SCHOOL POLICY

Section Title: Academic Matters
Policy Name: Grade Grievance
Responsible Executive: Director of Student Support Services
Responsible Office: Office of Student Affairs
Originally Adopted: 04/28/2021
Revisions:

I. PURPOSE
This policy describes the circumstances surrounding why and how a student shall appeal a grade in a course and the procedures for how appeal petitions are handled at the Rutgers School of Public Health.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY
The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for implementing this policy under the general direction of the Director of Student Support Services in consultation with appropriate academic faculty and deans.

III. APPLICABILITY
Any student enrolled in a School of Public Health course is eligible to report a grievance about a course grade or a grade received for a particular piece of work in a course and advocate for an improved grade. Prior to formally appealing a grade, the student should attempt to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor.

i. Formal Written Appeal
Should a grade complaint not be satisfactorily resolved between student and course instructor, the student must submit a formal written appeal of the grade to the Director of Student Support Services. The written appeal shall include detailed information regarding: 1) the grade that was assigned; 2) the course assignments, syllabus, and any course information at issue; 3) an explanation of the grounds for the appeal; and 4) any and all email or other written exchange the student has had with the instructor and/or department about the issue.

ii. Reasonable Time of Appeal
A formal written complaint about a grade of work completed while the course is in progress must be submitted to the Director of Student Support Services no later than two (2) weeks after notification of the grade. A formal written complaint about a final course grade must be submitted to the Director of Student Support Services no later than two (2) weeks after grades are due for that semester.

iii. Review of Appeal Request
Following the receipt of a formal written appeal, the Director of Student Support Services shall notify the course instructor and the Department Chair/Concentration Director of the course’s academic department that a complaint has been filed. The Department Chair/Concentration Director shall review the complaint and shall initiate an investigation of the rationale for appeal no later than two (2) weeks after receipt of the written appeal. The investigation may include, but is not limited to, requesting more information and documentation from the student, discussing the rationale of the grade.
with the course instructor, and reviewing the grades and outcomes of other students in
the class. The review of the appeal may also include forming an ad-hoc committee of
faculty from the department or concentration to discuss the case. In the event a
Department Chair or Concentration Director is the instructor of the course in which the
student is appealing a grade in, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs shall serve as
the acting Department Chair to determine a decision. A description of the review
process and the appeal decision must be rendered to the Director of Student Support
Services no later than four (4) weeks after receipt of the written appeal.

iv. Decision of Appeal Review
A letter from the Director of Student Support Services noting the outcome of the
decision shall be sent via email to the student with the course instructor, Department
Chair/Concentration Director, and academic advisor of the student copied on the email.
A copy of the decision shall also be held in the student’s record. Should an appeal be
granted, the Registrar shall update the grade on the student’s transcript. Should a
remediation of coursework or alternate assignments be recommended for the grade to
be adjusted, the student shall coordinate with the course instructor to complete
remaining work within two (2) weeks of the receipt of the appeal decision. The course
instructor shall then fairly and impartially review the newly submitted course material
and inform the Director of Student Support Services and Registrar of final grade.

v. Secondary Appeal
A student who wishes to appeal the outcome of the initial grade appeal process must
appeal in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs no later than two (2) weeks
after notification of the grade appeal decision. The secondary appeal should include
information about how the initial grade appeal process was not handled fairly and/or
additional rationale for why a secondary review of the grade is warranted. In the event
that the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs was involved in the initial appeal review,
then the secondary appeal will go to the Director of Student Support Services. More
information and documentation may also be requested from the student. Written
notification of the action taken by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is sent to
the student via email within four (4) weeks of the filing of the second appeal.

vi. Discrimination as Basis for Grade Appeal
In accordance with the School of Public Health’s “Zero Tolerance for Harassment and
Discrimination,” any student with a complaint that the assignment of the grade was, in
part or in full, attributable to discrimination, shall be referred to the Office of Employment
Equity. Alternately, the student may appeal directly to the Office of Employment Equity.

A student complaint that a grade or other academic decision was the result of
discrimination, harassment, or retaliation is not reviewed as part of the School’s grade
grievance process, even if asserted at a later stage during a pending grade appeal. The
Office of Employment Equity (OEE) is responsible for enforcing the University’s
policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation (including Policies
60.1.12 and 60.1.28), which extend to adverse academic decisions, such as the
issuance of a negative grade in an assignment or course. No decision shall be rendered
regarding a student’s grade appeal until the OEE completes its investigation
concerning the discrimination allegation. Student complaints related to discriminatory
matters should be written directly to the Office of Employment Equity following their
complaint process.