Grade Appeal Process

1. Basis for Appeal

1.1 A student may appeal a course grade if the student has evidence that the grade was assigned in a malicious, capricious, erroneous, or arbitrary manner. The following steps provide a guideline for the appeals process. All persons concerned with this process should make every attempt to adhere to the time schedule outlined in the following description of the appeals process. No appeal will be initiated more than one year following the date the grade was assigned.

2. Appeal to the Faculty Member for Review of the Assigned Grade

2.1 Within 21 calendar days after the beginning of the next term, excluding summer school, the student should discuss the assigned grade with the faculty member. If it is found that the assigned grade is incorrect in the judgment of the faculty member, he/she will initiate the appropriate change. If the change is made at this point, the matter is concluded.

2.2 If the faculty member is no longer with the university, the student should confer with the departmental chairperson who will then make every effort to receive written input concerning the matter from the former faculty member. If it is not possible to receive information from the former faculty member regarding the grade, then the student may appeal the grade as described below and the departmental chairperson will represent the interests of the faculty member who issued the grade.

3. Appeal to the Department Chairperson

3.1 If the question of the assigned grade cannot be resolved between the student and the faculty member, the student may appeal in writing to the chairperson of the department in which the course was taught. The written appeal to the departmental chairperson must be made by the end of the fourth week of the term. The student should include all known information relating to the appeal with the written appeal. After receiving such an appeal, in writing, from the student, the chairperson shall review with the faculty member the substance of the student's appeal and seek to determine its validity.

3.2 If the chairperson determines that the assigned grade is in his/her judgment, inappropriate, the chairperson should recommend to the faculty member that the grade be changed. The faculty member may or may not concur with the chairperson's recommendation.
3.3 The chairperson will notify the student in writing, within 14 calendar days of the appeal, whether or not the assigned grade will be changed by the faculty member. If the grade is changed to the student's satisfaction, the matter is concluded. If the grade will not be changed, the chairperson will also advise the student of the right of appeal to the dean of the college/school within which the grade was assigned.

3.4 If the grade will not be changed, copies of all written communication mentioned above should be sent by the chairperson to the dean of the college/school as described below.

4. Appeal to the College/School Dean

4.1 If the grade is not changed to the satisfaction of the student at the departmental level, an undergraduate student may appeal the assigned grade, in writing, to the dean of the college/school within which the course was offered. With the written appeal, the student should provide all information possible relating to the appeal. The written appeal to the dean of the college/school must be made within seven calendar days of receipt by the student of the notice from the department chairperson.

4.2 If the dean of the college/school, or his/her designee, the student and the faculty member are unable to resolve the appeal informally, the dean shall request a review of the student's appeal by a committee comprised of three faculty members and three undergraduate students, all of whom have voting privileges, and meet the approval of the student and faculty member involved. This committee will be appointed by the dean, unless a standing committee already exists, and will elect its own chairperson.

4.3 The committee shall conduct a hearing and shall review all pertinent information presented by the student, the faculty member, and any others who may be called to assist the committee.

4.4 In the case of all graduate students (including those graduate students enrolled in the M.S.-Ph.D. program in Biomedical Sciences within the College of Medicine), the appeal shall be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the dean, the student, and the faculty member are unable to resolve the appeal informally, the dean shall convene an ad hoc committee, comprised of three members of the graduate council and three graduate students, all of whom shall have voting privileges. This committee shall elect a chairperson and hold a hearing concerning the appeal. At this hearing all material relevant to the appeal shall be presented by the student, faculty member, the department chairperson, dean of the college in which the course was taught, the Dean of the Graduate School, and any others who may be called to assist the committee.
4.5 In the case of a medical student, the appeal shall be prepared by the student in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Medicine who shall convene an ad hoc committee comprised of three members of the Faculty Advisory Council of the College of Medicine and three medical students all of whom have voting privileges. This committee shall elect a chairperson and hold a hearing concerning the appeal. At this hearing all material relevant to the appeal shall be presented by the student, the faculty member, the department chairperson, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the College of Medicine, and any others who may be called to assist the committee.

5. Appeals Process Following Committee Review

5.1 Within 21 calendar days of its constitution, the committee will submit to the appropriate dean a written report containing a recommendation for a specific course of action regarding the student's appeal. The dean will, in turn, review the committee's recommendation and reasoning. The dean may also confer with any of the parties involved. After consideration of all appropriate information, the dean shall accept, reject, or modify the recommendation. The dean shall notify the student, the faculty member, the chairperson of the appeals committee, the departmental chairperson, and the appropriate individuals of his/her opinion concerning the appeal. The dean shall forward his/her decision to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs who will hold the documentation for 21 calendar days, at the end of which time he/she will notify the Registrar of the disposition of the student's grade, if it is to be changed.

5.2 A written appeal of the decision of the dean may be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs within 14 calendar days from the time the dean reports his/her decision to the appropriate individuals.

5.3 The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs will then review the dean's report and the other grade appeal documentation and endorse the dean's decision, reject the decision, or modify the decision. The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs shall then notify the student, the dean, the faculty member, the chairperson of the appeal committee, the departmental chairperson, and the appropriate individuals of his/her opinion concerning the appeal.

5.4 In the absence of further appeal, the opinion rendered by the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs becomes final. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will wait 21 calendar days, at the end of which time he/she will notify the Registrar of the disposition of the student's grade, if it is to be changed.

6. Appeal to the President
6.1 If either the student of faculty member believes that due process* has not been afforded, a written appeal may be made to the President; otherwise, the decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Vice President for Health Affairs is final. Such an appeal, based on denial of due process and specifically identifying the failure of the process, must be initiated in writing within 14 calendar days from the time the dean reports his/her decision to the appropriate individuals.

* The right to have your concerns reviewed by an impartial third party.