

Academic Grade Appeal Procedure

The College has established a grade appeal procedure to be used if a student has a valid reason to believe that a grade he/she received for an examination, a written/oral presentation, a clinical, a lab, or a project is inaccurate or an inaccurate grade has influenced the final grade in the class. This procedure will be followed for all students whether enrolled in courses held on campus in a traditional classroom setting or courses that are delivered via distance learning formats.

Formal appeals are accepted only when a student believes the instructor did not assign the grade correctly based on the syllabus guidelines. Students may also appeal the final grade in the class if he/she believes the final grade is inaccurate.

To initiate the formal Academic Grade Appeal process, a student must file the Academic Grade Appeal Form **within ten (10) days of the College's scheduled faculty duty days** after the student has received the grade in question. If the student is appealing the final course grade, the ten (10) *scheduled faculty duty days* period will begin on the first class day of the next academic term for full term or second mini term classes or the first class day of the second mini term for first mini term classes.

The student will initiate the formal appeal by following the procedure outlined below. The student must demonstrate proof that the instructor did not assign the course grade correctly based on the syllabus guidelines. The burden of proof is the responsibility of the student when appealing a grade. A student who receives a failing grade because he/she was unaware of the procedure or deadline for withdrawing from a course does not have the right to appeal the grade.

Thereafter, each subsequent appeal must occur **within ten (10) of the College's scheduled faculty duty days** after the respective decision is emailed to the student's official SUSCC email address (SUSCC will use the institutional student email as its official form of communication). If a student does not meet the deadline for appealing a grade, the right to appeal will be waived.

Appeal Procedure

In appealing a grade, the student may have his or her concern about the grade reviewed through the following procedures:

1. Initiation of Appeal

To initiate a grade appeal, the student must complete the Grade Appeal Form Level 1, and include a written statement describing why he/she believes that the grading procedures outlined in the class syllabus were not appropriately followed, attaching all relevant evidence to the form.

The completed form and evidence must be submitted in person or by email to the Assistant to the Dean of Academic, Health Sciences, or Technical Services, as appropriate. The *ten (10) scheduled faculty duty days* period will begin on the first class day of the next academic term for full term or second mini term classes or the first class day of the second mini term for first mini term classes.

The dean's assistant will log the appeal into the database and give a copy of the student's form to the course instructor.

2. Instructor Response

The instructor will prepare a written response *within (10) scheduled faculty duty days* of the receipt of the grade appeal and submit the response to the appropriate Dean's secretary or assistant.

The Instructional Dean's Assistant/Secretary will notify the student of the response from the instructor via the college email system and/or the phone number supplied by the student on the Academic Grade Appeal Form.

The student may pick up a copy of the instructor's response from the Assistant/ Secretary to the Instructional Dean or the response will be sent to the SUSCC email address.

3. Department Chair/Program Director Response

If the student does not feel the issue has been resolved by the instructor, he/she may submit a written request using

the Academic Grade Appeal Form, Level 2, for the department chair/program director to review the appeal to the appropriate dean's assistant/secretary *within (10) scheduled faculty duty days* of notification of the instructor's response. The completed appeal form may be emailed to the correct assistant/secretary by reviewing the list on the Appeal Form.

The dean's assistant/secretary will deliver copies of all documents to the department chair/program director who will analyze the appeal and provide a written response to the secretary/assistant *within (10) scheduled faculty duty days*.

The chairperson/director has the authority to call in the instructor, to ask for the assistance of another SUSCC instructor or seek the opinion of an expert in the subject area under review.

The assistant/secretary will deliver the response from the department chair/program director to the student in the same manner indicated above.

4. **Dean's/Academic Grade Appeal Committee Decision**

If the student still believes there is a problem, he/she has *(10) scheduled faculty duty days* from notification of the chair/director's response to request in writing a review by the instructional dean.

The student has the choice for the appeal to be considered either by the instructional dean or by the Academic Grade Appeal Committee. The preference of the student should be indicated on the Academic Grade Appeal Form, Final Level. The Committee will have a representative from the instructional area but not the department or discipline in question, unless a subject matter expert is requested by the committee. If a choice is not indicated, the decision of whether to use a committee will be made by the instructional dean.

The dean's assistant/secretary will give a copy of all materials that had been submitted by the student, instructor, and chair/director by the appropriate deadline to either the appropriate dean or to the Appeal Committee.

If chosen, the committee will review documents and make a recommendation to the dean. The dean's assistant/secretary will deliver the response from the dean/Appeal Committee to the student in the same manner indicated in step 2 listed above. The instructional dean/Appeal Committee's written decision can not be appealed under the Academic Grade Appeal Policy.

**The student may investigate the College Grievance process outlined in the College Catalog for additional options or the Appeal Process of the Alabama Community College System.*

Grade Appeal Decision: Subsequent Terms

If the grade appeal is in a course which is a prerequisite to a follow-up course for which the student is enrolled in the succeeding semester, the student will be allowed to enroll in the follow-up course if the student signs a statement that says:

I acknowledge that I am being allowed to enroll in <name of follow-up course(s)> pending the outcome of my grade appeal for <appealed course>. I understand that if my grade appeal for <appealed course> does not result in a change of grade that would qualify me to take <name of follow-up course(s)>

I will be administratively withdrawn from the follow-up course(s) with full refund of tuition and fees. I acknowledge that the return of any books and supplies associated with the follow-up course(s) is entirely my responsibility, and that if those books were paid through financial aid, I must return that aid money. I also acknowledge that I am fully responsible for returning any financial aid refunds if withdrawal from courses results in a reduction in my aid amount.

If an unsuccessful grade appeal would result in the student being placed on academic suspension, the student will be allowed to enroll in the succeeding semester if the student signs a statement saying:

I acknowledge that I am being allowed to enroll in <term> pending the outcome of my grade appeal for <name of course>. If the grade appeal does not result in a change of grade that would preclude suspension, I will be administratively withdrawn from the college with full refund of tuition and fees. I acknowledge that the return of any books and supplies associated with

the courses I was enrolled in for <term> is entirely my responsibility, and that if those books were paid through financial aid, I must return that aid money. I also acknowledge that I am fully responsible for returning any financial aid refund associated with <term>.

Once the student has exhausted all the SUSCC appeal processes the student may choose to appeal to the Alabama Community College System. The student must use the System's official Student Complaint Form, which is available online at the ACCS website (www.accs.cc). Students may submit completed complaint forms by printing the form, signing it, and then either (1) scanning it and e-mailing it to complaints@accs.edu or (2) mailing it to:

Alabama Community College System
Attention: Division of Academic and Student Affairs
P.O. Box 302130
Montgomery, AL 36130-2130

The Division of Academic and Student Affairs will investigate the complaint within 30 days of receipt. The institution which is the subject of complaint has 30 days to provide a written response to questions and/or concerns raised during the investigation. Such response may or may not contain a resolution. The Division of Academic and Student Affairs will adjudicate the matter and write a report or letter to the institution and student detailing corrective action, if any is necessary, or stating that the school has no violation of policies. If corrective action is needed the institution will have 30 days to comply or develop a plan to comply with the corrective action. The System Office will monitor the institution's compliance to ensure the completion of any required corrective action.