

FLORIDA	OFFICIAL
POLYTECHNIC	UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY	ACADEMIC POLICY

Subject/Title: Student Grade Appeals
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Date First Adopted: February 16, 2015
Date Revised: February 16, 2015
Responsible Division/Department: Academic Affairs
Initiating Authority: Ghazi Darkazalli, Provost and Executive VP of Academic Affairs

A. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to instructors and students and applies to all student appeals related to final course grades.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

Faculty, adjuncts, professors, and instructors (collectively referred to as “Instructors”) have a fundamental right and responsibility to assess student performance. Instructors exercise professional judgment in determining how to assess student performance based on standards in their departments or disciplines and based on their own expectations for student achievement. A student may request a review of the final course grade, using the procedure described below (“Student”) only when the Student believes that one or more of the following conditions apply:

- There was a computational or recording error in grading.
- Non-academic criteria were applied in the grading process.
- There was a gross violation of the grading statement in the Instructor’s course syllabus that states how course grades will be calculated.

The Student is responsible for monitoring his/her grades and student email account and availing himself/herself of this process in a timely manner if the Student wishes to appeal a grade. If the Student fails to submit the forms and information to the designated official on or before the deadlines as stated throughout this procedure, the Student’s appeal or further access to the grade appeal process will be denied.

C. PROCEDURES

The process a Student must follow to appeal a final grade in a course is as follows, in the order indicated. Any decisions will be provided to the Student via email to the Student’s University student email address.

1. Step 1- Meeting with Instructor.

- (a) **Request for Meeting Form.** A Student who believes that a grade has been awarded under one or more of the conditions stated in B. above and wants to appeal the grade must first submit a completed and signed *Grade Appeal Form 1-Request for Meeting with Instructor* (“**Request for Meeting Form**”) to the University Registrar (“Registrar”) via email to registrar@flpoly.org requesting a meeting with the Instructor of record who awarded the final course grade.

- (b) **Deadline for Registrar’s Receipt of Request for Meeting Form.** The Request for Meeting Form must be received by the Registrar on or before October 1 (or the first business day after October 1 if October 1 falls on a weekend) if the grade was awarded in the immediately preceding spring or summer semester, or on or before February 1 (or the first business day after February 1 if February 1 falls on a weekend) if the grade was awarded in the immediately preceding fall semester, whether or not the Student is enrolled at the University at the time of submitting the Request for Meeting Form. If the Request for Meeting Form is not received by the Registrar on or before the appropriate deadline date, the Student’s grade appeal will be denied, the request for a meeting with the Instructor will be denied, and the final course grade awarded will stand.
- (c) **Meeting with Instructor.** If the Registrar receives a timely submitted Request for Meeting Form, the Registrar will forward the Request for Meeting Form to the Instructor via email, and the Instructor will, within ten (10) business days of the Registrar’s receipt of the Request for Meeting Form, meet with the Student to explain how the grade was determined and attempt to resolve any disagreement regarding the grade.
- (d) **Instructor’s Decision.** Within five (5) business days of the meeting, the Instructor will complete the Instructor’s portion of the Request for Meeting Form indicating whether or not the grade should be changed and send it to the Registrar via email. If the Instructor’s decision is that the grade should not be changed, the Registrar will forward the Instructor’s decision to the Student. If the Instructor’s decision is to change the grade, the Registrar will forward the Request for Meeting Form containing the Instructor’s decision to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (“Vice Provost”) via email for approval of the grade change. Within five (5) days of the receipt of the Instructor’s decision to change the grade, the Vice Provost will indicate whether or not the grade change is approved by completing the Vice Provost’s portion of the Request for Meeting Form and emailing it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the completed Request for Meeting Form containing the Instructor’s decision and the Vice Provost’s decision (if applicable) to the Student and the Instructor.

