

# Grade Appeals

See Procedure for Academic Grievance Policy in the [Faculty Handbook](#)

Part III. Academic Policies

Section 2, Pages 76-78.

Procedure for Academic Grievance Policy

a. Academic Expectations

The freedom to learn depends upon opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. The responsibility to secure and respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. Students are obligated to exercise their freedom with maturity and responsibility.

i) Student Rights

Students have the right to

- ii) be informed of course requirements;
- iii) be evaluated fairly on the basis of their academic performance (their abilities and skills) as required by a professor as part of a course;
- iv) experience free and open discussion, inquiry, and expression, both in the classroom and in conference;
- v) experience competent instruction and advisement;
- vi) take exception to the data or views presented and reserve judgment about matters of opinion;
- vii) expect protection against a professor's improper disclosure of student's views, beliefs, and political association which may surface as a result of instructing, advising, or counseling;
- viii) expect protection, through established procedures, against prejudicial or capricious evaluation (see Academic Appeals and Academic Grievance Procedures section below).

b. Student Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility to:

- i) inquire about course requirements if they do not understand them or are in doubt about them;
- ii) maintain the standards of academic performance established for individual courses and for programs of study;
- iii) initiate an investigation if they believe their academic rights have been violated. (see Academic Appeals and Academic Grievance Procedures section below).
- iv) learn the content of any course of study;
- v) act in accordance with commonly accepted standards of academic conduct (see Student Conduct Code

c. Student Academic Appeals and Academic Grievance Procedures

- i) These procedures should be used to appeal or resolve disputes concerning an academic grade or other academic decision considered by a student to be arbitrary or contrary to College policy. These procedures should also be used to grieve perceived violations of any of the student academic rights listed above. For the purposes of these procedures, a student is someone holding “active” registration status as the time of the alleged violation.
- ii) Before using these procedures or between any of the appeals steps, students are encouraged to seek advice from the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Director of Compliance.
- iii) Appeals of charges of academic dishonesty follow a different procedure and there are separate procedures for removal of a grade of Incomplete.
- iv) It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the appeals procedure at each step. If the appeal is pursued through Step 3, it is expected that, unless there are unusual circumstances, the request for a hearing by the Student Academic Review Committee will be submitted within 90 days from the last day of the term in which the alleged violation arose. If the student fails to pursue the matter in the manner provided by this policy, after the conference with the department chair/director, or dean(s), if applicable, the original academic decision will be final. The student should bring to the various conferences and to the Student Academic Review Committee hearing all evidence on which they intend to rely.

The following procedures outline the steps of the academic appeal and/or grievance process. It is recommended but not required that the student first arrange a conference to discuss the appeal or grievance with the faculty member(s) whose

action is addressed in the student's appeal or grievance. It is expected that all of the parties involved at each step of the appeals/grievance process will make a good faith effort to resolve the issues. ([Request for Hearing by Fort Lewis College Student Academic Review Committee Form](#) can be found at the end of Part III Section 3, d)

- 1) Department Chair. In the event that a student feels they have not received adequate satisfaction from their discussion with the faculty involved or in the event that a student prefers not to discuss their concerns directly with the involved faculty, the student may arrange a conference to discuss the appeal or grievance with the department chair (or equivalent). If the department chair is the involved faculty member, this step may be skipped.
- 2) Dean (or equivalent). In the event there is no department chair in the school or academic unit involved, or in the event the involved faculty member is the department/unit chair, or in the event a student still feels aggrieved after consultation with the appropriate department chair, they may ask for a review by the appropriate dean (or equivalent). If the involved faculty member is the dean (or equivalent), this step may be skipped.
- 3) Student Academic Review Committee. In the event the student is not satisfied with the results of the reviews by the department chair and the dean (or equivalent) they may ask for a review committee to be formed. This request shall be in writing to the Provost. A copy of the request form appears at the end of this Section. The Provost, or designee, shall act as chair of the review committee. The committee shall include a faculty member from the department of the involved faculty (other than the chair). Such faculty member shall be chosen by the involved faculty member. The committee shall also include a faculty member (from any department) chosen by the student. The committee shall also include one student member of the ASFLC Student Court. This student is to be selected by the Student Court.

The review must be commenced and completed within 45 days from the receipt of the request for the review. If the review is not completed within this time period, an interim report shall be provided to all the involved parties.

The committee shall interview the involved student and faculty member and any other students and faculty they feel are necessary. Based upon their findings, the committee will determine whether or not the appeal or grievance addresses an action which may be considered arbitrary, capricious or contrary to College policy. If the grievance is dismissed, the student shall

be informed in writing of the reasons for dismissal. If desired, the student may request an in-person meeting with the Provost to better understand the Committee's decision; however it must be understood that the decision of the Committee is final. If the grievance is sustained, the Provost will so advise the student and negotiate a resolution of the matter with the involved faculty, department chair and dean. The review by the above committee constitutes the final process in this appeal/grievance procedure.

It is hoped that any concern about academic decisions shall be satisfactorily resolved at a lower level. Approved: May 4, 2005