

END OF TERM FINAL GRADE DISPUTE APPEAL PROCEDURE

Purpose

As set forth in PCC's Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, students have the Right to Protection from Improper Academic Evaluation. The Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal procedure provides the student with a process for appealing a final course grade when they believe that an improper evaluation has occurred. "Improper evaluation" is defined as

1. the evaluation standards and grading criteria contained in the course syllabus were not followed by the Instructor, or
2. the final grade was imposed in an arbitrary, or capricious manner.

Scope

The Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal procedure only applies to posted final course grades. Concerns about grades given for assignments, examinations during the term, concerns, or complaints about instructional quality should be addressed through the Online Complaint procedure.

The Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal procedure does not invalidate the requirements mandated by any department, program, and/or the curriculum of any particular course. Specific in class course assignments, Instructor-specific policies, or other formal course-related materials cannot be challenged, or appealed through the process outlined herein. These situations may be resolved by following the Online Complaint procedure (scroll down to the Complaints section).

Authority

The Instructor, and/or appropriate academic Program Dean have the authority to authorize a change to a Term Final Grade as an outcome of the appeal process. Unless the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal procedure was not followed, their decision is final.

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Support will serve as steward of the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal. When the appeal process is concluded, all documentation will be archived.

Student Protections

A student may have a support person of their choice (PCC counselor, advisor, student government representative, etc.) throughout the appeal process. An electronic Consent Release form must be on record (accessible via the students MyPCC portal). The support person is not permitted to present the appeal, but may advise the student throughout the appeal process. The Office of Student Conduct and Community Support may assist the student with identifying a support person, or arranging for assistance with language translation, if needed.

Both PCC, and the student may seek legal advice at their own expense; however, neither the college, or student may be represented by an attorney during any meeting pertaining to the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal procedure.

Concerns involving harassment, or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age national origin, disability, veteran, and/or any other legally protected status will be directed to PCC's Office of Equity, and Inclusion. Both the Office of Equity, and Inclusion, and the academic program considering the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal may engage in parallel investigations if the college determines it is appropriate.

Directions for Submitting a Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal:

STEP 1: Attempt to Resolve the Final Grade Concern With The Instructor

A. If the student believes their grade was a mistake, they must first directly communicate with the Instructor about the final grade by sending a written inquiry (email) to them requesting an explanation of how the grade was determined, and stating their questions, and concerns about the grade assigned.

The communication should include specific reasons why the student believes they were graded improperly, and include supporting evidence, such as statements in the course syllabus, alleged discrepancies in points, or grades received, emails to and from the Instructor, etceteras.

The written inquiry must be received by the Instructor within thirty (30) calendar days of the final course grades being posted.

B. Upon receiving a written inquiry regarding a final course grade, the Instructor is expected to respond to the student's inquiry in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the documented date of the student's inquiry.

If the Instructor is unable to respond within fourteen (14) calendar days, the Faculty Department Chair, or Program Dean may initiate an appropriate response. For Instructor, and Faculty Department chair contact the Office of Student Conduct and Community Support by emailing Appeals.Complaint.Feedback@pcc.edu. If questions remain after the student receives explanation from the Instructor, the student is encouraged to discuss those concerns with the Instructor.

STEP 2: Submit a Term Final Grade Appeal

A. If the student's concern is not resolved through Step 1, the student may submit a Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal. Appeal should include supporting evidence, such as the course syllabus, alleged discrepancies in points or grades received, emails to and from the Instructor, etceteras to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Support.

Appeal deadline is within ninety (90) calendar days after the term ends of the student's documented inquiry to the Instructor, and/or Faculty Department Chair outlined in Step 1.

B. The Office of Student Conduct and Community Support will review the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal to determine the next steps. These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Referral of the appeal to the Instructor's academic Program Dean, or other immediate administrator for review, and response.
2. request for additional information and supporting documentation from the student, or
3. A decision not to proceed with the appeal if the academic evaluation being contested does not fall within the scope of the policy.

C. Once sufficient information, and documentation have been received from the student, and the appeal has been deemed appropriate, the Program Dean, or other immediate administrator will review the final course grade in question, make a decision about the appropriateness of that grade under the standards described above, and communicate the decision in writing to the student. A copy of the written decision will also be sent to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Support.

Generally, Step 2 will be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal, unless more time is needed to review.

STEP 3: Appeal Decision to the Pathway Dean

The student may appeal the decision in Step 2 only on the grounds that

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1. The procedures outlined in the policy were not followed; or
2. Relevant documentation concerning the final course grade is discovered that was not available during Step 2.

An appeal must be made within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the Program Dean's written decision. The student must submit written justification for further review and provide documentation that there are grounds for the Step 3 appeal.

A. The Pathway Dean, or other immediate administrator will objectively review how the Term Final Grade Dispute Appeal process was conducted in Step 2, and/or consider relevant documentation that was not available, or not considered during Step 2, make a final decision, and communicate it in writing to the student, with a copy emailed to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Support.

The Pathway Dean's, or other immediate administrator's decision is final.

If you believe the final decision of your grade appeal involved harassment, or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age national origin, disability, veteran, and/or any other legally protected status, please contact PCC's Office of Equity, and Inclusion.

For questions, and assistance, contact the Office of Student Conduct and Community Support at Appeals.Complaints.Feedback@pcc.edu