

## Appeals Policies

### Academic Grade Appeals

Students who believe that the grade they received for a course does not reflect their performance in that course may dispute the grade and appeal. The University policy states that a grade appeal must take place before the end of the term immediately following the term in which the grade was recorded. However, since progression in the occupational therapy program is dependent on successful completion of course content from semester to semester, students must appeal the disputed grade before the beginning of the next semester after the grade was earned. Grade appeals go through several levels (in sequence).

#### LEVEL 1: Instructor

- If a student questions or disputes a final grade, he/she must begin with an information seeking discussion with the instructor within 4 weeks of the posting of the grade. If the student does not accept the decision, he/she may begin a formal grade appeal.
- If the student wishes to file a formal grade appeal, he/she will initiate the process by writing an e-mail to the course instructor within 6 weeks of the posting of the grade with a copy sent to the occupational therapy program director.
- This formal grade appeal must contain the reason for the grade appeal and supporting material.
- Acceptable reasons for the appeal are limited to
  - The instructor used different grading standards for this student's work than for other student in the class.
  - Grading of the student was arbitrary, biased, or capricious.
- The instructor will contact the student within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal and schedule a formal meeting with the student. This meeting will be attended by the course instructor, another faculty member or program director, the student, and anyone else the student wishes to bring (if desired). If the instructor is the program director, another faculty member or department chair will be asked to attend the meeting. The meeting will be recorded by notes and audiotape.

***NOTE: The person selected by the student to attend this or any level of the grade appeals process may not speak at the meeting. They may privately advise or consult with the student during the meeting, but will not be allowed to speak publicly.***

The possible outcomes of this appeal hearing are:

- Instructor accepts the student's appeal and changes the grade
- Student acknowledges the instructor's rationale for the grade and accepts the grade
- The instructor does not change the grade; student does not accept the decision and decides to appeal to the next level.

- The outcomes of the appeal will be documented by the course instructor within 5 working days after the hearing with a copy sent to the student, the program director, and a copy placed in the student file.

#### LEVEL 2: Occupational Therapy Program Director

***NOTE: If the Occupational Therapy Program director was involved in the initial appeal hearing or is the instructor of the course, this step is omitted.***

The request to appeal the grade will be put in writing and addressed to the program director within 5 working days of receipt of the instructor's decision.

- The appeal will contain the reason for the grade appeal and supporting materials.
- Acceptable reasons for the appeal are the same as listed in Level 1.
- The program director will contact the student within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal and schedule a formal meeting with the student. This meeting will be attended by the program director, the student, and anyone else the student wishes to bring (if desired). The meeting will be recorded by notes and audiotape.
- The program director may seek additional information from the course instructor and/or student before rendering a judgment.

The possible outcomes of this appeal hearing are:

- Program director supports instructor and recommends that the grade should stand as given
- Program director recommends that the instructor change the grade.
- In both cases, if the student accepts the grade, the appeal process ends.
- In both cases, if the student does not accept the grade the grade appeal may be moved to the next level. The outcomes of the appeal will be documented by the program director and a copy sent to the student and placed in the student's file within 5 working days after the meeting.

#### LEVEL 3: Chair, Health Professions Department

The request to appeal the grade will be put in writing and addressed to the Health Professions Department Chair within 5 working days of the receipt of the decision of the Occupational Therapy Program director.

- The appeal will contain the reason for the grade appeal and supporting materials. Acceptable reasons for appeal are limited to the reasons noted above with the addition of the following: If the program director recommended a grade change to the instructor but the instructor did not change the grade.
- The department chair will contact the student within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal and schedule a formal meeting with the student. This meeting will be attended by the department chair, the student, and anyone else the student wishes to bring (if desired). The meeting will be recorded by notes and audiotape.

- The department chair will speak to the course instructor after meeting with the student to gather information about the grading. The department chair may also formally seek additional information from the course instructor and/or student before rendering a judgment.

The possible outcomes of this appeal hearing are:

- Department chair supports instructor's grade and recommends that the grade should stand as given
- Recommends that the grade be changed to the course instructor.
- If the student accepts the department chair's decision and accepts the grades, the process has ended.
- If the student does not accept the department chair's decision and the grade, it may be appealed to the next level.

#### LEVEL 4: Health Professions Department

If the student wishes to further pursue an appeal, the request for a formal appeal at the Health Professions Department level must be filed with the department chair in writing within 5 working days after receipt of the decision from the Department Chair.

