



## **PROCEDURE FOR APPEAL OF FINAL COURSE GRADES**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to give specific guidance to assist the Niazee College of Osteopathic Medicine (NCOM) with implementation of, and ensure institutional compliance with, Institutional Policy D5000: Academic and Professional Standards, regarding grade appeals.

### **2. Applicability**

2.1 This procedure applies to any situation whereby a student wishes to appeal a course grade. Only the final grade of a course in Years 1 & 2 may be appealed. Only a failing course grade may be appealed in Years 3 & 4.

2.2 NCOM reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time, as necessary or appropriate.

### **3. Notification Of Appeal**

3.1 To appeal a final course grade, students must file a written notification to the appropriate Associate Dean within ten (10) business days of the final grade being posted by the Registrar.

3.1.1 Year 1 and 2 students shall notify the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

3.1.2 Year 3 and 4 students shall notify the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs.

3.2 The Associate Dean shall provide the student with a copy of this Procedure and Institutional Policy D5000.

### **4. Associate Dean - Student Meeting**

4.1 The student will meet with the appropriate Associate Dean to discuss the course grade. The meeting shall take place within five (5) business days of the written notification to the Associate Dean.

4.2 If the appropriate Associate Dean is unavailable, the Dean/CAO may grant an extension of up to thirty (30) days for this meeting. Any variance shall be in writing with appropriate copy distribution.

4.3 The student and Associate Dean may invite a third party to this meeting. In this case, “third party” is defined as “a faculty member, faculty advisor, or Preceptor.” The third party(ies) may attend but may not participate directly in the meeting.

4.4 The student shall explain their reasons for appealing the grade, and the Associate Dean shall explain the reasons for assigning the grade.

4.5 While serving an off-campus clinical rotation, the meeting between the student and Associate Dean may be conducted by phone, conference call, or video conference and involve a third party(ies) as described in Section 4.3.

4.6 The student must offer convincing evidence that “good cause” exists for the appeal. “Good cause” for the purposes of a grade appeal is defined in Institutional Policy D5000: Academic and Professional Standards, Section 15.

4.7 The Associate Dean will use the criteria as defined in Institutional Policy D5000: Academic and Professional Standards, in consideration of a student’s request for a change of a final course grade. Only if supported by sufficient evidence, shall there be “good cause” for the change of a final course grade.

4.8 The Associate Dean shall notify the student and the Dean/CAO, in writing, of their decision within a reasonable time after the meeting has occurred (usually five (5) business days) stating the rationale for the decision.

## **5. Appeal To the Dean/CAO**

5.1 If the decision of the Associate Dean is averse to the student, they may appeal to the Dean/CAO.

5.2 An appeal to the Dean/CAO must be made within five (5) business days after the student receives the denial of the first appeal by the Associate Dean.

5.3 An appeal to the Dean/CAO must be in writing and shall contain the student’s reasons and any supporting documentation for appealing the grade. The student must offer convincing evidence that “good cause” exists for the appeal. (See Institutional Policy D5000: Academic and Professional Standards, Section 14, for what does and does not constitute “good cause”)

5.4 The Dean/CAO shall investigate the matter (usually within ten (10) business days) to determine if the case can be decided administratively or if the facts of the case are in dispute.

5.4.1 Good faith on the faculty member's part shall be assumed unless the student can offer convincing evidence to the contrary.

5.4.2 If the facts of the matter meet the criteria for an appeal and warrant a grade change, the Dean/CAO may grant the grade appeal. The Dean/CAO will notify the Associate Dean to make appropriate grade changes. If not done, the Dean/CAO can administratively make the change.

5.4.3 If the facts of the matter do not meet the criteria for an appeal or do not warrant a grade change, the Dean/CAO will deny the grade appeal and the original grade shall stand. Dean/CAO will notify the student and Associate Dean that the grade appeal has been denied stating the rationale for the decision.

5.5 The decision of the Dean/CAO on a grade appeal is final and cannot be appealed further by the student.

## **6. Referral Of an Appeal to the Independent Ad Hoc Fact-Finding Committee**

6.1 If the facts of the case are in dispute, the Dean/CAO will refer the case to the Independent Ad Hoc Fact-Finding Committee (IAHFFC) for independent findings of fact.

6.2 The IAHFFC shall investigate the matter, conduct hearings as appropriate, review the case and forward its findings and conclusions to the Dean/CAO.

6.3 The student and appropriate Associate Dean shall have the opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the issues which led to the decision of the failing grade.

6.4 The IAHFFC may consider all materials in the appeal file, including but not limited to, the student's written appeal, the Associate Dean's written justification, the student's written work for the course, and any additional academic records. Following completion of the appeal, all files shall be remanded to the Dean/CAO.

6.5 The Dean/CAO will make a final determination in the matter as outlined in Section 5.4.