

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE

I. OVERVIEW

A. Creation of the Board of Academic Appeals

The Board of Academic Appeals (BAA) was created in July, 2006 by the President and the Provost of the University of Central Oklahoma.

B. Purpose

The purpose of the BAA is to be the final formal appellate body for academic disputes between students and faculty. Examples of such appealed disputes include, but are not limited to, grade appeals and appeals involving academic dishonesty.

II. BOARD OF ACADEMIC APPEALS MEMBERSHIP

A. The BAA shall be comprised of students and faculty members.

B. The Provost shall appoint the Chairperson of the BAA*. The Chairperson of the BAA is a non-voting member of the board.

*In the event the chairperson is unable to serve for a short period of time, the chairperson or the provost will appoint an interim chairperson from the sitting elected faculty board members.

C. Faculty Board Members **

Each academic college shall elect two (2) tenured, full-time faculty members for three-year staggered terms.

D. Student Board Members **

Student Board Members are recommended to serve on the Board of Academic Appeals by the colleges. The criteria for those students selected can be found in III.F.4 in the following section.

**In cases where a sufficient number of elected faculty board members and/or appointed student board members cannot be identified (e.g., for appeals that must take place during the summer term), the Chairperson of the BAA will appoint faculty or student members as necessary to hear appeals.

III. ACADEMIC APPEAL PROCEDURES

A. GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

1. All practices and procedures that will be used to determine a student's final grade should be communicated to the student in the course syllabus and on the first day of class. Any deficiency in accomplishing the above, however, shall not affect any of the rights or procedures herein outlined.
2. If a student believes the practices and procedures used to determine his/her final grade were not consistently and/or accurately followed, the student (hereinafter referred to as "Student Appellant") has the ability to have his/her appeal considered regarding the final grade. The process for the consideration of a student's appeal of a final grade follows herein.

B. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY APPEAL PROCESS

1. Academic dishonesty is anathema to the mission, vision and academic values of the University of Central Oklahoma and, as a result, will not be tolerated.
2. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not confined to: plagiarizing, cheating, turning in counterfeit papers, stealing academic materials, knowingly falsifying academic documents, accessing confidential academic records without authorization, disclosing confidential academic information without authorization, and turning in the same work to more than one class without the expressed permission of the instructors involved. Specific examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not confined to:
 - a. Cheating on an examination or the preparation of academic work;
 - b. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data, listings, and/or programs;
 - c. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the professor or instructor;
 - d. Collaborating with or aiding another person, without authorization, during an examination or in preparing academic work;
 - e. Knowingly and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing in whole or in part, the contents of an un-administered examination;
 - f. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
 - g. Bribing another person to obtain an un-administered examination or information about an un-administered examination;
 - h. Plagiarizing or appropriating another's work or idea without properly acknowledging incorporation of that work or idea into academic work; students of a group are responsible for plagiarized material contained in group work.
 - i) Any forgery, alteration, or misuse of academic documents, forms or records, in hard copy or electronic format;
 - j) Attempting to bribe any faculty/staff or student to alter a grade;
 - k) Attempts by unauthorized individuals or organizations to access student records without the expressed written consent of the student. Examples of violations include, but are not limited to the following:
 1. Illegally accessing information from student or faculty information terminals;
 2. Misrepresenting oneself to obtain another student's transcript, semester grades or class registration; and,
 3. Using a student's ID number without his or her expressed written permission to gain access to other University services.
3. The initial treatment of an allegation of academic dishonesty by a student shall be governed by the Code of Student Conduct in effect at the time of the behavior which is the subject of the allegation.
4. If a student believes the practices and procedures used by the instructor to address an allegation of academic dishonesty were inappropriate or unfair, the student may have the ability to have an appeal considered regarding the issues. The process for the consideration of a student's appeal of an academic dishonesty issue follows herein.

C. DEADLINES

1. All academic appeals must be filed with the Office of Academic Affairs no later than the end of the fourth week of the next semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was assigned, with the exception of the spring semester and self-paced online courses (SPOC). A spring grade appeal may be filed during the subsequent summer, but must be filed no later than the end of the fourth week of the next fall semester. A grade appeal for a self-paced online course must be filed by the end of the sixth week following the expiration date of the course.
2. The intent (but not mandate) of these Academic Appeal Procedures is to resolve all academic appeals by the end of the semester in which the appeal is filed.
3. The Chairperson of the BAA will have the authority to enforce deadlines regarding academic appeals and make any sanctions and/or exceptions he/she deems reasonable and fair.

D. ONLINE ACADEMIC APPEAL PACKET

1. If a Student Appellant believes an academic appeal of his/her situation is warranted, his/her first step is to download an Online Academic Appeal Packet (available online at <http://www.uco.edu/academic-affairs/students/grade-appeals.asp>)
2. In the Online Academic Appeal Packet, will be the following forms:
 - a. the *Student Information Form*
 - b. the *Student Consent Form*.
3. In completing the online Academic Appeal Packet, the Student Appellant will be required to meet with the faculty member* who assigned the grade and/or took the disputed action against him/her, as well as meet with the faculty member's department chairperson/school director. The intent and goal of the UCO Academic Appeal Procedure is that a significant effort be made to resolve this dispute at the departmental level.
4. In the event the faculty member is not able to participate in the informal or formal grade appeal process, the faculty member's department chairperson/school director will serve in his/her place.

