

## Grade Appeal Policy

### Appeal Requirements:

Students have the right to appeal course grades. The NJIT grade appeal policy is intended to present a process which is fair to both students and faculty. The student must be able to demonstrate that the grade in dispute was awarded in an unfair manner. For purposes of this policy, unfair means

- a. A demonstrable error was made in the calculation of the grade or
- b. The assignment of a final course grade was made in a manner that substantially or unreasonably departed from the instructor's course syllabus or
- c. The instructor failed to assign or remove an Incomplete or to initiate a grade change as agreed upon with the student in writing or
- d. The assignment of a final course grade was made on a basis other than the student's academic performance.

This policy will not be used in cases involving alleged violations of academic integrity. Also, if the appeal is based on student health or personal issues\*, the student must have first contacted the Dean of Students who will affirm the validity of such issues with the department chair.

### Procedure:

1. **Student-Instructor Contact:** Students have to first contact their instructors in person or by e-mail. Written records of all communications should be maintained. Students may request to see their graded final exams, term papers, or other submissions used for assessment. If the student has discussed the concern with the instructor and no resolution has been reached, or if the instructor has not responded to the student within two weeks when NJIT classes are in session, the student may file a formal appeal with the instructor's Department Chair no later than the end of the third week of the semester subsequent to the grade posting. In the case of SOM or COAD, the appeal should be filed with the instructor's Associate Dean for Academics.

**Note:** An instructor cannot assign more coursework after the final grade is assigned for the sole purpose of raising a student's grade.

**Role of the Department Chair or School/College Associate Dean for SOM and COAD:** The letter to the chair/associate dean must state succinctly, accurately and completely the cause for the appeal. The letter should also include: the name and number of the course; the grade given; the name of the instructor who taught the course; and whether the grade given prevents a student from advancing. The student should include a syllabus, relevant course materials, and any correspondence (to and from the instructor) that supports the appeal as attachments. A record of the communication should be kept by both the student and the chair/associate dean.

The chair/associate dean will review the submissions, consult with the instructor, and maintain documentation of the instructor's response. Subsequently, the chair/associate dean will notify both the student and the instructor of the outcome within a week, explaining

\*Matters related to Title IX or ADA are addressed under a separate process.

his/her decision to both instructor and student in person and/or in writing. Written records of all communications should be kept.

There are two possible outcomes:

- (a) The chair/associate dean rejects the appeal as unwarranted and the grade stands.
- (b) The chair/associate dean deems that the appeal is warranted. In that case, at the time that the chair/associate dean informs the student and instructor, he/she refers the case to the Department's (or SOM's or COAD's) Grade Appeal Committee. The committee is charged with reassessing the student's work in the context of the course delivered and assigning the appropriate grade. The committee members will convene to deliberate on the case within five working days after they are charged by the chair/associate dean, during which they will have the opportunity to evaluate any material pertinent to the issue provided by the student and instructor.

Prior to the actual hearing, the chair/associate dean (in addition to the Chair of the Departmental/School (SOM)/College (COAD) Appeal Committee) must meet together with both the student and the instructor to seek a workable resolution of the dispute. The student can also request that a faculty member of his/her choice attends the meeting. The faculty member chosen by the student must be tenured/tenure track faculty or a member of the instructional staff within the department offering the course for which the grade is disputed and must have agreed in writing to be present at the student's request.

2. **Role of the Department/School (SOM)/College (COAD) Appeal Committee:** If the chair/associate dean refers the case to the Department's/School's/College's Grade Appeal Committee, the chair of the committee (who cannot be the Department Chair or Associate Dean of the School or College) will inform the student in advance of the hearing date. Both the student and the instructor are invited to attend the hearing. An instructor unable to attend may choose to offer comments in writing. The Appeal Committee must include a faculty member who is familiar with the subject matter of the course of the grade dispute or solicit the independent opinion of a subject matter expert, providing him/her with all necessary course materials and assignments for making an assessment.
  - a. Once the hearing begins at the prearranged time, the student will have the opportunity in private (without the instructor present) to summarize the contents of any materials submitted and respond to questions from the committee.
  - b. If the instructor is present, the committee may then excuse the student to hear the instructor's remarks in private and to review the work shown previously. The appeal process never obliges either the student or the instructor to encounter or respond to one another during the hearing.
  - c. The panel will reach a decision within two working days of the hearing, which will be forwarded to the Departmental Chair or Associate Dean of School or College (the

latter for SOM and COAD, respectively), who will communicate the decision to the student within one working day of receiving the committee's decision.

- d. The instructor and student must provide information as needed at various phases of the appeal process, if more information is requested.
3. **Role of the Dean for all Schools/Colleges:** If the decision of the panel is unacceptable to the student or instructor, the student or instructor must promptly communicate this in writing to the Department Chair/Associate Dean of School or College within five working days of receiving notice of the decision. The appeal process will then be reviewed by the School/College Dean. The dean will assess the situation taking into account the report of the Department's/School's/College's Grade Appeal Committee which must include all of the documents to determine the final decision. Only in cases that the appeal process was not followed according to the procedures outlined in this document will the college/school dean be asked to reassess the decision of the Department's/School's/College's Grade Appeal Committee; otherwise, the decision of the Department/School/College Grade Appeal Committee stands. The dean may request clarification from any or all parties involved in the appeal process as he/she sees fit. In all instances, the college/school dean's decision will determine the final outcome of the requested grade change.

**All involved parties should keep the proceedings confidential at all times.**

**Exceptions to the policy:**

**Graduation Timeline**

In cases where graduation or academic honors are in jeopardy, the grade dispute process must be completed by noon of the day prior to commencement.

**Dean's List Eligibility**

In the event of a grade change, the student's eligibility for the Dean's List must be updated.