

# Grievance Procedures

Students who are dissatisfied with decisions regarding course concerns, final course grades, academic, behavioral, or professional behavior, or termination from the HCM Program are expected to follow University-wide, Graduate School, and Departmental grievance procedures as outlined below. Students must follow the procedure specific to their grievance.

## Procedures for Course Concerns

From Academic Affairs Complaint process

<https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources-forms/student-grievance-and-appeal-policies-and-procedures>

For complaints that do not fall into the categories above, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Attempt to resolve the matter directly with the person against whom the complaint is directed.
2. If a resolution is not reached, submit the complaint in writing to the person's immediate supervisor. For a faculty member, this will usually be the department chair or program director. For a staff member, it will be the administrator to whom the staff member reports. If you are unsure whom to contact, call the office of the Dean of Students for advice. The supervisor will investigate the matter and work with you toward a resolution of your complaint.
3. If you are not satisfied with the resolution, submit your complaint in writing to the next level supervisor (in the case of a faculty member, this will normally be a dean or associate/assistant dean in the college that the course and faculty member is in).
4. If the issue is still not resolved, contact one of the following:
  1. For undergraduate student academic issues: Mark Ginn, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (262-7660 or [ginnmc@appstate.edu](mailto:ginnmc@appstate.edu)(link sends e-mail))
  2. For graduate student academic issues: Dr. Ashley Colquitt, Associate Vice Provost & Dean, Graduate School at 262-2691 or [colquittad@appstate.edu](mailto:colquittad@appstate.edu)(link sends e-mail)
  3. For all other issues: Judy Haas, Dean of Students at 262-8284 or [haasjm@appstate.edu](mailto:haasjm@appstate.edu)(link sends e-mail).
5. If you have followed this process and your complaint has still not been resolved, contact Provost Dr. Neva Specht for academic issues (262-2070 or [spechtnj@appstate.edu](mailto:spechtnj@appstate.edu)(link sends e-mail)) or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

JJ Brown (262-2060 or [brownjj1@appstate.edu](mailto:brownjj1@appstate.edu)(link sends e-mail)) for all other issues.

6. The final court of appeal for internal resolution of student complaints is the [Chancellor's Office](#).
7. In compliance with University, state, federal, and accrediting body (SACSCOC) guidelines, laws, and policies, Appalachian State University investigates all reported matters to the fullest extent possible and utilizes the information to address concerns, hold individuals and groups accountable, and enhance the comprehensive educational experience for the entire Appalachian State community. Students who have a complaint/concern against the University as a whole and wish to file with the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina may do so using the following resources:
  - UNC Post-Secondary Education Complaints
    - <https://www.northcarolina.edu/post-secondary-education-complaints/>
  - Student Complaint Policy/Process
    - [https://www.northcarolina.edu/wp-content/uploads/reports-and-documents/academic-affairs/student\\_complaint\\_policy.pdf](https://www.northcarolina.edu/wp-content/uploads/reports-and-documents/academic-affairs/student_complaint_policy.pdf)
  - Student Complaint Form
    - <https://studentcomplaints.northcarolina.edu/form>

If you need help at any point in this process, contact the Office of the Dean of Students ([dos@appstate.edu](mailto:dos@appstate.edu)). Here are some tips that may help you in the process of resolving your complaint:

1. Whoever is investigating your complaint will want to hear all sides of the story before making a recommendation and may ask you to meet with the person against whom your complaint is directed.
2. Although the above procedure shows some separation between academic and other issues, in practice the offices of the Dean of Students and Academic Affairs work closely together in attempting to resolve student complaints.
3. Your confidentiality will be protected within reason, but officials of the university may require access to your "educational record," which includes most of the information that the university has about you. However, most people outside the university do not have access to your educational record without your written permission. Except in certain emergency situations, and unless your parents have established that they claim you as a dependent for income tax purposes, we obtain your written permission before discussing your educational record with your parents. For more information on the confidentiality of student records, see [FERPA and Student Records Access](#).
4. You have the right to retain legal counsel, but if you do, all communication with the university about your complaint will be handled through the [University Attorney's Office](#).
5. While you may be tempted to "start at the top" and contact the Chancellor's office first, it is almost always more effective to follow the procedure outlined above. In

most cases, the Chancellor will refer the matter back down through the reporting lines so that this process can be followed.

6. It is very important for you to be completely honest throughout the process of filing a complaint; "knowingly furnishing false information to a conduct board or to a conduct review officer, or to any other University official" is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

For more information visit this [complaints resolution webpage](#).

