

# OREGON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

## Student Academic Grievance

### OIT-16-010

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#### Philosophy of Proposed Policy Application

The purpose of the student academic grievance procedure is to provide a mechanism for exchanging information between student and instructor in cases of grade dispute and to provide a safeguard against unfair grading practices. When properly applied, the procedure should facilitate reconciliation between the student and the faculty member and avoid embarrassment or injury to either party. The intent is to provide an informal forum in which differences of opinion can be discussed and resolved in an expedient and constructive manner at the lowest administrative level possible.

#### Academic Disputes Covered by Policy

1. Student claims that final course grade resulted from unfair or prejudicial treatment by instructor or unusual or irregular procedures that impacted an individual student's grade in a disproportionate manner.
2. Student is dismissed from a professional program because of failure to meet prerequisite or sequential course requirements.
3. Student is dismissed from a professional externship component because of failure to meet standards of conduct or performance as required by the professional program and/or the externship site, as published in the Student Handbook for that program.

#### Academic and Related Disputes Not Covered by Policy

1. Grades assigned to tests, quizzes, homework, papers, projects, or other components of a course.
2. Final grades based on failure to meet published (via syllabus) standards for the course, in which no unusual or prejudicial treatment is claimed.
3. Disciplinary or other student conduct matters not specifically covered above.
4. Challenges to the instructor's grading system or components thereof, as long as the system was made available to students at the beginning of the academic term.

#### Procedure

1. Student reads policy to determine if the grievance can be appealed.

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2. Student makes appointment to dispute with course instructor. Since reconciliation of the dispute at this level is in the best interests of all parties, instructors and students are urged to engage in an honest and open-minded effort to resolve the problem.
3. Failing to resolve the dispute with the instructor, the student makes an appointment with either the program director (if one exists) or department chair, as appropriate.
  - a. The student and the instructor document the dispute in writing.
  - b. The department chair should confer with the instructor, either before (preferred) or after consultation with the student.
  - c. The department chair refers the matter back to the instructor for resolution or decides the dispute based on information that is available.
4. If disagreement with the department chair decision results, the student may request an appointment with the dean of the appropriate school (HAS or EIT). The student should indicate that the appointment concerns a grade dispute and the department, course, and instructor involved.
  - a. Students will not be seen by the dean unless the preceding steps have been followed. An exception to this is when the course instructor is the department chair. Then, the second level of appeal is the dean.
  - b. The dean contacts the department chair and, when appropriate, the course instructor to obtain information on the dispute.
  - c. After consultation with the department and the student, the dean offers the student the choice of a summary decision by the dean or the opportunity for a hearing by the Student Conduct Review Commission.

Summary Decision by Dean

If the dispute is summarily decided by the dean, either for or against the student, the grievance is terminated and the department chair, instructor, and the student are notified in writing. If a grade change results, the Registrar's Office is also notified in writing.

