



## **SECTION I – APPEAL PROCEDURES**

1. **Appeal to Grievance Committee.** All appeals pertaining to undergraduate and graduate courses within the College of Science and Technology will be heard by the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee. No appeal may be filed for consideration by the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee that has not complied with the College of Science and Technology requirements for attempts at dispute resolution between the student and the department as described in Section II of this document.

2. **What decisions or actions may be appealed.** A student may appeal a departmental decision pertaining to grades assigned in undergraduate and graduate courses in the following cases:

A. **A grade dispute:** Wherein a final course grade is alleged to have been given by a faculty member to the student in a capricious/arbitrary or discriminatory manner. As used in this paragraph:

i. **“capricious/arbitrary”** means not resulting from a reasonable announced grading policy and/or procedure or without a sound academic basis or based primarily upon personal preference or whim.

ii. **“discriminatory”** means differential treatment based upon race, religion, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.



B. **An unacceptable academic learning environment:** Wherein a faculty member, staff member, or administrator has created or perpetuated a learning environment that has caused a significant and ascertainable negative impact upon the student.

3. **Manner of filing appeal.** All appeals made to the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee will commence with the filing of a properly completed appeal form, as approved by the Dean of the College of Science and Technology.

Appeal forms may be obtained on the College of Science and Technology website ([famuedu/cst](http://famuedu/cst)), in the office of the department from which the undergraduate or graduate course is offered, or in the Office of the Dean (105 University Commons). Any appeal pending prior to August 24, 2015, remains subject to application procedures in effect at the time of the appeal's submission.

Any appeal filed for courses offered Fall 2015 or after are subject to the guidelines in this document. Appeals filed for courses taken Summer 2015 or before are subject to procedures in place at the time the course was taken. Please contact the Dean's Office if clarification is needed regarding the appropriate procedures governing your grievance.

If the course in question was taken prior to Fall 2015, you will follow the previous procedure. If you file a grievance for a course taken Fall 2015 or later, you will follow this procedure.

4. **Where appeal is to be filed.** An appeal must be filed in the Office of the Dean of the College of Science and Technology (105 University Commons).



5. **Timing of the appeal.** An appeal must be filed according to the established deadlines (see Section II below for clarification of departmental processes and decisions), unless the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee grants additional time for appeal based upon just cause and in the interest of a just resolution of the appeal. Requests for the Committee to review appeals submitted after the established deadlines must be submitted, in writing, to the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chairperson.

6. **Initial processing of the appeal.** After receipt of a properly executed appeal form, the College of Science and Technology will refer the appeal in a timely manner, but within seven (7) business days to the Grievance Committee by transmittal to the committee chair. The College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chairperson will direct the appropriate department chair to furnish the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chairperson (within two weeks of the request) all documentation within his or her custody pertaining to the appeal, including the Department Grievance Outcome Form (or comparable departmental form). The College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chairperson, in turn, will furnish each member of the committee with the appeal form, supporting documentation, and other materials relevant to the appeal.

7. **Scheduling of hearing.** The College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chairperson, upon receipt of an appeal and necessary documentation, will expeditiously schedule a hearing in the matter before the committee. Unless otherwise directed by the committee or its chair, hearings will be held monthly. The committee chair will notify all parties of the appeal—including the student making the appeal, the faculty member, staff member or administrator whose course gave rise to the appeal, and the appropriate department chair—of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The notice will be made in writing via email not less than seven (7) calendar days in advance of the hearing, unless each of the concerned parties to an appeal waives the notice requirement, in writing, to the committee chairperson.



8. **Hearings.** Unless otherwise allowed by the committee in the interest of a just resolution of an appeal, each party to an appeal will be allowed not more than ten (10) minutes to present his or her respective position. Only the student making the appeal, the faculty member, staff member or administrator whose action gave rise to the appeal, and the appropriate department chair will be allowed to speak during a hearing. Pertinent information from witnesses having direct knowledge of the circumstances giving rise to the appeal may be submitted to the committee in written form and the committee upon its own motion may call witnesses for oral testimony at a hearing. Written statements from witnesses must be submitted when the grievance is submitted to the Dean's Office (University Commons, room 105).

9. **Hearing record.** As directed by the committee chair, an appropriate written record of each appeal hearing will be taken and maintained.

10. **Grievance Committee findings and recommendations.** After completion of the hearing of an appeal, the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee will expeditiously review the record of the appeal in the interest of a just resolution. Notice of the committee's findings and recommendations will be forwarded in writing by the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee chair to the Associate Dean of the College of Science and Technology no more than three weeks after the committee formalizes its recommendation.

11. **Final determination.** The Dean of the College of Science and Technology will review the Grievance Committee findings and recommendations in each appeal in a timely manner. Within three weeks following receipt of the Grievance Committee's recommendation, the Dean's Office will notify the parties of the appeal in writing, via email, of the Dean's decision and also will provide each of the parties with a copy of the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee's recommendation unless the Dean notifies the student otherwise. It is incumbent upon the grievant to check his/her email.



**Appeal final determination.** Should the grievant conclude after the Dean’s decision a just rendering was not reached, a formal letter of appeal of the Dean’s decision must be submitted within **30 calendar days** post emailed decision to the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs. Graduate students may pursue an appeal of a grade with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) if he or she is dissatisfied with the decision made **after pursuing the appeal at the college or school level**. If the student does not obtain satisfactory resolution at the SGS level, they may then appeal at the level of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Before filing a complaint with the SGS, it is hoped that a student’s concerns can be addressed and resolved within the college or school in which the student is enrolled. (See the procedures on the SGS website – [famu.edu/graduatestudies](http://famu.edu/graduatestudies)).

