



### **TITLE OF POLICY**

Policy on Appeal of Block Grades, Course Grades, and Written Evaluations

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

To establish the policy and procedures for appealing a block and/or course grade and written evaluations. This policy applies to all medical students and faculty.

### **RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The Education Committee will review and approve the policy in odd-numbered years or as needed.

### **LCME REFERENCE(S)**

LCME 9.9: Student Advancement and Appeal Process

### **HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES**

Revised and approved by the Curriculum Committee July 18, 2011

Approved by Education Committee February 20, 2017

Revised and approved by Education Committee October 2018

Revised and approved by Education Committee December 2018

Revised and approved by Education Committee August 2021

Approved by the Application Phase Committee May 1, 2023

### **POLICY**

#### **Grounds for an Appeal**

All appeals must be in writing and contain one or more of the following as the basis for appeal:

- Mathematical or clerical error
  - Arbitrariness (i.e., decisions that are made by chance, whim, or impulse, and not by reason or principle);
  - Personal malice; or
  - Inappropriate jurisdiction (i.e., the matter was inappropriately decided through a School of Medicine (SOM) forum when there were elements that should have first been decided in a general University forum (e.g., UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Code violations). The SOM may impose additional requirements/sanctions after the University forum review has been completed, consistent with the Student Advancement Policy
  - New information not available at the time the grade was assigned or evaluation completed
  - Discrimination based on age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identify, genetic information, national origin, religion, sex, or veteran status;
- NOTE: The University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Misconduct prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual's age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identify, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.



- NOTE: Any administrator or supervisor, including a department chair, associate dean or other administrator, who receives a student's complaint about prohibited harassment or discrimination, must notify the EOC Office. If a student raises a claim of prohibited harassment or discrimination during an academic appeal, an investigation of the student's claim must be performed by the EOC Office.
- NOTE: For any appeals that include discrimination as a basis of appeal, the relevant SOM representative must receive the results of the harassment or discrimination investigation by the EOC office before the SOM may proceed with its appeal process.

Students who want additional information regarding the University's process for responding to allegations of discrimination or harassment should contact the Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) Office for assistance:

Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599  
Telephone: (919) 966-3576  
[eoc@unc.edu](mailto:eoc@unc.edu)  
<https://eoc.unc.edu/>

### **Appeal of Block and/or Course Grade and/or Written Evaluation**

#### **Level 1: Appeal to the Course Director(s)**

A student must submit all appeals in writing. Students must initiate an appeal within 15 business days of the notification of the grade or evaluation. Students appealing failing grades may not continue to the next phase of the curriculum, but they are able to take approved electives as allowed by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

A properly submitted appeal requires:

1. A written statement by the student
2. Clear specification of the grounds of the appeal using the 6 grounds of appeal listed above.
3. Submission to the course director(s) and to each of the following parties:
  - a) Associate Dean for Student Affairs;
  - b) Assistant Dean for Student Affairs;
  - c) Registrar; and
  - d) Student's college advisor.

Receipt of the student's materials by these parties will be confirmed via an email to the student. The confirmation will either (1) accept the submission as complete or (2) decline the submission as incomplete, permitting the student to re-submit according to guidelines above, provided re-submission does not exceed the 15 business days specified above.



Should the course director(s) determine that there is a reason to change the course grade or evaluation in the student's favor, the course director will send notification to the student, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, the Registrar, and the student's college advisor.

If no basis for changing the course grade and/or written evaluation is found, the course director will inform the above parties that the grade and/or evaluation stands. The student will receive written notification of the course director's decision within 15 business days of the student's appeal. If it is not possible to meet this deadline, then within those 15 business days, the course director will inform the student of the date when the notification will be sent.

### **Level 2: Appeal to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or Designee**

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the course director(s), the student may file one additional appeal within 15 business days of receiving the Level 1 denial.

A properly submitted appeal requires:

1. A written statement by the student
2. Clear specification of the grounds of the appeal using the 6 grounds of appeal listed above.
3. Submission to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education and to each of the following parties:
  - a) Associate Dean for Student Affairs;
  - b) Assistant Dean for Student Affairs;
  - c) Registrar; and
  - d) Student's college advisor.

Receipt of the student's materials to these parties will be confirmed via an email to the student from Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or designee. The confirmation will either (1) accept the submission as complete or (2) decline the submission as incomplete, permitting the student to re-submit according to guidelines above provided re-submission does not exceed the 15 business days specified above.

Within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal, the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or designee will either:

- Decide that the appeal lacks the merit to warrant a hearing and uphold the decision of the course directors; or
- Schedule a hearing within 15 business days of the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education's receipt of the appeal before an ad hoc committee consisting of three faculty members of the SOM who serve on the Education Committee. The individuals serving on the ad hoc committee must not be individuals who have either been involved in assessing the student in the course or who have been the student's health care provider. During the hearing, the student will have an opportunity to discuss the rationale for their appeal, and the course director, or their representative, will have an opportunity to discuss their rationale for determining the student's grade and for denying the appeal.



The student may have their advisor, or another SOM faculty advocate of their choice, attend the hearing. Attorneys may not attend or participate in the hearing.

The ad hoc committee will make a determination based on the information reviewed and discussed at the hearing. The decision of the ad hoc committee is advisory to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or designee. The Senior Associate Deans for Medical Student Education or designee, upon receipt of the recommendation of the ad hoc committee, will render a final decision regarding the appeal. The decision will be delivered to the student within 15 business days of the appeal hearing. If it is not possible to meet this deadline, then within those 15 business days, the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or designee will inform the student of the date when the notification will be sent. The decision of the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Student Education or designee is the final decision for block or course grade or written evaluation appeals, and no further appeals are available to the student.

#### **PROCEDURE(S)**

N/A

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

##### **Grades for Honor Court Violations**

A student who is alleged to have cheated on a medical school exam should be given a grade of NG and the incident should be referred to the UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Court system for investigation. Assigning a failing grade for cheating is not allowed under the current Instrument of Student Judicial Governance until the student has passed through the UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Court system. If the student is given a grade of F because of an allegation of cheating, and the case has not been referred to the UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Court system, the student may appeal the grade. This ground for appeal was previously expressed as appealing based on “student conduct cognizable under the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.”