Student Conduct Review Commission

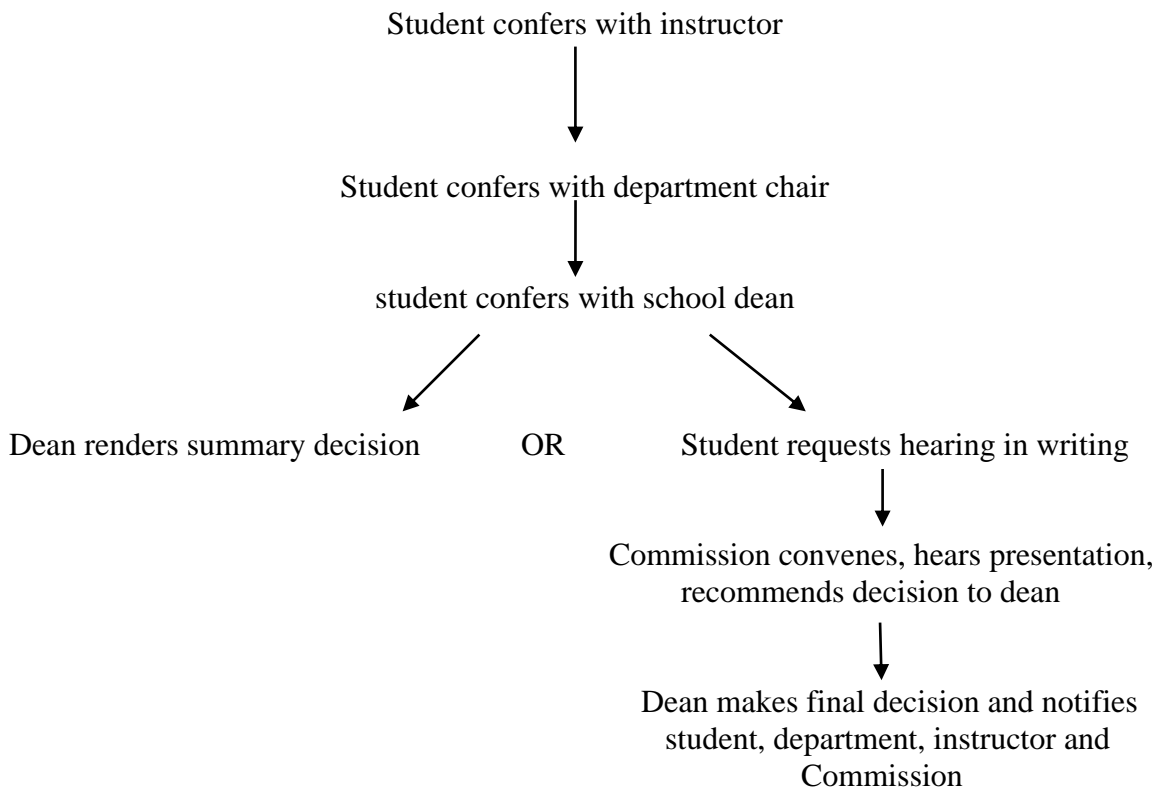
If the student elects to have the dispute referred to the Student Conduct Review Commission:

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1. The student must prepare a written request, utilizing the appropriate form, that summarizes the reasons for a hearing and the requested intervention (e.g., change of grade, reinstatement) should the appeal be granted. Documents that support the student's claim should be attached. The request is presented to the dean within three (3) school days after discussion with the dean.
2. A hearing is scheduled at the earliest time that is mutually available to the student and the Commission, normally within five (5) days after the request is received by the dean.
3. A copy of the student request is forwarded to the department chair and supporting documentation requested for the hearing.
4. The chair of the Commission convenes the hearing and considers the presentations of student and instructor. Witnesses can be called by either the student or the instructor to offer supporting information. The student has the right to be accompanied to the hearing by an advisor. The advisor is free to be at the student's side and the student is free to consult with the advisor, but the advisor is not free to address the board or ask questions of them.
5. The Commission formulates and transmits a recommendation to the dean. The decision should be supported by a rationale and it may include a majority and minority report, if appropriate.
6. After careful consideration of the Commission's findings, the dean renders a final decision and notifies the Commission, department chair, instructor, and student. If a grade change results, the dean notifies the Registrar's Office.

Summary of Sequential Steps in Grievance Procedure



Other Considerations

1. Appeals of final grades or professional academic standing should be initiated by the student within two weeks after final grades are distributed. Appeals will not be considered after that time limit by the dean of the school unless:
  - a. the student was incommunicado with the campus or unable to obtain grades after distribution because of academic assignment;
  - b. unusual events associated with the grading procedure or completion of assignments made it impossible for the student to receive or appeal the grade in a timely manner.
2. In cases of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, the instructor has two options:

- a. the instructor discusses the matter with the student, allowing the student to respond to the charge. If the instructor believes that academic dishonesty has occurred, it can be referred to the Student Conduct Review Commission;
- b. the instructor can give the student a zero or reduced credit grade for the assignment or examination in question. If the reduced credit results in a disputed grade, the student can appeal the grade by means of the academic grievance procedure.

Recommended:

Faculty Senate – 6/6/96  
President’s Council – 6/11/96

Approved:   
Lawrence J. Wolf, President

Date: June 12, 1996