of the Board to discuss the appeal prior to formal hearings. A quorum must be present to convene an official meeting. Quorum is met when fifty percent (50%) or more of the membership is present.
- 2.01.7 The Chair or Office of Enrollment Management schedules hearings for the student and faculty. The student and faculty must be provided with at least three (3) days' notice prior to the hearing date, unless they waive such notice in writing. Appointments for hearings are confirmed by electronic mail (email) at the parties' official university email addresses. Hearings are generally held on the same day but never simultaneously to avoid confrontation between student and faculty. The Board may not hold a hearing unless at least five (5) of the six (6) Board members are present. Any student who fails to appear at the designated hearing date, place, and time will waive his or her right to the appeal. Parties who are not available on campus to attend the hearing may appear by video or telephone. The Board must conclude the hearing process within a reasonable time after the student filed the appeal.
- 2.01.8 With prior notification through the Board Chair, the student and faculty have the right to present witnesses such as an advisor, student, faculty member, or other person to provide evidence to the Board to assist in establishing the factors of the case. The student and each faculty member may each request up to three (3) witnesses. The student and faculty must provide the Chair with a list of any witnesses he or she plans to call to the hearing at least two (2) business days before the hearing date. The Board has the option of calling additional witnesses if it votes to do so. Witnesses, if any, may be present only during their testimony. The student may be accompanied by an advisor or attorney during the hearing, but the advisor or attorney is merely there to advise the student and may not speak for the student during the hearing.
- 2.01.9 Faculty are required to produce evidence relevant to the grade appeal. It is also important to preserve the integrity of examinations, quizzes, and other assessment instruments used by faculty. As a result, the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management will work with the Associate Dean of Curriculum to determine what evidence may be

shared with the student. The Associate Dean of Enrollment Management will submit relevant and appropriate evidence to the student within three (3) business days of the student requesting it. If the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management submits evidence, the student must be provided a reasonable opportunity to obtain it. The student is also required to return the evidence within three (3) business days of the Board rendering its decision.

- 2.01.10 The Board must provide notice of its decision within three (3) business days after the final hearing date to the student, the Instructor, the Course Director, the Associate Dean of Curriculum, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Associate Dean of Enrollment Management, and the Dean or designee. Appeal Board decisions must be communicated via official university email addresses. All Appeal Board decisions are final and binding. When the Board votes to alter a grade, the Chair must send the decision to the Office of the Registrar to effect a grade change.
- 2.01.11 There are cases when a student's appeal may be applicable to other students in the course (e.g., the Board determines more than one answer to an exam question is correct). If the Board votes to uphold a student's appeal and the Board determines that other students would be impacted by the issue it considered, the Course Director must meet with the Board within five (5) business days after it issues its decision to determine how to adjust grades for other affected students. If the Board and Course Director agree how to adjust grades for other students, the Course Director will adjust grades accordingly. If the Board and Course Director do not agree how to adjust grades for other students, the Board will recommend how the Course Director should adjust grades to the Dean or designee. The Dean or designee will decide whether to enforce the Board's recommendation or defer to the Course Director.