



Procedure Number:	AS 113
Procedure Title:	Academic Grievance
Relevant Board Policy:	Board Policy F.4.6 Academic Grievance
Relevant SACSCOC Principle:	10.1 Academic Policies, 12.4 Student Complaints
Originating Unit:	Vice President for Academic Success
Maintenance Unit:	Vice President for Academic Success
Contact for Interpretation:	Vice President for Academic Success

## **I. Academic Grievance Procedure**

Faculty are responsible for classroom management, teaching strategies, testing, and evaluation of student performance. At academic institutions conflicts may develop within the educational process that require academic intervention using the Academic Grievance process.

Students are encouraged to use the Academic Grievance process only when there is clear and convincing evidence that a faculty member has treated the student unfairly, arbitrarily, or capriciously. The Academic Grievance process allows for unresolved complaints to move from student, to professor, to academic department Chair, and to the Dean until a resolution is achieved or a final decision affirming or denying the grievance is made.

## 1. Opportunity to Appeal a Grade

Northeast Lakeview College acknowledges the possibility that a student may dispute the final grade recorded for a course taken, believing that the grade was incorrectly or unfairly determined.

Prior to initiating a formal grievance, the student should make a reasonable effort to resolve the problem with the course professor. This should occur as soon as possible following the course end or notification of grade.

If the nature of the grade dispute is beyond the course academics and personal, then the student may first approach the Department Chair of the academic department to which the course belongs or the Dean for further guidance.

All unresolved grievances beyond the level of the course professor will be channeled to the next higher-level administrator. A complete record of the grievance will be forwarded to the next higher-level administrator. After considering both sides and reviewing the record, a decision will be rendered affirming or denying the grievance. To affirm a student grievance there must be adequate cause.

If an initial, informal grade dispute is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the Student Academic Grievance procedure (below) can be initiated using the *Academic Grievance Form*.

**a. Final Course Grades**

The formal academic grievance process is designed for appeal of final course grades. Accordingly, it is after a final course grade has been submitted by the professor and recorded as a part of the student's transcript that a grade becomes eligible for appeal.

**b. Grades within a Course**

Individual assignment grades or any broader concerns within a semester are not eligible for the formal academic grievance procedure and should be dealt with within the course itself. Individual assignment grades or broader concerns may, however, become part of a case for disputing a course grade after the course is complete.

The Academic Grievance process may be adapted for addressing grading concerns during the course of a semester. The student should first discuss the concern with the professor. If the student remains unsatisfied with the explanation, he/she should next discuss the concern with the Chair of the academic department in which the course resides. As an example, a student with a concern about grading in a Biology course should see the Chair of the Department of Natural Sciences. Typically, the Chair's intervention will stand as the decisive action in the situation. Should the student wish to appeal further to the Dean of Academic Success, the Dean's decision will be final. An appeal of the course's final grade remains, however, as an option at the end of the semester. The normal grade appeal procedure will apply.

## 2. Grievance Procedure

### Definitions of Terms

1. “Professor” is the instructor of record for the course the student took and from whom the disputed grade was recorded.
2. “Chair” is the administrative chair of the academic department in which the course resides. Occasionally, the course professor may have a home base in an academic department different from that of the course; in such a case, the chair of the department that controls the course, and not the chair of the professor’s home department, is the appropriate administrator.
3. “Dean” is the Dean of Academic Success, under whom the academic departments, professors, and courses fall.
4. “Adequate cause” means clear and objective evidence in support of the student’s position over that of the professor’s explanation of the grade.
5. “Grievance” is a claim that a student’s course grade has been incorrectly or unfairly determined and recorded.
6. “Appeal” is an action taken to request a review of and possible change to the recommended resolution of the grievance at a previous (lower) level.
7. “Working days” (and “business days” on the forms) are weekdays (Monday through Friday, excluding holidays) when the College is open for normal business. Days when faculty are “off contract” may extend the span of working days.