2. Step 2- Conference with Academic Coordinator.

- (a) **Request for Conference Form.** If the Student completed Step 1 of this procedure and was unable to satisfactorily resolve the grade appeal, and the Student wants to continue to appeal the final course grade, the Student must submit a completed and signed *Grade Appeal Form 2-Request for Conference* (“**Request for Conference Form**”) to the Registrar via email to registrar@flpoly.org requesting a conference with the Academic Coordinator.
- (b) **Deadline for Registrar’s Receipt of Request for Conference Form.** The Request for Conference Form must be received by the Registrar on or before November 1 (or the first business day after November 1 if November 1 falls on a weekend) if the grade was awarded in the immediately preceding spring or summer semester, or on or before March 1 (or the first business day after March 1 if March 1 falls on a weekend) if the grade was awarded in the immediately preceding fall semester. If the Request for Conference Form is not received by the Registrar on or before the appropriate deadline date, the Student’s further grade appeal and request for

conference will be denied, and the grade will remain as decided in Step 1 of the grade appeal.

- (c) **Review for Merit.** If the Registrar receives a timely submitted Request for Conference Form, the Registrar will forward the Request for Conference Form along with the related Grade Appeal Form via email to the appropriate Academic Coordinator for the course. If the Instructor is also the Academic Coordinator, the Provost will appoint an individual to act as the Academic Coordinator for purposes of conducting Step 2 of this procedure.

The Academic Coordinator will review the Grade Appeal Forms 1 and 2 and determine if the grade appeal may have merit. If the Coordinator determines that the grade appeal is without merit, the Coordinator will indicate such on the Academic Coordinator's section of the Request for Conference Form and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the completed Request for Conference Form with the Academic Coordinator's decision to the Student and the Instructor.

- (d) **Conference.** If the Academic Coordinator determines the grade appeal may have merit, the Coordinator will arrange for a conference to be held with the Student within ten (10) business days of the Registrar's receipt of the Student's Request for Conference Form in order to attempt to mediate the grade review. During the conference the Student must provide evidence that the grade awarded was based on a computational or recording error; that non-academic criteria were applied in the grading process; and/or that there was a gross violation of the grading statement in the Instructor's course syllabus. The Instructor may participate in the conference. No other individuals may attend the conference.
- (e) **Academic Coordinator's Decision.** Within five (5) business days of the conference, the Academic Coordinator will complete the Academic Coordinator's portion of the Request for Conference Form providing a written summary of findings and his/her decision on the grade appeal and email it to the Registrar.

If the Academic Coordinator's decision is that the grade will remain as decided in Step 1 of the grade appeal, the Registrar will email the Request for Conference Form containing the Academic Coordinator's summary of findings and decision to the Student and the Instructor.

If the Academic Coordinator's decision is that the grade should be changed, the Registrar will email the Request for Conference Form containing the Academic Coordinator's decision to the Vice Provost for approval of the grade change. The Vice Provost will indicate whether or not the grade change is approved by completing the Vice Provost's portion of the Request for Conference Form and emailing it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the Request for Conference Form containing the Academic Coordinator's decision and the Vice Provost's decision (if applicable) to the Student, Instructor and Academic Coordinator.

3. Step 3- Appeal to the Vice Provost.

- (a) **Appeal to the Vice Provost Form.** If the Student is not satisfied with the results of the conference with the Academic Coordinator and wants to continue with the appeal of the grade, the Student must submit a completed and signed *Grade Appeal Form 3- Appeal to the Vice Provost* (“**Appeal to the Vice Provost Form**”) to the Registrar via email to registrar@flpoly.org requesting a review of the grade appeal by the Vice Provost.
- (b) **Deadline for Registrar’s Receipt of Appeal to Vice Provost Form.** The Student’s Appeal to the Vice Provost Form must be received by the Registrar within five (5) business days of the date the Registrar sent the Student the decision related to the Request for Conference Form in Step 2, or the Student’s further grade appeal and request for review of the grade appeal by the Vice Provost will be denied, and the grade will remain as decided in Step 2 of the grade appeal.
- (c) **Review for Merit.** If the Registrar receives a timely submitted Appeal to the Vice Provost Form, the Registrar will email the Appeal to the Vice Provost Form to the Vice Provost, along with the related fully completed Grade Appeal Forms 1 and 2. If the Instructor is also the Vice Provost, the Provost will appoint an individual to act as Vice Provost for purposes of conducting Step 3 of this process.