E. Formal Appeal

1. **The Student Appellant* should also prepare/gather the following:**
 - a. **A detailed description concerning specific points of dissatisfaction with the grade assigned and/or other actions or sanctions taken against the Student Appellant;**
 - b. **Any and all supporting documentation the Student Appellant wants the BAA to consider;**
 - c. **A complete list of all potential witnesses desired by the Student Appellant; that list should include phone, email and other contact information; and**
 - d. **Specific result sought by the Student Appellant.**
2. After preparing/gathering the documents listed above, the Student Appellant **must file the documents with the Office of the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.**

3. The Student Appellant is notified that the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is in receipt of the grade appeal packet. A letter is then sent to the faculty member requesting his/her response and any supporting documents.
4. For security purposes, all academic appeal materials filed shall be kept in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for the duration of the appeal process. After that time, all appeal materials will be archived in the Office of Legal Counsel.

*In the event the Student Appellant is unable to continue the formal process due to extraordinary and/or unforeseen circumstances (e.g. deployment, death, etc.), the Chairperson of the BAA shall have the authority to dismiss the appeal or allow a continuance based upon good cause shown in writing.

F. BAA Hearing Committees

1. All BAA Hearing Committees shall be comprised of three (3) faculty members and two (2) students.
2. The Chairperson of the BAA shall appoint the faculty members and students to BAA Hearing Committees.
3. Faculty Committee Members

Faculty members from the college in which the appeal originated shall recuse themselves from serving on that BAA Hearing Committee.

4. Student Committee Members
 - a. Student members of a BAA Hearing Committee shall be full-time student who are not pursuing major programs in the same college as the Student Appellant; and they shall have the same status (graduate/undergraduate) as the Student Appellant.
 - b. An undergraduate appointed to serve on a BAA Hearing Committee must have a retention/graduation grade point average of 3.0 or better except as noted in Section II.D.
 - c. A graduate student appointed to serve on a BAA Hearing Committee must have a retention/graduation grade point average of 3.3 or better except as noted in Section II.D.
 - d. None of the students serving on a BAA Hearing Committee shall have been enrolled in the section in which the contested grade was assigned and/or in which the subject behavior occurred.
 - e. Additionally, none of the students serving on a BAA Hearing Committee shall be currently enrolled in any course with any of the faculty members of the BAA Hearing Committee or with the faculty member involved in the dispute.

G. Procedure for a Preliminary Review of Academic Appeals

1. Each appointed BAA Hearing Committee member shall promptly and independently review the entire Academic Appeal Packet.
2. Each BAA Hearing Committee member shall vote, by written ballot on whether or not to grant an oral hearing before the BAA Hearing Committee.
3. If an Oral Hearing is not granted, the BAA Hearing Committee shall promptly consider and issue its proposed findings and recommendations.

4. An affirmative vote of at least three (3) members of the BAA Hearing Committee shall be necessary to grant an Oral Hearing. If an Oral Hearing is granted, section III.H below shall be implemented.
5. The Chairperson of the BAA shall inform all parties of the decision of the Board: the student appellant, the faculty member, the faculty member's department chairperson/school director, and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

H. Procedures for an Academic Appeal Oral Hearing

1. If three (3) or more members of the BAA Hearing Committee vote to grant an Oral Hearing, the Chairperson of the BAA shall schedule the Oral Hearing.
2. A representative from UCO's Office of Legal Counsel shall be present to digitally record the proceedings and to advise the BAA Hearing Committee on procedures, issues of law, and mixed questions of facts and law.
3. The Chairperson of the BAA shall have the duty of calling the Oral Hearing to order, and presiding over the proceedings to ensure it is conducted in a fair, orderly, and efficient manner as follows:

Either party shall have the right to be assisted by counsel. However, each party must advocate for him/herself, and counsel may not address the BAA Hearing Committee or any witness.
4. The student shall be heard first in all phases of the Oral Hearing.
5. Presentation Time
 - a. Both parties shall have 5 minutes to make an opening statement.
 - b. Both parties shall have 40 minutes to present evidence, testimony, and witnesses.
 - c. Both parties shall have 5 minutes to make a closing argument.
 - d. An extension of time regarding the above time frames may be requested by either party. An affirmative vote of three members of the BAA Hearing Committee shall be required to grant the request.
6. Witnesses
 - a. Either party shall have the right to call witnesses and to ask questions of all witnesses.
 - b. Members of the BAA Hearing Committee may question witnesses as well.
 - c. Witnesses shall be heard individually and shall be excluded from the hearing room when not actually testifying.
7. All evidence and testimony pertaining to the academic appeal oral hearing shall be held in confidence between the student, faculty member, witnesses, the BAA Hearing Committee members, and other necessary officers of the university.
8. At the conclusion of the Oral Hearing, both parties shall be dismissed, and the BAA Hearing Committee shall convene to discuss the case.
9. Committee Report of Findings and Recommendations

- a. The BAA Hearing Committee shall promptly issue a Majority Report of findings and recommendations.
 - b. The Majority Report shall be signed by those members of the BAA Hearing Committee who found for the majority.
 - c. Any member of the minority may write a dissenting opinion, which shall be shared with the members of the majority.
 - d. The BAA Hearing Committee Majority Report and all dissents shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the BAA.
 - e. The chair of the BAA will forward copies of the majority report to the Student Appellant, the faculty member, the department chair/school director, the dean, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Office of Legal Counsel.
10. If the Committee's Majority Report recommends a grade change, the Chairperson of the BAA shall implement the decision in coordination with the Office of Legal Counsel. If the Committee's Majority Report recommends either suspension or expulsion of the Student Appellant, the Chairperson of the BAA shall forward the recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs for further action.

IV. RECORDS MAINTENANCE

The Office of Legal Counsel shall serve as a central repository for all concluded academic appeal records. At the conclusion of an academic appeal, the Chairperson of the BAA shall forward all original documents, digital recordings, recommendations, and final determination decisions to the Office of Legal Counsel. Such records shall be maintained by the Office of Legal Counsel for the statutorily required period of time.