

Appeal Policy for Grades, Academic Decisions, and Student Complaints

Collins College of Business

Approved by Collins College Faculty October 18, 2016

[Revised October 17, 2016]

This document is not a contract. Policies and interpretation by the administration are subject to change as circumstances warrant. Please check with the Associate Dean for updates and current application of any policy.

I. PURPOSE

The following grade appeal and complaint policy is established in order to make clear the procedures of the Collins College of Business regarding student complaints and appeals of grades or academic decisions. Cases involving academic misconduct are governed only by the College's "Policies and Procedures Relating to Academic Misconduct." Recognizing that students may have complaints from time to time regarding grades, academic decisions, or other issues related to a particular professor, department chair, administrator, committee, or other entity, the Collins College of Business of The University of Tulsa provides the following mechanism for students to address the problem in question.

II. POLICY

- A. This policy may involve a grade dispute for a class or other concerns which may include (but not limited to): a possible FERPA violation, disrespectful or discriminatory conduct, or failure to give adequate/timely responses to questions by an instructor or other University official.
- B. Students are encouraged to resolve differences or concerns in an informal manner with professors, entities, or other university employees through direct contact and inquiry.
- C. If a satisfactory resolution is not possible informally, a student who believes that a decision or action made by a professor, department chair, or other entity is unwarranted, in error, or otherwise adversely and incorrectly affects the student, may appeal the decision by taking the following steps in the order shown.
- D. At each stage, the appeal must be made in accordance with the following rules:
 1. The student's formal appeal or complaint must be made in a written document. The appeal document should not be an email, but it may be attached to an email as a Word or PDF document.
 2. The appeal must set forth (i) the decision or grade being appealed or a full description of the complaint, (ii) the rationale for considering the decision to be in error, and (iii) the specific remedy requested.
 3. The initial appeal or complaint by the student must be initiated within 30 calendar days of the incident or within 30 calendar days of the date grades are due for the semester in question.

III. PROCEDURES

A. INITIAL COMPLAINT

1. Students should attempt to resolve the issue in informal communication between the parties involved.

Procedures Continued on the Next Page

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2. If a resolution is not found informally, the student should contact in writing (as described in Section II: Policy) the individual who has posted the grade or decision or caused the complaint to explain the basis of the appeal or complaint and the remedy requested. This should be done within 30 calendar days of the decision or incident causing the complaint (or final posting of grades for the semester where a grade may be questioned).
 3. If the party or parties petitioned feel there are insufficient reasons for honoring the appeal or addressing the complaint, the petitioned party or parties should explain the refusal to do so on appropriate academic or administrative grounds in writing normally within 10 calendar days of the student's appeal.
- B. APPEAL OF INITIAL COMPLAINT
1. Should the student be unsatisfied with the explanation provided at the first level of complaint, he or she may appeal in writing in the designated order to the next level of academic or administrative supervision, which in most cases means the department chair or director. This second level of appeal should be made within 10 calendar days of being informed of the denial of the appeal by the individual in question
 2. The department chair or director has 10 calendar days (except in unusual circumstances) to respond in writing to the appellant. If the department chair or director denies the appeal, the appellant has 10 calendar days to appeal in writing to the Associate Dean of the college.
- C. APPEAL TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN
1. A student shall have the right to request a hearing before the Review Board.
 2. Should the appellant choose retain and use outside legal counsel, the Associate Dean must be notified at least 5 calendar days prior to the Review Board hearing.
 3. The Associate Dean, as chair, will convene the Review Board to review the appeal from the decision of an instructor. The Associate Dean will cast a vote only in the event of a tie by the Review Board.
 4. The membership and procedures of the Review Board are defined in its charter.
 5. The Review Board shall have the right to conduct a hearing, to request additional information, and to receive and give such weight to evidence as the Review Board sees fit.
 6. The Board will determine who may speak during an appeal hearing, but in normal circumstances only the student making the appeal, the instructor who filed the allegation, and named witnesses will be asked to address the Review Board.
 7. A student has the right to remain silent, to present personal testimony and evidence, and to have the assistance of a friend, or other advisor of his or her choosing.
 8. The instructor initiating the complaint, the student and/or the student's representative shall not be present during the vote of the Review Board. The deliberation and the vote of the board are considered confidential except for the reporting of the outcome to the Dean.
 9. The Review Board shall make a recommendation for course of action to the Dean of the College. The Dean may affirm the board's recommendation or determine an alternate course of action. The Dean's decision is final and binding. The decision of the Dean should be rendered within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the recommendation by the Review Board

Procedures Continued on the Next Page

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D. FINAL APPEAL TO THE PROVOST

1. In the unusual circumstance that the student can make a case that the concept of fundamental fairness has been violated in the appeal process itself, a final appeal may be made to the Provost, who may either consider it or decline to do so depending on the Provost's assessment of the circumstances presented. In all such cases, student appeals on academic issues will be final when a decision is rendered by the Provost
2. An appeal to the Office of the Provost must be submitted within 10 calendar days after receiving the final decision by the Dean.