12. **Other grievances.** For information concerning student grievances other than those subject to appeal to the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee, see the Florida A&M University General Catalog (<http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?catalog>), including sections relating to academic discipline; cheating and plagiarism; readmission from suspension; modification of degree requirements; university non-discrimination policies; policy on disruptive behavior; university code of conduct; and general catalog policy on student petitions.



## **SECTION II –PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE GRADE DISPUTES PRIOR TO SUBMITTING A FORMAL APPEAL**

It is the intent of these rules to provide a fair and consistent process for resolving student grade grievances pertaining to academic matters. The steps specified are designed to encourage the student, before filing a complaint, to resolve the grievance by conferring with the academic administrators of the college and, as necessary, with their counterparts in other academic units.

### **Procedural Steps**

The steps to be taken in resolving grade disputes are as follows:

1. The student must attempt, as soon as is reasonably practical after receipt of the grade that is the subject (pertaining to undergraduate or graduate courses) of the dispute to communicate directly with the instructor in an effort to resolve the issue.



- Resolving fall semester grade disputes with the instructor must be attempted in accordance to the following deadlines.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics courses – no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than three (3) days after grades are available for student view in accordance with the University Registrar’s calendar (visit [famuedu](http://famuedu) for more information).
- Resolving spring and summer semester grade disputes with the instructor must be attempted in accordance to the following deadlines.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics courses – no later than August 30<sup>th</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than three (3) days after grades are available for student view in accordance with the University Registrar’s calendar (visit [famuedu](http://famuedu) for more information).

The student can proceed to step 2 if no resolution satisfactory to the student results from the communication or if, after reasonable effort, the student cannot communicate with the instructor.



2. A student whose dispute has not been resolved satisfactorily by communicating directly with the instructor of the undergraduate or graduate course, or who has failed in reasonable attempts to communicate directly with the instructor of the undergraduate or graduate course, may take his or her grievance and proceed with the department's grievance process. If the department does not have a formal grievance process, may take his or her grievance, in writing, to the chair of the department in which the undergraduate or graduate course is offered. All grievances must follow the department's grievance process. All disputes referred to a chair must be brought to his or her attention no later than the deadlines listed below.

- Submitting fall semester grade disputes must be communicated to the department chairperson as described below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math courses – student must make contact with the department chairperson in accordance with the department's grievance procedure but not later than February 15<sup>th</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than five (5) days after meeting with the instructor. Student must submit an Academic Complaint Process (ACP) form to the CIS chairperson.
  - o Physics courses – student must submit a grievance to the Physics Grievance Committee in accordance with the department's grievance procedure within 30 days of not resolving the dispute with the chairperson.
- Submitting spring and summer semester grade disputes must be communicated to the department chairperson as described below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math courses – student must make contact with the department chairperson in accordance with the department's grievance procedure but no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than five (5) days after meeting with the instructor. Student must submit an Academic Complaint Process (ACP) form to the CIS chairperson.





- o Physics courses – student must make contact with the department chairperson in accordance with the department’s grievance procedure but before August 30<sup>th</sup>.

The chair will inform the student of the department’s procedure to address grade grievances. If there is no formal departmental grade grievance procedure, then the chair will endeavor to communicate directly with the instructor and the student in order to attempt to resolve the grievance. The chair will submit a written summary of his or her (or the departmental grievance committee’s) findings and decision to the student and to the instructor in a timely manner.

- Department decisions for fall semester grade disputes will be communicated to the student and instructor as described below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math courses – no later than February 22<sup>nd</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – no later than two weeks after the student has submitted an Academic Complaint Process (ACP) form to the CIS chairperson.
- Department decisions for spring and summer semester grade disputes will be communicated to the student and instructor as described below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math courses – no later than October 7<sup>th</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – no later than two weeks after the student has submitted an Academic Complaint Process (ACP) form to the CIS chairperson.

3. When the instructor of the undergraduate or graduate course being grieved serves as the department chair, the dispute may be filed with the Associate or Assistant Dean of the College of Science and Technology rather than with the department chair and paragraph 2 will be followed.



4. An appeal of the decision of the department pursuant to step 2 (or of the Associate or Assistant Dean of the College of Science and Technology pursuant to step 3) may be taken to the Dean of the College of Science and Technology. Any such appeal must adhere to the following deadlines.

- Grievances for consideration by the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee for fall semester grade disputes must be submitted to the College of Science and Technology Dean's Office by the deadlines listed below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics courses – student must submit the grievance no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than three weeks after the student receives notification of the outcome of the Academic Complaint Process (ACP) from the CIS chairperson.
- Grievances for consideration by the College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee for spring and summer semester grade disputes must be submitted to the College of Science and Technology Dean's Office by the deadlines below.
  - o Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics courses – student must submit the grievance no later than October 22<sup>nd</sup> (or next business day).
  - o CIS courses – No later than three weeks after the student receives notification of the outcome of the Academic Complaint Process (ACP) from the CIS chairperson.

5. The College of Science and Technology Grievance Committee will review each appeal, conduct a hearing if appropriate, and issue findings and recommendations to the dean. Hearings will be held monthly, as needed. The chair will forward committee findings and recommendations to the dean no later than three weeks after the committee formalizes its decision.



6. The Dean of the College Science and Technology will review the Grievance Committee findings and recommendations in each appeal in a timely manner. Within three weeks following receipt of the Grievance Committee’s recommendation, the Dean’s Office will notify the parties of the appeal in writing of the Dean’s decision and also will provide each of the parties with a copy of the Grievance Committee’s recommendation.

7. In the case of a College of Science and Technology student who has a credible grade dispute arising out of a course offered outside the College of Science and Technology, the Dean of the College of Science and Technology, upon written request by the student, will endeavor to contact the appropriate administrative counterpart in the other college or school to request notification of proceedings and decisions regarding the dispute.