

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

11. Grade Appeal Policy

Final Amendment to PPM 1 Academic Programs
Approved January 26, 2017

11.1 Background:

The purpose of this Grade Appeal Policy is to ensure fairness in the assignment of grades for students at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Grades should be based on mastery of course content and/or course learning objectives.

The School recognizes that faculty must be able to exercise their considered academic judgment and expertise in the assigning of a grade. A grade may not be appealed based solely on a difference of opinion between the student and the instructor regarding the content or quality of the student's work.

11.2 Permissible Bases for a Grade Appeal:

Only final course grades may be appealed through this formal process, though students remain free to discuss interim course assignment grades with their course instructor or base an appeal of a final grade on the grade awarded to an interim course assignment. Appeals must be brought within 45 days of the posting of a final course grade to SIS.

The final grade appeal must be based on one or more of the following factors only:

1. An error in the arithmetic computation of the grade;
2. The course Instructor failed to follow a written course policy or grading standards in the course assignment instructions, syllabus, course website, or other course materials or lecture in a manner that affected the final grade.

11.3 Not Covered by this Grade Appeal Process:

A faculty member's decision not to grade, or to penalize the grade of, an assignment submitted past the submission deadline, or an assignment submitted in a manner inconsistent with course instructions (e.g., to an incorrect drop box), may not be appealed unless that decision contradicts a written course policy stated in the course assignment instructions, syllabus, course website, lecture, or other course materials in a manner that affected the final grade.

Disputes regarding changes of grading system (e.g., to or from Pass/Fail to a letter grade) are not covered by this policy.

If the student believes that the faculty member's grading decision is based on animus toward the student or other inappropriate factor, that dispute will not be governed by this Grade Appeal Policy. It will instead be governed by PPM Faculty 8: Professional Misconduct.

Complaints by students involving matters other than course grades are not governed by this Grade Appeal Policy. They may be governed by PPM Students 7: Student Grievance Procedure.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or ethnic origin, or disability, or complaints of sexual harassment are not governed by this Grade Appeal Policy. Complaints of this nature are to be referred to the University's Office of Institutional Equity.

11.4 Process:

Step 1: Contact the Course Instructor

The student must first contact the course Instructor via dated email, within 45 days of the course grade having been posted to the SIS, to attempt to resolve the matter informally.

Step 2: Contact Your Adviser or Other Faculty Member Who Agrees to Assist with a Possible Mediation of the Dispute

If efforts to resolve the matter with the course Instructor informally are unsuccessful, and the student wishes to proceed, the student must next discuss the matter with their adviser, or another faculty member of the student's choice (with that faculty member's agreement), to assist in a possible mediation of the dispute. If the student does not wish to discuss the matter with their adviser, and is unable to identify an alternative faculty member, they may ask the Director of their Academic Program to designate a faculty member with whom to discuss the matter and to assist with a possible mediation of the dispute.

Step 3: Contact the Designee of the Chair of the Department in which the Course is Taught

If the matter remains unresolved following Steps 1 and 2 (above), the student may proceed to Step 3.

Each Department Chair shall designate a faculty or staff member to serve as the contact for that Department's grade appeals. The Chair may designate themselves if they choose.

If the Chair is the instructor for the course in question, they must designate another faculty member for the resolution of the relevant dispute only.

If the course is an interdepartmental course (i.e., with a 550 designation), the Director of the School's Office of Academic Integrity will serve as the decision-maker for an appeal under Step 3.

To initiate Step 3, the student shall first complete the attached form (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/policies/academic/grade-appeal-policy/Grade_Appeal_Form_01262017.pdf) stating the basis for the appeal and attaching a brief summary of the nature of the appeal, the course syllabus, assignment instructions, relevant information from the course website if any, and any other documentary materials relevant to the dispute.

The Designee of the Chair shall review the materials submitted by the student. If the Designee finds it helpful or necessary to gather additional information from either party, whether in person or in writing (e.g., via email), the designee shall notify both parties and offer each an opportunity to respond.

The Designee shall base their decision solely on whether one of the permissible basis or bases for appeal have been met, based on a preponderance of the evidence, and whether the final grade was affected as a result.

Step 4: Communication of Decision

The Designee of the Chair shall communicate their decision, stating the reason, to the student and course Instructor in writing (via email is permitted.) No further appeal is permissible. The course Instructor shall be responsible for promptly notifying the Registrar of any necessary grade change.