APPEALS OF ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

Policy Scope

The following guidelines are intended to describe the process by which a student enrolled in a course, where the College of Public Health is granting credit and assigning faculty to teach the course, can appeal an academic evaluation. Courses taught outside of the COPH will be handled by the academic unit that is granting credit. The student may reach out to the COPH Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, with questions about the process or eligibility of the appeal to fall within the COPH's appeals of grades and academic evaluations process.

Policy Definitions

Academic Evaluation – An academic evaluation subject to appeal under this policy is defined as any summative or formative assessment or evaluation of a student including but not limited to individual or comprehensive assessments and final course academic evaluations.

Receiving an Academic Evaluation Grade – A grade that has been communicated by the instructor through written or electronic means.

Procedures

Stage I: Informal Appeal

1. Within five business days after receiving an academic evaluation grade which the student believes is prejudiced or capricious, the student should discuss the matter directly with the instructor who conducted the evaluation.
2. If a satisfactory agreement with the instructor cannot be made, the student has five business days to appeal in writing to the program director and/or chair of the department granting credit for the course. The program director and/or chair of the department will forward the appeal in writing to the COPH Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for notification.
3. If a satisfactory agreement with the program director and/or chair of the department granting credit for the course cannot be made within ten business days of the submission of the informal appeal, the student may initiate a formal appeal.

Stage II: Formal Appeal

1. The student must submit a formal written appeal to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, no later than ten business days after the informal appeal process has been concluded. The written appeal should include a detailed account of the informal appeal procedures conducted as well as provide an account of the facts pertinent to the academic evaluation with the reasons why the student believes the academic evaluation is prejudiced or capricious. The formal written appeal should be as specific as possible and should include a request to appear personally before the Faculty-Student Appeals Committee if the student elects to do so.
2. The COPH Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs will identify the chairperson and members of the Faculty-Student Appeals Committee in consultation with the Department Chairs and the Assistant Dean of Study Affairs within ten business days of receiving the formal written appeal. The Faculty-Student committee membership will be comprised of five faculty members and one student. Faculty must have their primary appointment in the COPH, and students must be currently enrolled in a COPH program and in good academic standing. The COPH Faculty-Student Appeals Committee will investigate and/or hear appeals involving academic evaluations in which a student can provide evidence that the evaluation was prejudiced or capricious. The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs will assist the student in managing the procedural steps of the policy.
3. During a formal appeal, the student is expected to successfully complete all program requirements and courses with final grades deemed satisfactory as defined by the program standards and course syllabus when relevant. Additionally, the student is expected to follow all college and program policies and procedures.
4. After receiving the student's formal written appeal from the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, the chairperson of the COPH Faculty-Student Appeals Committee will forward copies to all members of the committee and to any instructor involved. The committee will decide how to best handle the appeal. The committee may grant the student's request for a hearing or may decide a closed investigation is appropriate. In appeals of evaluations potentially leading to an academic dismissal or suspension, the committee must grant a formal hearing if requested by the student.
5. The chairperson will request the instructor of the course submit the materials used in determining the challenged academic evaluation. Upon receiving the materials, the chairperson will forward copies to all members of the committee. The instructor will have an opportunity to present evidence and respond to any allegations of a prejudice or capricious assessment of an academic evaluation in writing or by interview as requested by the committee. The committee may also request the student supply additional clarification in writing or by interview.
6. If the committee schedules a formal hearing, any persons required to attend the hearing will be given reasonable notice (a minimum of ten business days) of the time and place. The committee chairperson will oversee the hearing proceedings. They will determine the order of presentation, and the relevancy of any evidence submitted, and they will direct the questioning of any witnesses. It is their responsibility to ensure that the hearing is conducted in accordance with due process.
7. It is the student's responsibility or burden of proof to show by the weight of the evidence that the academic evaluation was prejudiced or capricious. The student may use any evidence deemed proper, including affidavits, exhibits, and witness testimonies. It is the student's responsibility to gather and submit all evidence presented in the investigation. If the student wishes to have witnesses testify on their behalf, it is the student's responsibility to pay any fees associated with retaining the witness(es). At any time during the appeal process, the student will be entitled to examine the materials which were used in determining the challenged academic evaluation.
8. During the hearing, the student may be assisted by an advisor of their choice. The student must inform the committee chairperson of the advisor's name at least 24 hours before the hearing. The advisor may assist the student in formulating their case, and they may be present at the hearing, but they may not actually participate in the proceedings unless the chairperson specifically permits. The college

is not responsible for any fees that may be associated with retaining an advisor.

9. At the conclusion of its formal investigation and hearing (if one is conducted), the committee will determine from the evidence the propriety of the academic evaluation. The committee will submit its findings in writing to the student, the instructor who issued the academic evaluation, the student's program director and/or chair of the department, and the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs within five business days of concluding the investigation or hearing.
    a. If the committee finds that the academic evaluation was not prejudice or capricious, the student may face academic implications set forth in the Good Academic Standing Policy.
    b. If the committee finds that the academic evaluation was prejudice or capricious, the committee in consultation with the student's program director and/or department chair will develop a plan for resolution of the academic evaluation. In cases where the program director is the instructor who issued the prejudice or capricious academic evaluation, the COPH Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and an instructor from the student's program who is not involved in the case will consult with the committee members to develop the plan for resolution.
10. Decision of the committee is considered final with no further appeal option.

References

UNMC Policy on the Retention of Materials

University of Nebraska Board of Regents: Student Records Schedule 170-17; Item Numbers: 170-17-33 & 170-17-34, Registration and Academic Progress Records

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Effective Date:
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Responsible Administrator: COPH Dean of Student Affairs
Policy Contact: COPH Dean of Student Affairs