

## **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.