



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Grade Appeal Policy

### Policy Number 1-19

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, April 9, 2026

Issued by President Jeffery Osgood, April 23, 2026

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Previous Policy: Supersedes IAP 25 and Portions of PRP 3592

### 1. Purpose

The grade appeal policy establishes a clear, fair process by which students may contest a course grade that reflects an unwarranted deviation from grading procedures set out at the beginning of the course or they believe has been awarded in a manner inconsistent with university policies.

### 2. Scope

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania students, faculty and staff.

### 3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1. Definitions

- 3.1.1. **Student:** Any student enrolled at Commonwealth University, including undergraduate and graduate students.
- 3.1.2. **Grade:** Letter assigned at the end of a semester, session, or intersession reflecting the final evaluation of a student's work. Incomplete or other grades denoting a course in process are not subject to this policy.
- 3.1.3. **Instructor of Record:** Faculty member responsible for assigning a final grade for students in a course.
- 3.1.4. **Regular Semester:** Indicative of either a Fall or Spring term.
- 3.1.5. **Class day:** For undergraduate students, a class day is defined as any day when classes are officially in session, fall or spring semesters. For graduate students, a class day is defined as any day when classes or courses are officially in session.

#### 3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. Department Chair evaluates grade appeal petitions at Step 2. They may also resolve grade appeals informally at Step 1 (See 5.1.6 and 5.1.7).



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3.1.2. Dean of the College evaluates grade appeal petitions at Step 3

#### **4. Policy**

- 4.1. A student may appeal the final grade in a course if they believe an academic injustice has occurred such that one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - 4.1.1. Failure to Follow Published Grading Criteria: Significant and unwarranted deviation from grading procedures and course outlines set at the beginning of the course.
  - 4.1.2. Arbitrary Grading: A grade assigned arbitrarily on the basis of whim or impulse.
  - 4.1.3. Inconsistency with official University policy.
- 4.2. A student should initiate an appeal within 10 class days of the beginning of the regular semester following.
- 4.3. In an attempt to resolve a complaint on an informal basis, the student should first meet with the following individuals to discuss the matter in the order listed:
  - 4.3.1. The instructor of record for the course.
  - 4.3.2. Chair of the Department for which the course is offered
  - 4.3.3. Dean, or designee, of the College in which course is offered
- 4.4. It is assumed that the department chairpersons and the deans will make every effort to resolve the conflict by meeting with all parties and by listening to the views of all parties as they relate to the grievance. Every effort should be made to settle the alleged injustice through informal consultation.
- 4.5. Students who feel the academic appeals process has curtailed their rights to due process may request a hearing before an academic grievance board (CU Policy 1-24)
  - 4.5.1. Requests for a grievance hearing must be filed no later than the beginning of the eighth week of the regular semester following the alleged academic injustice.
  - 4.5.2. Any request for a grievance hearing must present evidence that the student's right to fair grading standards as set forth in 4.1, or the right to due process, have been curtailed.
- 4.6. Disagreement with the academic standards, workload, or the grading scale does not constitute grounds for a grade appeal.
- 4.7. Grades awarded by the faculty member of record can only be changed by that faculty member, unless the Provost directs otherwise following the procedure outlined below.
- 4.8. Grades awarded to students engaged in off-campus study that are awarded by the host institution are not subject to this policy.



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## **5. Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines**

### **5.1 Step 1: Informal Resolution**

- 5.1.1 A student must initiate a written appeal to the instructor of record within 10 class days of the beginning of the regular term following the final posted course grade.
- 5.1.2 The written appeal must clearly specify the violation of published grading standards, evidence of capriciousness, or evidence of a violation of University policy.
- 5.1.3 The burden of proof rests upon the student.
- 5.1.4 The appeal must be sent to the instructor of record.
- 5.1.5 If the appeal is based on an interpretation of departmental or University policy, the student's academic advisor should also be notified.
- 5.1.6 If the instructor of record is nonresponsive to a request to meet within 5 class days, the appeal initiates with the Department Chair.
- 5.1.7 If the instructor of record is no longer employed by the University, the appeal initiates with the Department Chair.
- 5.1.8 If the faculty member is the department chair proceed directly to Step 3.
- 5.1.9 The student and faculty member should mutually attempt to resolve the appeal within five (5) class days following receipt of the written appeal.

### **5.2 Step 2: Department Chair resolution.**

- 5.2.1 If the appeal is not resolved at Step 1, the student may submit a written appeal within five (5) class days to the chair of the department offering the course (or their designee). All evidence should be presented to the department chair. The department chair (or their designee) will submit a written response to the student within ten (10) class days following receipt of the written appeal. A copy of the response is provided to the instructor.

### **5.3 Step 3: Dean of the College**

- 5.3.1 If the appeal is not resolved at Step 2, the student may submit a written appeal to the dean of the college or school offering the course (or their designee). The appeal must be made within five (5) class days following the receipt of the written response from the department chair. The dean (or their designee) will submit a written recommendation within ten (10) class days following receipt of the written appeal. A copy of the recommendation shall be provided to the instructor of record and the department chair.

### **5.4 Step 4: Academic Grievance**

- 5.4.1. Students may submit a written request to convene an Academic Grievance Board under conditions outlined in 4.5. Requests must be submitted within five (5) class days following the receipt of the written response from the dean (or their designee). The request for an appeal must be submitted to the Dean for Undergraduate Education (for undergraduate appeals) or the Dean of The Graduate School (for graduate appeals), who



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will convene an Academic Grievance Board as soon as possible, after the receipt of the written appeal. See Academic Grievance Policy (CU Policy 1-24)

## **6 Compliance and Enforcement**

- 6.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 6.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

## **7. Additional Information**

### **7.1 Supporting Documents**

### **7.2 History**

- 7.2.1 Supersedes IAP 25 and, in part, PRP 3592: Academic Grievance Procedure by separating the grade appeal process from policy describing the structure, composition, and functioning of the academic grievance boards.
- 7.2.2 Effective Date – April 23, 2026
- 7.2.3 Revised – April 23, 2026
- 7.2.4 Next Review Date – Spring 2031

### **7.3 Related Policies**

- 7.3.1 Academic Grievance Policy 1-24

### **7.4 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting**

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viceprovost@commonwealthu.edu  
570-389-3803