

Grade Appeal Procedures

Each academic college will implement the following procedures for the resolution of final grade appeals filed by students. A student may only appeal the final grade in a course, individual assignments or test grades are not subject to appeal. The student may seek the assistance of the SGA Director of Student Rights and Grievances at any time during the informal and formal procedures. It is the responsibility of the student to contact SGA. All grade appeals must be initiated within the prescribed time period(s) indicated in the following Informal and Formal Procedures.

Informal Procedures

1. The student must attempt to resolve the academic grievance with the faculty member involved within 30 calendar days of when the final course grade is posted.
2. If the matter is not resolved with the faculty member, for whatever reason, the student may pursue the issue with the head of the faculty member's department within 60 calendar days when the final course grade was posted by completing a Grade Appeal Form and submitting it to the head of the department in which the faculty member teaches. The department head may use a department-based group to review and make recommendations regarding the matter. A copy of the Grade Appeal Form is available in every academic department office and Student Life.
3. If the matter is not resolved at the department level, the student may submit a copy of his/her final Grade Appeal Form to the Academic Dean of the College in which the faculty member teaches. The Grade Appeal Form must be filed with the Academic Dean within 90 days of when the final course grade was posted. The Dean should informally review the merits of the complaint and attempt to facilitate a resolution of the matter before initiating the formal process.

[Student Grade Appeal Form](#)

Formal Procedures

1. The Academic Dean shall verify that the 90-day deadline for filing final grade appeal has been met. If so, the Academic Dean shall refer the matter to the College Academic Grievance Committee (see committee composition requirements below) within ten (10) work days after receipt of the appeal form and/or attempts to facilitate an informal resolution. If the form is not submitted to the Academic Dean within 90 days of when the final grade was posted, the Academic Dean shall inform the student in writing that the period for acting on the matter has expired and therefore, the Grade Appeal Form (petition) is rejected and the matter closed.
2. If the student has met the deadline, the Academic Dean shall provide the Chair of the Academic Grievance Committee (Chair) with copies of all pertinent documents related to the grade appeal.

3. The hearing will be scheduled by the Chair at a date and time agreed upon by the student (complainant) and the faculty member. If an agreement is not reached, the Chair will set the date and time for the hearing. The Chair will make every attempt to schedule the hearing within 30 work days of receiving the grade appeal. The Chair may postpone the hearing for good cause. The decision of the Chair to postpone or reschedule a hearing is final and not subject to appeal.
4. The Chair will caution both parties that there should be no communication between them concerning the grade appeal. Both the grievant and the faculty member shall refer all matters pertinent to the grade appeal to the Chair.
5. The grievant and the faculty member will provide the Chair with a list of witnesses to be called. Each party is responsible for notifying his/her witnesses of the meeting. The Chair may assist with summoning witnesses to the hearing; however, the responsibility of producing witnesses rests with the respective parties involved.
6. The Chair will provide the Academic Dean with the Academic Grievance Committee's recommendation within ten (10) work days of the formal grade appeal hearing.
7. The Dean will notify his/her final decision in writing to the student, faculty member, and Department Head, and, if a grade changed is involved, the Registrar within ten (10) work days of receipt of the report from the college Academic Grievance Committee. The decision of the Dean is final and ends the grade appeal process.
8. A copy of the Student Grade Appeal Form documenting the outcome of the appeal procedure will be filed in the Dean's Office.

Academic Grievance Committee

Composition

The Academic Dean of each college will appoint the College Academic Grievance Committee. The Undergraduate Committee will consist of five members: three faculty members from the college and two students. An ad-hoc committee will be appointed to hear graduate student issues. Membership of the graduate ad-hoc committee will be three graduate faculty and two graduate students. One alternate faculty member and one alternate student will be named in the event that a seated committee member finds it necessary to excuse himself/herself or is successfully challenged. The Academic Dean will appoint one of the three faculty members to serve as Chair.

Duties

The College Academic Grievance Committees will hear academic dishonesty cases as well as student final grade appeals. Complaints involving discrimination or harassment will be handled in accordance with the Standards of Conduct. If the case concerns academic dishonesty, the procedures followed are the same as for disciplinary matters. When the student or student group lodges a formal final grade appeal against a faculty member, procedures for conducting a hearing will be followed as described below.