The Vice Provost will review the Grade Appeal Forms. If the Vice Provost finds that the Student’s grade appeal is without merit, the Vice Provost will indicate that on the Vice Provost’s portion of the Appeal to the Vice Provost Form and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the Appeal to the Vice Provost Form containing the Vice Provost’s decision to the Student, Instructor, and Academic Coordinator.

If the Vice Provost determines that the appeal may have merit, the Vice Provost will convene the Student Academic Appeals Committee to conduct a formal review.

- (d) **Formal Review by Committee.** The formal review will be conducted by the Student Academic Appeals Committee (“Committee”) and should take place within ten (10) business days of the Registrar’s receipt of the Student’s Appeal to the Vice Provost Form.

- (i) **Composition of the Committee.** The Committee shall be made up of at least three (3) and not more than five (5) faculty members and two (2) students. The Vice Provost will appoint the faculty members, and the Director of Student Affairs will appoint the student members from a panel of ten (10) students provided by the president of the University’s Student Government Association. The Student and the Instructor may each challenge the appointment of any Committee member with cause. The validity of any such challenges shall be decided by the Vice Provost. If a challenge to an appointment is upheld by the Vice Provost, the Vice Provost shall appoint a replacement member from the faculty or from the student panel, as appropriate. The Instructor and the Student may each exercise a peremptory challenge of one member of the initial Committee.

(ii) Guidelines for Formal Review. In conducting the formal review, the Committee shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. The time limits specified for the formal review and decision may be extended by mutual agreement of the Student and Instructor.
- b. The Committee should make every reasonable effort to meet for the formal review of the appeal within ten (10) business days after the Registrar's receipt of the Student's Appeal to the Vice Provost Form.
- c. The Committee will maintain the minutes and all records of the formal review; the formal review will not be recorded or transcribed.
- d. The meeting is an educational activity subject to Student privacy laws and regulations, and the strict rules of evidence do not apply.
- e. The Student may choose to be accompanied by a single advisor, but the advisor may not speak at the formal review.
- f. The Student and the Instructor may attend the formal review and present testimony and evidence on their behalf. Additional witnesses may be permitted to speak at the formal review only if the Committee deems the subject matter each witness wants to speak about is relevant to the grade appeal.
- g. The Committee will deliberate and complete the Committee's portion of the Appeal to the Vice Provost Form and include a summary of findings and its recommendation concerning the grade appeal. The Committee will email its summary of findings and recommendation to the Vice Provost and the Registrar within five (5) business days of the conclusion of the Committee's formal review.

(e) Vice Provost's Decision. Within five (5) business days of receiving the Committee's summary of findings and recommendations, the Vice Provost will consider the summary of findings and recommendation and will complete the Vice Provost's portion of the Appeal to the Vice Provost Form indicating the Vice Provost's decision and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will forward the completed Appeal to the Vice Provost Form containing the Vice Provost's decision to the Student, the Instructor, and the members of the Committee.