8. "Grade" refers only to the grade recorded for a course at the end of the semester. Individual assignment grades within a semester are not eligible for this academic grievance procedure and should be dealt with within the course itself. Individual assignment grades may, however, become part of the case for disputing a course grade after the course is complete.

### Procedure

A flow chart illustrates the process (attached as Appendix 2).

1. A course must first be completed and a final course grade recorded before an academic grievance related to the final course grade may be initiated.
2. The student who wishes to dispute a final course grade should approach the course professor informally within the first two weeks of the next regular semester in an attempt to understand or resolve the grade dispute.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the explanation of the grade and wishes to file a formal grievance, he/she must do so by submitting a written appeal using the Student Academic Grievance Form (attached as Appendix 1) within five working days following the initial, informal conference with the course professor. The first step in the formal grievance procedure is another conference with the course professor. The professor will render a decision either immediately in conference with the student or within five working days, either affirming or denying the grievance. The professor will notify the student of his/her decision in writing (which may be as simple as noting the decision and signing the grievance form).
4. If the student remains unsatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Chair of the academic department in which the course resides, within five working days.

This

step involves a conference with the Chair, who will then seek an explanation from the course professor. The Chair will render a decision within five working days, either affirming or denying the grievance. The Chair will provide his/her decision in writing to both the student and the professor.

5. If the student remains unsatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Dean within five working days. This step involves completing a separate form available from the Office of the Dean of Academic Success, which provides for a written explanation of the student's dispute, and a conference with the Dean, who will then seek an explanation from the Chair and from the course professor. The Dean's role is not to regrade the student's work but primarily to evaluate the process and ensure that the grade was determined properly (that is, in accordance with the course syllabus and College policies) and without inappropriate bias. The Dean will render a decision within five working days, either affirming or denying the grievance. The Dean will provide his/her decision in writing to the Chair, the student, and the professor.
6. The decision of the Dean is final.
7. A record of the academic grievance will be archived in the records of the Office of the Dean and forwarded upon the request of the Office of the Vice President for Student Success for inclusion in the College's records of other grievances.

Attachment: Academic Grievance Form, Academic Grievance Flow Chart

Originator: Alan Cottrell

Date Approved: 11/11/2016,

Updated: 11/26/2014

Last Updated: 10/13/2020

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Vice President for Academic Success

# Appendix 1

Print

Reset

## Northeast Lakeview College Student Academic Grievance Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Banner ID \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Alt. Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City/St./Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

The student must file an appeal with the Professor within two weeks of the next regular semester following the grade.

### Step One: Description of Grievance

Semester of course \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Professor \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Write grievance summary or attach prepared document:

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Student/Professor Conference Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Professor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Resolved

Unresolved

If the matter is resolved, then the process ends here. Otherwise, proceed to STEP TWO within 5 business days.  
Forward supporting documentation as necessary.

# Step Two: Department Chair Conference and Decision

Student/Department Chair Conference Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Department Chair will seek a response from the professor.

Upon consideration of the circumstances presented, I hereby affirm\*  , deny\*  the grievance in question.

*\*Written explanation must be forwarded to the Professor and the Student.*

Department Chair Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**If the matter is resolved, then the process ends here. Otherwise, proceed to STEP THREE within 5 business days. Forward supporting documentation as necessary.**



**Northeast Lakeview College Student Academic Grievance Form**

**Step Three: Appeal to Dean**

ACTION BY DEAN

Final Arbitration

The Office of the Dean has a separate grade grievance form to be obtained from the administrative assistant and completed before conferring with the Dean.

Student/Dean Conference Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Dean will secure a response from the Department Chair.

Upon consideration of the circumstances presented, I hereby affirm\*  deny\*  the grievance in question.

*\*Written explanation must be forwarded to the Department Chair, professor, and Student.*

Dean Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(Copy of letter of decision to be attached.)*

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Associate Vice Chancellor of Employee  
Services Title IX Coordinator, (210) 485-  
0200.  
Human Resources  
Department, 201 W.  
Sheridan, Bldg. AA  
San Antonio, Texas 78204.

## Appendix 2

# Academic Grievance Policy

The academic grievance procedure is displayed in the following flow chart:

