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| <b>Section:</b>           | II.3.25  |                             |
| <b>Title:</b>             | Grade Appeals                                      |                             |
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| <b>Approved By:</b>       | Provost  |                             |
| <b>Responsible Unit:</b>  | Academic Affairs (609) 771-3080; academic@tcnj.edu |                             |
| <b>Related Documents:</b> | N/A  |                             |
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| 2.0                       | January 7, 2022                                    | Revised                     |
| 1.0                       | February 13, 2015                                  | New Policy; Initial Release |

## I. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the procedure for appeals of course grades.

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Course Grade** - the grade assigned at the completion of a course.

## III. POLICY

(For complaints not involving discrimination or sexual harassment)

The grade appeal policy applies to course grades for both undergraduate and graduate level courses offered in any term and in any modality. It is recognized that appeals of a course grade may rest on concerns (see below) regarding one or more specific graded assignments. This policy provides for a procedure to address such concerns within the framework of the grievance process. Any grade appeal process must be initiated only after the final grade has been posted for the relevant course. Students who are concerned about a grade awarded on a specific assignment in a course are encouraged to communicate with the instructor immediately after receiving the graded assignment.

Undergraduate or graduate students who wish to dispute a course grade must first attempt to resolve this matter through communication with the course instructor. If the student and instructor are unable to reach a resolution regarding a disputed grade, or if the student was unable to establish contact with the professor of the course, the student may file a written appeal with the chair of the department in which the course was offered. A student who wishes to file

a written grade appeal must inform the department chair within a period of fifteen calendar days after meeting with and/or receiving a reply from the instructor of the course. In cases where the student was unable to establish contact with the professor, a written appeal must be filed with the department chair within thirty calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was posted. For the purposes of grade appeals, “end of the semester” is defined as the last day that grades are due in a given term. This date can be found on the TCNJ academic calendar. In cases where grades are submitted after the official deadline, a student may file a grievance up to thirty days after the grade is posted. It is the responsibility of the student to provide evidence that indicated that the grade was submitted after the official deadline (such as through documentation from the Office of Records and Registration). In cases where the chair was the instructor of the course in which the grade is being disputed, or if the chair feels it necessary to recuse him or herself, the dean of the school in which the course was taken shall appoint a tenured faculty member from the given school, preferably from the same department, to consider the appeal. Grade appeals at the department level may be handled individually by the chair or by his/her designee or by an ad-hoc committee convened to review an individual student’s specific grievance. Some departments may have a standing committee that addresses grade appeals as they arise.

It is the responsibility of the student to submit a written statement to the department chair (or chair’s designee) outlining the basis and grounds of the complaint. Valid reasons for disputing a grade include, but are not limited to the following: an error was made in calculating the grade; the instructor failed to notify students clearly and promptly of the criteria for grade determination; a grade was assigned based on reasons other than announced criteria and standards; a grade was assigned based on factors other than academic achievement; published course policies were not followed properly. Appropriate documentation must be submitted as necessary to support the appeal. The department chair (or designee in the case of recusal) is responsible for responding to the student with a request for additional information or notification of the appeal decision (that the grade will be upheld or changed) within a period of thirty calendar days of the start of the academic term following the semester in which the grade appeal was submitted. For example, a grade appeal submitted in the spring semester would need to be resolved within thirty days of the beginning of the next fall semester. It is the responsibility of the department chair (or designee) to evaluate relevant information and make a fair and informed decision.

Upon receipt of the chair’s decision, a student may appeal the decision to the Dean’s Office of the school in which the course was offered. It is the responsibility of the student to file a written appeal (with appropriate documentation) within thirty calendar days after receiving the chair’s decision. In cases where a dean must recuse him or herself, the Office of Academic Affairs

shall appoint another dean at the College to consider the grade appeal.

Upon receipt of a student's official appeal of a course grade, it is the responsibility of the dean to render a decision regarding the best protocol to handle the grievance. As such, a student grade appeal may be addressed individually by the dean, by an appropriate designee from his or her office or school, or by a special committee convened to address the given grade appeal. It is the responsibility of the dean to respond with a decision on a grade appeal within thirty calendar days of the start of the academic term following the semester in which the grade appeal was submitted to the dean; for example, a grade appeal submitted to the dean in the spring semester would need to be resolved within thirty days of the beginning of the next fall semester.

A student may appeal the decision of a dean's office to the Office of Academic Affairs (the Provost or a provost-level designee). However, the basis of this appeal cannot simply be dissatisfaction with the decision of the dean. Rather, the basis for such an appeal may only occur on the grounds that the dean, or her/his designee(s), did not follow established College policy. Students who wish to appeal a grade to the Office of Academic Affairs must do so within thirty calendar days after receiving the dean's decision, and must specifically outline how appropriate College policies were not followed during the previous review processes. The Office of Academic Affairs has the authority to decide if the student's appeal has merit in which case it may choose to review the matter further and then present a final decision regarding the grade in question. The decision of the Office of Academic Affairs is final and not subject to appeal. If the Office of Academic Affairs denies the basis of the student's appeal, then the decision of the dean or her/his designee(s) is final.

In each instance of an appeal process at the level of the department, Dean's Office, or Office of Academic Affairs, the following appeal procedure will be used: The individual(s) conducting the appeal process will gather relevant information. The individual(s) conducting the appeal procedure will communicate separately with the student appealing the grade, the faculty member who posted the grade under appeal, and any others the individual(s) conducting the appeal procedure deem to have information relevant to the appeal, such as the Director of the Accessibility Resource Center