Hearing Procedures

1. Rules of evidence, disclosure, procedure, and the burden of proof for deciding issues found in a court of law do not apply to these procedures. The purpose of an administrative hearing in a university environment is to search for the truth and to make reasonable decisions regarding the pursuit of truth and recommendations regarding such matters. To that end, the weight of proof when deciding an issue is “more likely than not.” For example, do the evidence and argument presented during the hearing weigh more for accepting or rejecting the allegation? The answer to that question will provide the basis for the committee’s finding.
2. The committee may consider those issues that a reasonable employee or student would likely consider in making decisions. The committee will operate in the spirit of fairness to all parties and thus all reasonable evidence and testimony that the Committee deems appropriate may be heard in the committee’s attempt to determine the merits of the allegation and to determine recommendations regarding such matters.
3. Any member of the committee who is directly involved with the academic grievance before the committee shall excuse himself/herself in order to ensure a fair hearing.
4. Either the student or the faculty member may challenge any member of the committee for lack of impartiality. The challenging party shall present grounds for the challenge. The Chair will rule on such challenges.
5. All parties concerned with the academic grievance shall appear in person and remain until the Chair releases them.
6. Parties may appear alone or with one other person. This person may be a friend, an advisor, or an attorney. If any party chooses to be accompanied by an attorney, he/she must so inform the Chair of the committee at least 3 days in advance of the hearing. The attorney, advisor or friend may not address the committee, witnesses or the other party (s) directly. If the student chooses to invite the SGA Director of Student Rights and Grievances to attend the meeting, this person will be permitted to attend the meeting as the advisor.
7. The student and the faculty member may present documentary evidence, witnesses, and testimony. Only three witnesses may appear for each side. The committee will grant exceptions to the number of witnesses upon demonstration that three witnesses cannot adequately present a party’s case. The Chair will rule on all exception requests.

The following sequence shall be followed for the presentation of testimony

1. Grievant opening statements
2. Faculty opening statements
3. Testimony and cross-examination of witnesses
4. Student closing statement (10 minute limit)
5. Faculty closing statement (10 minute limit)
6. Student rebuttal (5 minute limit)
7. Faculty rebuttal (5 minute limit)

8. The committee reserves the right to question any party appearing before the committee at any time.
9. All testimony on behalf of the student and the faculty member shall be heard unless judged by the Chair to be repetitious or irrelevant. The decision of the Chair is final.
10. Neither the student nor faculty member shall question the other directly but may suggest questions to the Chair.
11. A tape recording of the proceedings, except for the committee deliberations in executive session, will be maintained along with the written record.
12. After all the evidence has been presented, the committee will move into executive session to evaluate the testimony, including documentary evidence presented, and will reach a decision on the validity of the academic grievance and action to be taken. The committee may take notes or materials with them into executive session. All individual notes will be collected and destroyed at the conclusion of the hearing. The committee will review the findings and cast ballots in executive session. Each member is allowed one vote. The weight of proof for deciding an issue is "more likely than not." See the first paragraph of the section titled "Hearing Procedures."
13. The committee will reconvene in regular session for the purpose of informing the student and the faculty member of its findings and recommendation(s).
14. The committee will report its findings and recommendations to be taken to the Academic Dean of the college within ten (10) work days of the hearing. The Chair will forward the records of the hearing and minutes of the meeting the Academic Dean.
15. The Academic Dean will conduct a procedural and substantive review of the matter. The Academic Dean will either accept the findings and implement the recommendations of the committee or, if the Academic Dean determines that a procedural or due process error has been made or there is cause for reconsideration based on substantive matter, reject the findings and/or recommendations of the committee and impose appropriate action or refer the matter back to the committee for reconsideration.
16. The Academic Dean will notify the student and faculty member in writing of his/her decision(s) regarding the matter within 10 days of receipt of the report from the college Academic Grievance Committee.

Student Final Grade Appeal Form

Informal Procedures: (must be initiated within 30 calendar days of when the final grade is posted)

1. This form is to be used by students who wish to initiate a **final grade appeal** and who have attempted to resolve the matter with the instructor. A student may only appeal the final grade in a course.
2. Students may request assistance with the appeal process from the SGA Director of Student Rights and Grievances. The SGA Office is located in the Student Union. The telephone number is 985-448-4557, email is SGA.Grievances@nicholls.edu
3. If the matter is not resolved with the instructor, the student may pursue the issue by completing this form and submitting it to the department head within 60 calendar days of when the final grade was posted. If the matter is resolved with the instructor, the student is encouraged to keep this form for his/her records.

Grievance Information:

Name of Student: _____ N Number: _____

Local Telephone Number: _____

Nicholls Email Address: _____

Type of Grievance: Final Grade Appeal

Name of Instructor: _____ Course: _____

Date Final Grade Posted in Banner: _____

Please provide a written description of the appeal request (attach to this form):

- A. detailed description of the nature of the grade appeal;
- B. description of the informal procedures taken by the student to resolve the matter, including date student met with instructor;
- C. description of documentary evidence to be used in support of the grade appeal (copies should be attached if available), and
- D. Remedial action requested by the student.

TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Date student submitted copy of final grade appeal form to department head: _____

Date student met with department head: _____

Matter satisfactorily resolved with department head: ____yes ____no

4. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the student may request a hearing on the matter by submitting a copy of the final grade appeal form to the Dean within 90 days of when the final course grade was posted.

Formal Procedures: Formal grievances must be filed within 90 days of when the final course grade was posted.

TO BE COMPLETED BY DEAN:

Date final grade appeal form submitted to Dean of the College: _____

Date Dean provided student a copy of the formal final grade appeal procedures: _____

Date final grade appeal referred to Chair of College Academic Grievance Committee: _____

Date of Committee Hearing: _____

Date Committee findings and recommendations forwarded to Dean: _____

Date parties notified of Dean's decision*: _____

The Decision of the Dean is final.*