Appeals Process

The Office of Student Judicial Affairs (OSJA) employs a two-tiered appeals process that is designed to promote the equitable resolution of disputes between students and the administration or faculty. The two tiers consist of a local, or degree-level committee as a first avenue of appeal (i.e., appeals committee), and a school-wide grievance committee as a second and final level of appeal. Students are encouraged to informally resolve disputes with the administration or faculty by initially addressing their concerns with the appropriate administrator or faculty member. If no resolution is achieved through informal measures, a formal appeal may be requested (see ***Appeals***). In the event that a student believes a satisfactory resolution is not achieved through a formal appeal, the student may then proceed to the next level of appeal by filing a grievance (see ***Grievances***).* This next level of appeal (i.e., grievance) serves to provide students with an opportunity to counter (not rebuke) an unfavorable outcome by the appeals committee and/or introduce new information that may not have previously been disclosed. An appeal outcome letter that includes the committee's rationale for its decision is provided to aid in the formulation of possible grievances.

Students are encouraged to provide a clear and concise written statement of the facts, supported by relevant and compelling documentation.

The decisions of appeal and grievance committees are not subjective, but rather the result of a thorough and thoughtful analysis of the facts and documentation provided as it relates to applicable policies and procedures. Similarly, when considering grade appeals, appeal and grievance committees do not substitute its judgment for the professional academic/qualitative discretion of faculty in assessing the quality of students' work (i.e., faculty assessment of students' work is not subject to review). Rather, the review of grade appeals focuses on adherence to policy, procedure, and protocol by the course professor. 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.

Appeals Protocol

The appeals process is not an avenue for students to seek exemption from, or to contest, the established policies and procedures of the Fischler School and the University. Appeals and grievances are reviewed on an individual basis for singular issues (i.e., no multiple issue or group appeals will be considered). If disputing more than one issue (e.g., grade and dismissal), separate appeals and grievances must be submitted (i.e., one for each dispute). Any single issue may be appealed one time only.

Grades on individual assignments during the time frame of a course are not subject to review. Upon receipt of a final course grade, an appeal may be filed in which a grade on an individual assignment is under dispute (see the above reference to faculty assessment of students' work in assigning grades). Individual assignments and final course grades under dispute are not subject to review by a third party.

Students must complete and fully execute all required forms for review and consideration. Completion and/or submission of forms and/or documentation by a third party, or representation by a third party, will not effectuate a review by the applicable committee. If, upon conducting a cursory review of an appeal or grievance, it is determined in the judgment of the Director of Student Judicial Affairs to be non-reviewable (e.g., for reasons of time, nature of the appeal/grievance, or person filing the appeal), the appeal or grievance will summarily be denied. Should an appeal or grievance contain accusations of discrimination or bias, an independent review by the director may be conducted in advance of a committee review.

Once an appeal or grievance has concluded, any subsequent communication regarding the committee's decision should be directed solely to the committee chair, the Director of Student Judicial Affairs, or OSJA departmental staff.

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* Grievances are not considered unless and until an appeal has been filed and undergone a committee review.