

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

STUDENT APPEALS POLICY

The Physician Assistant Program does not have a separate and distinct policy for processing Physician Assistant student appeals. The program follows and complies with university-wide policies and procedures for processing student appeals.

Grievance of course grades

Misericordia University students have the right to clearly defined grading criteria in all of their courses and learning experiences. However, students need to recognize that grading criteria differ depending on instructor, discipline, learning activities, course organization, and course level.

A student may appeal only a final course grade. (In other words, a student may not formally appeal a grade on an assignment in a course.) An appeal would be made for only one of the following three reasons:

1. The syllabus does not describe how assignment grades will be used to calculate the final grade.
2. The assigned grade was determined in a manner inconsistent with the course grading policy stated on the course syllabus, within reasonable standards of faculty discretion.
3. The faculty member calculated the grade erroneously.

There are two stages to the grievance process. The first is informal, where the student tries to resolve the matter with the faculty member and (if necessary) the department chair/program director. Absent resolution through this informal process, and in a situation where the student believes that one of the three criteria above has been met, the student must institute a formal grade appeal.

Students must initiate the informal grade grievance process as soon as possible and no more than 5 business days after the Registrar's due date for course grades.

Informal Course Grade Appeal Process:

1. Prior to initiating a formal grievance, the student must attempt to resolve the matter on an informal basis by discussing the grade with the instructor of record and may include the department chair in this discussion.
2. If unable to reach a resolution, the student will next discuss the matter with the department chair who supervises the faculty member involved and the dean of the college. In programs which have an appeal body based on accreditation requirements, students should make sure to follow those processes.
3. If the matter is not resolved by these informal processes, then a formal grade appeal may be filed.

Formal Course Grade Appeal Process:

1. A student wishing to pursue a formal grade appeal must register a written appeal, including supporting documentation, with the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs as soon as possible and no more than 4 weeks into the academic semester following the posting of the grade in question. A copy of this appeal should be sent to the department chair/program director, faculty member, and dean.
2. Within 5 days of receiving the formal appeal from the student, the AVPAA will share these materials with the chair of the Grievance Committee. Together, the AVPAA and Chair of the Grievance Committee will determine whether a grievance meets one of the definitions provided at the beginning of this policy, and whether the required steps have been taken to resolve the matter as outlined in this policy. Such a determination may involve requesting additional information from the student. If the AVPAA and the Chair of the Grievance Committee determine that a grievance is not warranted, the process concludes. There is no possibility of further appeal.
3. If the AVPAA and Chair of the Grievance Committee determine that a grievance is warranted, an Academic Grievance Committee will be assembled, comprised of three faculty members, one of whom is the committee chair, and another who will be selected from the department involved in the grievance. Two students will also be selected by the Chair of the Grievance Committee.

4. On the basis of written information provided by the instructor, the student, and any other relevant party, the Committee will invite spoken testimony from the student and professor involved in the case and may, at its discretion, solicit other pertinent information. Decisions in appeals hearings will be made by majority vote.
5. The report and recommendation of the Committee will be sent to the AVPAA, department chair/program director, the student, the faculty member, and the dean within 10 days of the hearing.
6. Students who are not satisfied with the Committee decision may appeal in writing to the VPAA within 5 days of receiving the committee's decision. The VPAA has final determination in these matters.

Note: University business days are the business days of Monday through Friday during which the university's administrative offices are open.

Note: Policies and procedures are consistently applied to all similar situations in a similar manner.