

4.10.6 Grade Appeal

Policy Tracking	Date
Approved	
Revised	February 6, 2019
Reviewed	

The grade appeal process applies only to final course grades. In the event a student appeals a grade that prevents progression in a program, the student will be allowed to enroll and attend the following semester pending the outcome of the appeal. For sequential classes that have a clinical component, the student will be allowed to take the academic coursework, but will not be allowed to participate in the clinical component of the class until the appeal is over. If the grade is upheld, the student will be administratively dropped from the course and refunded the tuition.

The College has the right to set academic standards that students must meet. A student is entitled to an explanation from his or her instructor(s) for the basis of his/her final course grade to ensure that the grade has not been assigned in an arbitrary and capricious manner. For purposes of these procedures, a final course grade is deemed to have been assigned in an arbitrary and capricious manner if:

- I. The final course grade was based upon the student's race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, or sexual orientation), disability, genetic information, or for some other arbitrary or personal reason unrelated to the instructor's exercise of his or her professional academic judgment in the evaluation of the academic performance of the student;
- II. The final course grade was assigned in a manner not consistent with the standards and procedures for evaluation established by the instructor, usually at the beginning of the course in the course syllabus but supplemented on occasion during the semester in other written or oral communications directed to the class as a whole; or
- III. The final course grade assigned by the instructor was the result of a clear and material mistake in calculating or recording grades.

Faculty Responsibility:

It is a fundamental principle of higher education that faculty members are expected to exercise their professional judgment in evaluating student performance. At the same time, faculty members have the responsibility to specify in each of their course syllabi at the beginning of the academic term:

- Course requirements and expectations for academic performance.
- Procedures for evaluating performance (method(s) of evaluation and grading scales).

Faculty members must clearly document to all students in the course any subsequent additions to or changes in these requirements, standards, and procedures in a syllabus course addendum. Finally, faculty members have the responsibility to apply the specified grading criteria equitably to the academic performance alone.

Student Responsibility:

Students have the responsibility to know and adhere to College and course policies and standards pertaining to them. As students willingly accept the benefits of membership in the Blue Ridge Community College academic community, they are obligated to uphold and observe the principles and standards articulated in the Blue Ridge Community College Catalog.

Grade Appeal Process:

Every reasonable effort should be made to resolve the matter at the informal level between the instructor and the student.

- I. If a student is dissatisfied with his or her final course grade, the student must first meet with the instructor who assigned the course grade within five (5) business days after official receipt of the final course grade and provide clear and convincing evidence that the grade was assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner as defined above. If necessary, the Chair of the Department may also participate in this meeting. In cases where the student is unable to meet in person with the instructor, the student may contact the instructor by letter or email. If the instructor is no longer employed at Blue Ridge Community College, the student may proceed to step two. The instructor will then make a written determination and provide it to the student within five (5) business days after the meeting. The written determination may be sent as an email, certified letter, or hand delivered document.
- II. If the student is still dissatisfied with the instructor's determination, within five (5) business days after receipt of the written determination, the student must meet with the Department Dean. The student must present the instructor's written determination and provide clear and convincing evidence that the final course grade was assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner as defined above. In cases where the student is unable to meet in person with the Department Dean, the student may contact the Dean by letter or email. The Dean will then make a written determination and provide it to the student within five (5) business days after the meeting. The written determination may be sent as an email, certified letter, or hand delivered document.
- III. If the student is still dissatisfied with the Department Dean's written determination, within five (5) business days after receipt of the written determination, the student must file a written appeal with all documentary evidence to the appropriate Vice President over the department. The Department Dean shall also file a written response, attaching the written decision of the faculty member to the Vice President. The Vice President shall perform an "on the record review" and will make a determination within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the student's

appeal. If needed for clarification, the Vice President may meet with the student or ask the student or Dean to submit additional information. The Vice President will then make a written determination and provide it to the student. The written determination may be sent as an email, certified letter, or hand delivered document. The Vice President's decision is final.