The Department's student concern resolution procedures are described below. These procedures are designed to provide the student with a mechanism for communicating directly with those who can assist them in addressing the concern. The student is encouraged to take responsibility for resolving their concerns without additional faculty, staff, and peers becoming involved. If students have any questions about the procedure outlined below, please don't hesitate to discuss them with the MHA Program Director and/or Department Chair.

Concerns Specific to a Particular Course or Professor:

1. First, contact the professor and try to resolve the concern(s).
2. If you believe your concern(s) have not been adequately addressed, make an appointment with the MHA Program Director.
3. If you believe that the concern(s) have not been adequately addressed, make an appointment to seek advice from the Department Chair.

Concerns Specific to the Program of Study or Other Academic Areas:

1. First, contact MHA Program Director and try to resolve the concern(s).
2. If you believe that the concern(s) have not been adequately addressed, make an appointment to seek advice from the Department Chair.

If students have followed the procedure outlined above without resolution of their concerns, they may make an appointment with the Dean of the College of Health Sciences<sup>2</sup>. Students may also contact the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Compliance<sup>10</sup> or the university Ombudsperson<sup>11</sup> and will be assisted by these offices as appropriate.

If students have exhausted the steps outlined above without resolution of their concerns, they may utilize the [student grievance and appeal policies and procedures](#)<sup>12</sup> at Appalachian:

# Procedures for Final Grade Concerns

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<sup>2</sup> <https://healthsciences.appstate.edu/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://edc.appstate.edu/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ombuds.appstate.edu/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/student-grievance-and-appeal-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>13</sup> <https://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/>

<sup>14</sup> [https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final\\_grade\\_appeal\\_enabled.pdf](https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final_grade_appeal_enabled.pdf)

Please note there are specific criteria taken into consideration when appealing a final grade. The following information on grade appeals is taken from the Graduate Bulletin.

## 6.12.3 Final Grade Appeal Procedure

 <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/final-grade-appeal-procedure>.

(a) Any student considering a grade appeal should understand that each faculty member has the right and responsibility to determine grades according to any method chosen by the faculty member that is professionally acceptable, communicated to everyone in the class, and applied to all students equally. Prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious academic evaluation by a faculty member, however, is a violation of the student's rights and is a valid ground for a final grade appeal.

### 6.12.3.2 Steps to take in final grade appeal:

(a) Any student who contests a course final grade shall first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. The student must explain her or his position to the instructor and attempt to understand the instructor's reasons for assigning the grade. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the instructor's actions and to resolve differences in an informal and cooperative manner. If the student fails to reach a satisfactory solution in consultation with the instructor, the student must present the appeal in writing (using the Grade Appeal Form) to the chair of the department in which the contested grade was awarded.

(b) The student must file the written appeal with the departmental chair within fourteen (14) calendar days after consulting with the instructor. The statement must be specific and concise and limit itself to citations of evidence pertaining to valid grounds for the appeal. Through conferring with the student and the instructor, the departmental chair will seek resolution by agreement. The student must provide the departmental chair with a course syllabus and all available tangible materials related to the grade (e.g., exam and term papers) as well as a list of any items used in the evaluation for which the student cannot provide documentation (e.g., unreturned exams, grades on class participation, attendance records);

(c) If there is failure to reach an agreement through consultation with the departmental chair, the student may file the written appeal with the Grade Appeals Committee through the office of the dean of the college or school in which the grade was awarded. The student must file this written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days after the beginning of classes in the next semester after the contested grade was awarded. When possible, the form must be signed and dated by both the instructor and the departmental chair as well as the student. In accordance with the instructions on the form, the student must present with it the documentary evidence furnished to the departmental chair and any other evidence relevant to the case;

(d) The dean or the dean's designee serves as convener of the Grade Appeals Committee of the college or school. Each full committee consists of the convener (who presides over hearings), the chair of the department in which the contested grade was assigned,

three faculty, one undergraduate student, and one graduate student, all from the college or school which the committee serves. The departmental chair sits in a non-voting capacity, and the convener votes only in the case of a tie. The three faculty members, one alternate faculty member, and two students are appointed by the dean from among volunteers for

the assignment. A quorum for each committee shall consist of no fewer than one student and two faculty members, along with the convener;

(e) The Grade Appeals Committee has authority to screen out frivolous or unsubstantiated appeals. The convener will explain any such finding in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the departmental chair;

(f) If the committee grants a full hearing, the student will appear before it to present all evidence relevant to her or his case. The convener will also invite the instructor to appear and present any evidence in support of the instructor's grade decision. The committee may ask questions of either or both and will hold its deliberations in executive session after hearing the case. The dean, the departmental chair, the faculty member, and the student will receive prompt written notification of the committee's findings.

**THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION IS BINDING.** If the committee supports the student's appeal, the instructor will be required to re-evaluate the student according to a specific method. The method of re-evaluation will depend on the circumstances of the appeal. Re-evaluation will not be used in a punitive manner toward the student. The student has fourteen (14) calendar days to inform the instructor, departmental chair, and convener in writing whether she or he consents to the proposed method of reevaluation (which must be completed within the semester of the finding). Should the student not consent to the proposed method of re-evaluation, the instructor, departmental chair, and committee will mutually agree on a method of recalculating the appealed grade. In either case, the resulting grade is final and may not be appealed.

## Grievances Related to Academic Performance Reviews

A student who is dissatisfied with the Department Chair's decision following an academic, professional and/or behavioral review may appeal the decision as outlined below.

1. The student must submit any appeal by email to the Dean of the College of Health Sciences, with a copy to the Department Chair, within 10 business days of the date on which the Chair's decision was emailed to the student.
2. The appeal should state the basis for the appeal (e.g., procedures required by this policy were not followed, fundamental unfairness of the decision, etc.).
3. The Dean may consider any information deemed appropriate to reaching a considered and fair decision on the appeal.
4. The Dean shall communicate his or her decision via email to the student, with a copy to the Department Chair.
5. A student who is dissatisfied with the Dean's decision has the right to appeal the decision to the Dean of the Graduate School or their designee in writing by email within 10 business days following the date of the Dean's decision. The Dean of the Graduate School's decision is final.

## Grievance Procedures Related to Termination from the MHA Program.



Appeals involving termination from a graduate program (e.g., denial of a probationary term, etc.) are handled through the program and the Graduate School, as described in the [Graduate Bulletin](#)<sup>15</sup>. The steps in this procedure are as follows.

1. Appeal to the program in writing through the MHA Program Director and/or the Department Chair.
2. If the situation cannot be resolved at the program level, the student may appeal to the Graduate School within thirty (30) calendar days of the program's denial of the first appeal by submitting documentation in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The program will also be given an opportunity to provide written documentation about the situation.
  - a. The program will provide specific details regarding why the program has denied the appeal and what steps were taken prior to the action, including a record of communication with the student regarding the action.
  - b. The Graduate School's primary role in the appeals process is to review the student appeal and the program decision to ensure that due process has been followed. Appeals denied by the Graduate School will automatically be sent to the Graduate AP&P's Appeals Committee for review. The Appeals Committee is an ad hoc subcommittee of the Graduate AP&P consisting of graduate faculty from three departments other than the student's home department; the committee meets only on demand and does not usually meet with the student or the program. The committee's decision is binding. If the committee supports the student's appeal, the program will be required to accommodate the student's continuation in the program.

<sup>1</sup> <https://graduate.appstate.edu/prospective-students>

<sup>2</sup> <https://healthsciences.appstate.edu/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://studentconduct.appstate.edu/student-information>

<sup>4</sup> <https://academicintegrity.appstate.edu/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://distance.appstate.edu/programs/id/health-administration-mha>

<sup>6</sup> [https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance\\_exam\\_waiver\\_form\\_0.pdf](https://graduate.appstate.edu/sites/graduate.appstate.edu/files/entrance_exam_waiver_form_0.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ache.org/abt\\_ache/code.cfm](https://www.ache.org/abt_ache/code.cfm)

<sup>8</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=292>

<sup>9</sup> <https://odr.appstate.edu/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://edc.appstate.edu/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ombuds.appstate.edu/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/student-grievance-and-appeal-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>13</sup>

<sup>14</sup> [https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final\\_grade\\_appeal\\_enabled.pdf](https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/academicaffairs.appstate.edu/files/final_grade_appeal_enabled.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=294#suspension-and-dismissal>

#### Acknowledgements:

MHA Program Academic Concerns Policy and Academic Performance Review Procedures adopted in this policy are based on the Appalachian State University MSW & Graduate Nutrition Program Policies.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://bulletin.appstate.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=294> - suspension-and-dismissal

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