

# Grades Dispute Policy

## Process for Resolving Disputed Grades

It is the responsibility of the classroom instructor to evaluate each student's work and to assign a grade which is a fair and valid measure of the student's achievement in the course. In the event of a dispute over an assigned grade, the student will document in writing the rationale for the grade dispute. The student must provide a copy of his or her perception of the dispute to the instructor and the department chair. It will then become part of the permanent record concerning the dispute. This document must be signed and the date of the transmittal to the instructor and the department chair noted on the document.

The time limit for initial confirmed contact of the professor who awarded the grade is twenty (20) business days, not including summer, into the semester following the one in which the grade was recorded. If the professor is unavailable or fails to respond by the 30th business day of the semester, students have an additional ten (10) business days to contact the department chair. Where the department chair and the instructor are one and the same, twenty (20) business days suffice before the student can move on to the next step.

### 1. Department Level:

- a) The student and the instructor will meet to attempt resolution of the disputed grade. If the instructor is no longer accessible for any reason (e.g., prolonged illness, no longer at Rowan), the student may continue the process as noted in this policy by first meeting with the department chair (see 1 b),
- b) If the matter is not resolved, the student and the instructor will then meet with the department chair, who will act as a facilitator, to determine if resolution is possible. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, faculty will continue to be available to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

### 2. College Level

If the issue is not resolved at the department level, within ten (10) business days from the time the department chair is informed of the dispute, the student shall schedule a meeting with the appropriate academic dean within five (5) business days of the departmental decision and will provide, in writing, the rationale for the grade dispute. The academic dean will attempt to effect a reconciliation between the two parties within ten (10) business days of receiving the student's written rationale for the grade dispute. Pertinent documentation provided by the instructor and the student shall form the basis for discussion at this stage.

### 3. Grade Grievance Committee Level

If the matter is still unresolved, ten (10) business days after the meeting with the academic dean, the student may pursue the matter with the associate provost for academic affairs. The associate provost for academic affairs will provide the Grievance Committee with the student's written grievance to determine whether a formal hearing is warranted. If the Grievance Committee determines a formal hearing is warranted, a date and time will be set for the hearing. The Grade Grievance Committee shall, at the conclusion of the hearing, have prepared a written recommendation to the provost. The recommendation shall be submitted within four working days after the hearing.

### 4. Provost Level

Within ten (10) working days of receiving the recommendation, the provost will take action and shall notify both parties in the grievance of the decision and action taken. This action is final.

The Grievance Committee shall be composed of two faculty members appointed by the Senate, two students appointed by the SGA, and two administrators appointed by the University president or his/her designee. A chairperson shall be elected from and by the membership and shall have the right to vote. The associate provost for academic affairs shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee without vote. A majority of the Committee membership must be present for all meetings of the committee.

Every effort will be made by the associate provost for academic affairs to schedule a grade grievance hearing at a time that is mutually convenient to the instructor and the student. This may, however, not always be possible. The associate provost for academic affairs will set the schedule for the meeting after careful consideration of the personal schedules of the parties involved. A hearing will not be set for a time when either the instructor or the student has a class at Rowan scheduled. One continuance is permitted if unforeseen events make one or the other party's attendance impossible. Thereafter, a new date for the hearing will be set, and the committee will be convened despite the absence of one or both of the parties to the dispute.

If any committee member has a direct personal or professional relationship with any individual(s) involved in a particular case, that committee member may disqualify him/herself from serving on the committee while the case is being heard. Further, if a charge of bias is raised by an individual, the contested committee member may disqualify him/herself from committee deliberations. Failing voluntary action in either situation, the committee itself must reach a decision as to the continuance of the individual so questioned. If a member is disqualified, another individual from the same constituency shall be appointed to serve in his/her place.