

Student Appeal Process

Doctoral Studies Appeals Committee
Abraham S. Fischler School of Education

The doctoral studies appeal process for the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education (FSE) serves to provide a formal means of resolving disputes between students and the administration or faculty. The proper protocol for resolving disputes involves first utilizing the following informal measures:

- For any *administrative action* (e.g., dismissal, violations of behavioral standards), first consult the appropriate administrator (i.e., director, dean or designee). A written account of any perceived discrepancies may be requested by the administrator prior to his/her review. The administrator may, at his/her discretion, either intercede or suggest a formal review by the Appeals Committee.
- For disputes over a *final course grade* or *other academic matter*, first consult the course professor. If the dispute persists after consulting the course professor, then consult the program professor or academic director for the course or study area. A written account of any perceived discrepancies may be requested by the program professor or academic director prior to his/her review. The program professor or academic director may, at his/her discretion, either intercede or suggest a formal review by the Appeals Committee.

If no resolution is achieved after utilizing the above informal measures, a formal appeal may then be filed with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs by completing the attached *Student Appeal Form* and *Informal Resolution Verification Form*. All forms must be completed and on file in Student Judicial Affairs within forty-five (45) days from the date of the administrative action, or from the end date of the course if appealing a grade, for consideration by the committee.

- A. A three-member committee consisting of a doctoral enrollment counselor, program professor, and an administrator or designee, presided over by a chairperson in a non-voting capacity, shall meet on a monthly basis on or about the middle of each month, or as needed, to review appeals. Neither students, nor administration or faculty, against whom an appeal is filed, attend the committee's review. All parties involved are represented by written statements to include relevant facts and rationale pertaining to the appeal, and any applicable supporting documentation. The appeal is decided by a majority vote of the committee.

1. When appealing a *final course grade*, written statements and accompanying documentation submitted with the *Student Appeal Form* are forwarded to the course professor within a reasonable time frame for their written response to the issues raised by the appellant. Upon receipt of the course professor's written response, the matter is then taken under review by the Appeals Committee at its next meeting.
 - a. Because the assignment of grades resides with the expertise and academic/professional discretion of the professor, the committee does not evaluate course work for the purpose of assigning or changing grades (i.e., faculty assessment of students' work is not reviewable). The committee does, however, seek to determine whether the professor issued grades in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the program and FSE. Any allegation that a grade was awarded capriciously or arbitrarily, or that there were procedural irregularities, must be supported by clear and compelling evidence; not merely a statement to this effect.
 - b. Should the committee's decision favor the student, one of the following measures will ensue:
 - The Appeals Coordinator will consult the course professor to resolve the matter consistent with the committee's determination.
 - If the Appeals Coordinator is unable to resolve the matter, a three-member faculty panel will be convened to review the appeal for a final determination by majority vote, which shall be binding upon either party. Faculty serving on the panel will not have had any prior knowledge of the appeal under review.
2. When appealing *other academic matters* (e.g., violations of academic standards), written statements and accompanying documentation submitted with the *Student Appeal Form* are forwarded to the course professor within a reasonable time frame for their written response to the issues raised by the appellant. Upon receipt of the course professor's written response, the matter is then taken under review by the Appeals Committee at its next meeting.
 - a. Should the committee's decision favor the student, one of the following measures will ensue:
 - The Appeals Coordinator will consult the course professor to resolve the matter consistent with the committee's determination.
 - If the Appeals Coordinator is unable to resolve the matter, a three-member faculty panel will be convened to review the appeal for a final determination by majority vote, which shall be binding upon either party. Faculty serving on the panel will not have had any prior knowledge of the appeal under review.

3. When appealing an *administrative action* (e.g., dismissal; violations of behavioral standards), written statements and accompanying documentation submitted with the *Student Appeal Form* may be forwarded to an appropriate administrator (i.e., director, dean or designee) within a reasonable time frame for a written response to the issues raised by the appellant. Upon receipt of the administrator's written response, the matter is then taken under review by the Appeals Committee at its next meeting. The decision of the committee shall be binding upon either party.
- B. In the event all necessary statements and documentation to be reviewed are not received within ten (10) working days of the committee's scheduled meeting, the appeal is carried forward to its next meeting.
 - C. Written notification of the committee's decision is provided within a reasonable time frame of its review via e-mail and first-class U.S. mail.
 1. The committee may request additional information from the appellant, and/or the administration or faculty, if it determines that a decision cannot be reached based on the information provided.
 - a. When additional information from the appellant, and/or the administration or faculty is necessary, the appeal, to include any additional information, is carried forward to the committee's next meeting.
 2. Administrative actions, final course grades, and other academic matters may be appealed one (1) time only.
 - D. If the appellant is not satisfied with the decision of the committee and wishes to pursue his/her complaint, a formal grievance may be filed with the FSE Office of Student Judicial Affairs.
 1. A formal grievance may be pursued when a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved through utilizing the process outlined above.
 - a. Grievance forms must be requested within fifteen (15) days from the date of written notification of the appeal committee's decision.
 2. Students who wish to file a formal grievance may discuss the matter with the Director of Student Judicial Affairs.