

# Graduate School

## Appeals Policy

A graduate student who believes that a course grade, a professional disposition decision, or the result of a learning experience (e.g. academic dishonesty allegation or penalty, comprehensive examination, fieldwork, etc.) has been assigned in an arbitrary and capricious manner by the instructor, program, may pursue a resolution of the dispute by submitting an appeal. The time limit for filing this appeal shall be within six months of the end of the academic semester in which the evaluation or decision has occurred. The student should carefully consider his/her own performance prior to submitting an appeal. The process is designed to resolve a dispute at the lowest possible level. Attempting to resolve the dispute with the instructor or program is the first necessary step before further action can be initiated.

The Appeals process has not been designed to produce changes which are the result of a reevaluation of an instructor's professional judgment about academic performance and the substantive content of assignments completed by a student. In other words, the focus of the appeal is procedural due process (e.g. course management, errors in application of the course grading arrangements, review of professional dispositions, etc.); not about the rightness or wrongness of the faculty member's content expertise or judgments about the relevancy of assigned readings, choice of materials, etc.

When a student feels that an assigned grade or result has been applied with arbitrary or capricious standards or procedures, and when the initial informal student-instructor or program level consultations have failed to resolve the situation, the following steps and procedures will be utilized:

1. Appeal to the department chair. (Note: in the case of MLS, MPS, & MBA appeals, a course appeal will be reviewed by the department chair in the department offering the course. A program appeal will be given to the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences for the MLS, the Dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences for the MPS, and, in the case of the MBA program, the Dean of the College of Business and Entrepreneurship with advisory copies routed to the academic department chairs involved. Other programs that may not clearly be assigned to an academic department shall be clarified by the graduate dean.) The student will submit the approved Graduate School Appeals Form to the department chair with attachments to support his/her case. The department chair will investigate the issue by interviewing all parties involved. Although legal counsel is not considered appropriate or necessary to such a proceeding, the appellant may request the presence of an advisor or advocate. The advisor or advocate must be a graduate student at FHSU at the time of the appeal. The purpose of the inquiry is fact-finding. The department chair will then communicate his/her recommendation to the student in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeals form. This documentation will be attached to the Graduate School Appeals Form and become part of the record of the appeal. This written communication shall be sent by electronic mail as well as by standard mail to the mailing address given by the student on the appeal form.

If the student wishes to continue to resolve the appeal process, he/she may pursue step 2, below.

2. Appeal to the graduate dean. The department chair will forward the record of the appeal to the graduate dean. The graduate dean shall investigate the appeal by establishing a three member hearing committee consisting of university graduate faculty. The graduate dean shall convene the committee, issue a charge, and then withdraw from the proceedings. Although legal counsel is not considered appropriate or necessary to such a proceeding, the appellant may request the presence of an advisor or advocate as defined in step 1, above. The purpose of the inquiry is fact-finding. The appeal committee will make a

recommendation to the graduate dean. In response, the graduate dean shall issue his/her recommendation to the provost with copies to all involved parties and the appropriate college dean within ten (10) working days. This documentation will be attached to the Graduate School Appeals Form and become part of the record of the appeal. This written communication shall be sent by electronic mail as well as by standard mail to the mailing address given by the student on the appeal form.

If the student wishes to continue to resolve the appeal process, he/she may pursue step 3, below.

3. The provost shall consider the record of the appeal, and the recommendations of the department chair, the hearing appeal committee and graduate dean to render a written decision. Copies of this document will be sent to all parties involved in the appeal including the student, instructors, department chair, and graduate dean. The decision shall embody one of the following:

- a. agreement with the instructor, program, or committee's original assignment of grade, sanction, or result,
- b. a change of the original assigned grade, sanction, or result. A change of grade will be noted on the grading record as an administrative grade change by the provost,
- c. if possible, a retake of the course with another instructor,
- d. other remedy determined by the Provost to be reasonable in light of the circumstances of the appeal.

In all instances, face-to-face meetings will be the preferred method of communication and parties involved should endeavor to make that possible. However, in situations where meeting face-to-face is not possible, communication may occur over telephone and/or electronic mail. The method of communication used by parties in this process shall have no effect upon the appeal.

Approved by Provost Council 8-5-08

Approved by General Counsel 8-13-08

Approved by Graduate Council 10-22-08

Revision Approved by Graduate Council 10-5-15

Revision Approved by Graduate Council 9-13-17

Revision Approved by Graduate Council 2-7-18

Graduate School Appeals Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_  
 Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Faculty Member, Program, or Committee Involved in this Appeal:

Appeal Type: (check all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course Grade                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Dishonesty Allegation or Penalty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Examination        | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Disposition Decision         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Field Study Final Defense | Other: _____   |

Appeal Statement: (briefly describe the basis for your appeal)

Supporting Documentation: attach all documentation to support your appeal as email attachments or in hard copy stapled to this form. For a grade appeal, please attach the syllabus for the course.

<u>Department Chair</u>	(attach documentation and written response)
Date Received: _____	Date: _____
	Signature: _____

<u>Graduate Dean</u>	(attach documentation and written response)
Date Received: _____	Date: _____
	Signature: _____

Provost	(attach written response)
Date Received: _____	Date: _____
	Signature: _____