



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences

Approved by GFC: July 8, 1999

POLICY ON APPEAL OF GRADES

PURPOSE

It is the policy of the GSBMS that the assessment of student academic performance is a faculty responsibility. The faculty member offering the course, therefore, is responsible for evaluating the student's work in that course and, under normal circumstances, is the sole judge of the grades received by students in the course.

The faculty are obliged to make every effort to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true academic merit. The GSBMS operates under the strong presumption that the faculty's assessment of student merit is authoritative. On the other hand, situations may and do arise in which a student feels that he or she has been graded unfairly or inaccurately. This policy establishes a framework in which a student may seek protection against unfair, prejudiced, or capricious academic evaluation.

PROCEDURES FOR APPEAL OF GRADES

1. A student who wishes to appeal a grade received should first discuss the matter with the course director. This discussion should be initiated as soon as possible after the grade is received. The course director should listen to the student's argument and should provide the student with an explanation of how and why the grade was assigned. The course director should be receptive to the possibility of changing the grade if the student provides a compelling argument for doing so. The course director should not, however, grant special treatment to the individual student that would not be afforded to the other students in the class. In most cases, the issue should be resolved at this point.
2. If the student's concerns are not resolved, s/he may then raise the issue with his/her graduate program director or with the chairperson of the instructor's department. If the program director or chairperson feels that the complaint has merit, s/he should discuss it with the course instructor.
3. If the matter remains unresolved to the student's satisfaction, s/he may appeal the grade to the GSBMS dean. The dean may seek to resolve the issue informally, through discussion with the course instructor, program director and/or department chair. If that approach does not yield a resolution satisfactory to both the student and the instructor, the dean will refer the appeal to the Academic Standards Committee.

4. The Academic Standards Committee will review the grade appeal. It will normally require a written statement from the student outlining the basis of the student's complaint. Depending upon the nature of the complaint, the Committee may also require documentation about the course from the course director, such as the syllabus, the course objectives, the course's grading policy, etc. Copies of the student's exams and/or written assignments may also be requested from either the instructor or the student. The dean may be asked to provide other documentation relevant to the case. The Committee will normally interview the student and the course director, and may interview other persons as it deems appropriate. If the nature of the appeal and the course are such that some specific scientific expertise is required that is not represented on the Committee, the dean may appoint an appropriate *ad hoc* member from the graduate faculty.
5. After reviewing the arguments and evidence on both sides, and after deliberating the issues and merits of the case, the Committee may choose either to uphold the instructor's original grade assignment, or to determine that the original grade should be changed to some specific alternative grade. The Committee should provide a brief explanation of its decision, in writing, to the student (if the original grade is upheld), to the course director (if the original grade is changed), and to the dean (in either case).
6. If the course director wishes to appeal the Committee's decision, s/he may provide a written argument within one week of receiving notice of the decision. The Committee would then consider the appeal and decide to reverse its original decision, let it stand, or re-open its deliberation. In most cases, unless the instructor offers relevant new information, the Committee's original decision should stand.
7. If the Committee's final recommendation (i.e., after considering any appeal by the instructor) is to grant the student's appeal, the dean will instruct the university registrar to change the grade on the basis of the Academic Standards Committee's review. The dean will also inform the student, the course director, and the department chair of the final decision.