- The appeal will contain the reason(s) for the Level 1 grade appeal and supporting documentation
- In addition, documentation of the program director's and/or the chair's recommendation of a grade change to the instructor which the instructor declined to follow.
- Within 5 working days after receipt of the appeal, the department chair will appoint a five-member ad hoc committee to hear the appeal as indicated in the Department of Health Profession Bylaws: Three faculty/IAS of the program (whenever possible) and two faculty/IAS from other department programs besides occupational therapy.
- The department chair will appoint one of the committee members (other than the course instructor) to chair the committee.
- The department chair shall NOT be a member of this committee, but will attend the committee meeting as observer and witness.
- The departmental appeals committee will meet within 5 working days of receipt of the written grade appeal. The committee members will be given copies of the documentation of the previous three levels of appeal prior to the appeal hearing.

The appeals hearing will be conducted as follows:

- Student will be given 15 minutes to describe the basis for the appeal and provide supporting documentation to the committee.
- The teacher involved will be given 15 minutes to describe the rationale for the grade and the reason for not changing the grade.
- The department chair will be asked to describe his/her involvement in the situation, decisions, and actions taken

- The student and instructor will be excused and the committee will deliberate.
- The committee may ask for additional information from any of the parties involved and specify a timeframe for supplying the materials. The request for additional materials will be put in writing. If additional materials are requested, the committee meeting will be adjourned.
- The committee will reconvene within one week after deadline for receipt of the requested materials.

The possible decisions the committee can make are:

- Deny the appeal and support the grade as given
- Support the appeal and make a recommendation to the course instructor to change the grade. The appeals committee chair will communicate the outcome of the appeal hearing in writing to the student, course instructor, and department chair within 5 days of the final committee hearing. A copy of the student written appeal and the response of the committee will be given to the student and placed in the student's permanent record. A final grade will be determined by the course instructor and will be communicated to the student within 5 working days of receiving the committee's recommendation. The Health Professions Department does not have a process for grade appeals that goes beyond the department level.

### Non Academic Appeals

Students may appeal a program decision or action for non-academic reasons which he/she feels is unfair, biased, arbitrary, or capricious.

#### Appeal Procedure Level I: Occupational Therapy Program

- The student should contact the Occupational Therapy Program director as soon as possible following the decision or action of concern to discuss the situation.
- The Occupational Therapy Program director will schedule a meeting with the student within 5 working days of the contact. If the student is on fieldwork, this meeting may occur by video or telephone conferencing.
- If the student wishes to submit a formal appeal of the program's actions, he/she must do so in writing to the Occupational Therapy Program director within 30 days of the original program action.
- The grounds for an appeal are limited to documentation that the Occupational Therapy action was unfair, biased, arbitrary, or capricious.
- Supporting documentation must be supplied for the appeal to be heard. •
- The occupational therapy faculty will meet within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal notice. If a particular faculty member was personally involved, that faculty member will be present for the information gathering portion of the hearing and excused during the deliberations.

- It is preferred that this meeting be held in person with the student being given the opportunity to represent him/herself. If the student is at some distance on fieldwork, this meeting may be held via video or phone conferencing.
- In that instance, the student will prepare a written statement of his/her appeal in advance so the faculty have it available at the conference. •
- The faculty will communicate the decision of the appeal hearing in writing to the student within 5 working days following this meeting.

#### Level 2: Chair, Health Professions Department

If the student does not accept this decision and wishes to appeal it to the Chair of the Health Professions Department, he/she may do so by contacting the Department Chair in writing within 5 working days following receipt of the occupational therapy faculty decision.

- The chair will contact the student within 5 working days and schedule a meeting with him/her and whoever else is mutually agreed upon within 10 working days.
- The chair will make a recommendation to either support the decision of the occupational therapy faculty or suggest an alternative decision to that group and the student within 5 working days of the meeting.

#### Level 3: Health Professions Department

If the student does not accept the decision and wishes to pursue further appeal, he/she must notify the Chair of Health Professions within 5 working days of receiving the results of Level 2 appeal hearing.

- The chair will convene an ad hoc group of 3-5 faculty, IAS, or adjunct faculty members who will meet within 10 working days of the student's declaration of appeal. At least 1 faculty member must be from the occupational therapy program.
- The student and other mutually agreed upon persons may attend through the portion of the meeting in which information is presented. They will be excused for the deliberations.
- The decision of this ad hoc Health Professions Appeals committee will be communicated to the student in writing within 5 working days following the meeting.

The appeal process ends at this level as the Health Professions Department bylaws do not specify a non-academic appeal process beyond the departmental level.

#### **Academic Dismissal**

Students may appeal an academic dismissal from the program following the procedure posted at graduate studies:

[http://www.uwlax.edu/uploadedFiles/Offices-Services/Graduate\\_studies/Academic%20Dismissal%20Appeal\(2\).pdf](http://www.uwlax.edu/uploadedFiles/Offices-Services/Graduate_studies/Academic%20Dismissal%20Appeal(2).pdf)