4. Step 4- Final Appeal to the Provost.

- (a) Final Appeal to the Provost Form.** If the Student is not satisfied with the result of the appeal to the Vice Provost and wants to continue with the appeal of the grade, the Student must submit a completed and signed *Grade Appeal Form 4-Final Appeal to the Provost* ("**Final Appeal to the Provost Form**") to the Registrar via email to registrar@flpoly.org requesting a review of the grade appeal by the Provost.
- (b) Deadline for Registrar's Receipt of Final Appeal to the Provost Form.** The Final appeal to the Provost Form must be received by the Registrar no later than five (5) business days from the date the Registrar sent the Student the decision related to the Step 3 Appeal to the Vice Provost Form, or the Student's further grade appeal and request for review of the grade by the Provost will be denied, and the grade will remain as decided in Step 3 of the grade appeal.
- (c) Provost's Review and Decision.** If the Registrar receives a timely submitted Final Appeal to Provost Form, the Registrar will forward the Final Appeal to the Provost

Form along with all of the related fully completed Grade Appeal Forms for Steps 1-3 of the grade appeal to the Provost. If the Instructor is also the Provost, the President will appoint an individual to act as the Provost for purposes of conducting Step 4 of this procedure.

- (i) If a **review was conducted by the Student Academic Review Committee** in Step 3, the Provost will review all of the Grade Appeal Forms and make a final decision on the grade appeal within ten (10) business days of the Registrar's receipt of the Student's Appeal to the Provost Form. The Provost will complete the Provost's portion of the Appeal to Provost Form and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the completed Appeal to Provost Form containing the Provost's decision to the Student, Instructor, Vice Provost, and Committee members. This decision by the Provost constitutes final University action.
- (ii) If **no review was conducted by the Committee** in Step 3 because the Vice Provost found that the Student's grade appeal was without merit, the Provost will review the Grade Appeal Forms and either uphold or reverse the Vice-Provost's decision.
 - a. If the Provost **upholds the Vice Provost's decision**, the Provost will complete the Provost's portion of the Appeal to Provost Form and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the completed Appeal to Provost Form containing the Provost's decision to the Student, Vice Provost, and Instructor. This decision by the Provost constitutes final University action.
 - b. If the Provost **reverses the Vice Provost's decision**, the Provost will designate a person to act in the Vice Provost's place for purposes of re-conducting Step 3 of the grade appeal. The Provost will complete the Provost's portion of the Appeal to Provost Form and email it to the Registrar. The Registrar will email the completed Appeal to Provost Form containing the Provost's decision to the Student, Vice Provost, and Instructor. The designee will convene a Committee to conduct a formal review of the grade appeal and will ultimately make a decision under Step 3 of this procedure. The designee's decision will be subject to further appeal by the Student using Step 4 of this procedure.

- 5. Waiver of Deadline for Exceptional Circumstances.** A student may request a waiver of a deadline missed under this procedure only for one or more of the following reasons:
- (a) Student illness of such severity or duration that precluded the Student’s timely compliance with the grade appeal process, as confirmed by a physician in writing;
 - (b) A death in the student’s immediate family (parent, spouse, child, sibling, or grandparent) that precluded the Student’s timely compliance with the grade appeal process, as confirmed by documentation indicating the death and the Student’s relationship to the deceased;
 - (c) Student’s active military duty or return from active duty that precluded the Student’s timely compliance with the grade appeal process, as confirmed by military orders;
 - (d) University error which precluded the Student’s timely compliance with the grade appeal process, as confirmed in writing on University letterhead signed by an appropriate University official or confirmed by appropriate University documents; or
 - (e) Other documented exceptional circumstances (whether the circumstances are indeed “exceptional” will be determined by the Registrar) beyond the student’s control that precluded the Student’s timely compliance with the grade appeal process, accompanied by a letter of explanation and appropriate documentation.

The request for Waiver of a Deadline must be sent to the Registrar at Registrar@FLPoly.org, and if granted by the Registrar, the Student may complete and submit the appropriate Grade Appeal Form to begin or continue the Student Grade Appeals procedure.

ACADEMIC POLICY APPROVAL	
Policy No.: FPU-5.00714AP	
Initiating Authority	Date
Academic Policies Committee Chair	Date
Vice President of Academic Affairs	Date
President/Designee	Date
Approved by FPU BOT, if required	Date
EXECUTED SIGNATURE PAGES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL	