

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

### ACADEMIC APPEALS

<b>Number</b>	02.01.12
<b>Division</b>	Academic Affairs
<b>Date</b>	November 1, 2002
<b>Purpose</b>	To establish a consistent procedure for graduate and undergraduate academic appeals.
<b>Policy</b>	<p>An academic appeal may be filed by a student regarding an action taken by University personnel, including instructional personnel, administrators, or staff members at the University that affects the student's academic or related standing. Examples of academic appeals include, but are not limited to, allegations of unfairness in grading, alleged violation of a written or oral agreement with a student (e.g., course requirements for graduation), and alleged inconsistent applications of existing policies. Appeals related to course grades must be filed within 30 calendar days after the beginning of the next semester/term after the semester/term the grade was earned.</p>

Resolution of a student's appeals, unless otherwise specified, shall begin with the University official, typically the faculty member who is the instructor in the course, whose decision is being appealed. If the appeal is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at this level, the matter may be pursued through the appropriate administrative chain. For academic appeals, this chain is the faculty member, the chair of the department in which the course(s) was offered (or program director, if one), the dean of the college in which the course was offered, and the Office of the Provost, in that order, or his/her designee. The Associate Provost reviews and considers undergraduate academic appeals for the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost will confer with the Dean of the Graduate School in consideration of academic appeals from graduate students.

The instructor has the responsibility for a class, directed individual study, or thesis and has the authority over all matters affecting the conduct of the course, including assignment of grades. The instructor shall be presumed to have assigned the proper grade until it is proven otherwise. The burden of proof to the contrary rests with the student.

Grade appeals must be based on evidence that the student performed at a level sufficient to warrant a different grade. Appeals of a final course grade or other final comprehensive evaluations must be based upon one or more of the following:

1. Arithmetical or clerical error.

2. The course grade was assigned on a basis other than performance in the course.
3. The instructor used standards that were different from those allowed for other students in the same class, or different from those allowed in departmental/college/school policies, if specific departmental/college/school grading policies exist.
4. Changes in course requirements or grading components as defined in the course syllabus were made.
5. A substantial or unannounced departure from the instructor's previously articulated standards was used in assigning the grade.

Concerns over course design, pedagogy, or personal habit of the faculty member, differences in opinion over the right" answer, differences in grading by faculty members teaching separate sections of the same course, and fine distinctions between any two grades, do not warrant an appeal under this policy.

**Procedures** Students should first meet with the course instructor to discuss concerns and try to reach an informal resolution. The student may wish to provide the faculty member a written statement concerning the elements on which his/her concerns are based. At each level of appeal, above the initial level of the course instructor, the student shall provide to the appropriate official (chair or his/her designees (or program director, if one), dean or his/her designees or associate provost) a written statement of appeal, setting forth the nature of the appeal, the pertinent facts, and the remedial action desired. Any other pertinent materials shall also be presented. The written document may be hand delivered, e-mailed or mailed to the appropriate official. The student shall receive a written response from such official within ten working days of the official's receipt of the appeal statement. The response shall be one of the following:

1. A decision in favor of the student;
2. A decision supporting the previous action;
3. A statement of compromise agreed to in a discussion with the parties involved and signed by them; or,
4. An explanation for delaying the decision for an additional two weeks, followed by a response as in above by the end of that period.

If, at any level, a student does not receive a response in the manner stated above, he or she may immediately submit his or her appeal to the official at the next level. Successive appeals beyond the initial appeal must be filed within ten working days of the student's receipt of a decision. The procedure at the next level will be the same as described above. Failure by an official to respond will, therefore, not preclude a student from carrying the appeal to the next level. If, for any reason, a student decides that he or she does not wish a written response, the student shall so indicate in the statement of appeal submitted to the official at that level.

If a faculty member disagrees with the final resolution of an academic appeal, the faculty member may appeal using the General Grievance Procedures given in Appendix E of the Faculty Handbook.

**Review**

Academic Affairs will review this policy every five years or sooner as needed.