Grade Appeal Policy

Summary of Purpose

This policy was created to ensure a fair and equitable appeal process that allows a medical student to appeal a grade when they can demonstrate that the grade inaccurately reflects their performance in a course, clerkship, or elective.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to the final course or clerkship or elective grade for medical students enrolled in the medical education program and to course and clerkship and elective directors and staff who support that program.

This does not apply to individual questions on exams or individual components that comprise a final grade in a course or clerkship or elective.

Definitions

None.

Policy Statement

• The assignment of grades is the responsibility of the course or clerkship or elective director.

• If a student believes that the grade earned in a course or clerkship or elective is inappropriate, there are three levels of appeal that may be pursued. Each level of review is independent of the one prior and will be based on the initial written appeal by the student.

• A student who wishes to appeal a final grade must follow the appeal process within the timeframe specified in the grade appeal procedure. Appeals that do not comply with the timeframe will not be accepted.

• All appeals must be in writing and contain the basis for the appeal.

• Individual course and clerkship evaluation and grading practices will be outlined using a standard location and format in the learning management system (CANVAS), and provide sufficient detail regarding the relative contribution and determination of each assessment to the overall grade. (Please see grading criteria established for individual courses in the preclinical curriculum located in the course syllabus, or the grading policy for the clinical clerkships.)
Procedure

Before the formal appeal process is initiated, any medical student who believes a final grade is inappropriate should confer with the course or clerkship or elective director to request a reconsideration. This is considered an informal review of the grade and is noted as Level 0 in the Table. This discussion should be initiated within 2 weeks of the posting of the grade. The student is entitled to an explanation of exactly how the final grade was determined and to view the results of component quizzes, examinations, and evaluations that contributed to the final grade.

If the student disagrees with the grading decision, the formal grade appeal process may be initiated by completing the grade appeal form (see Appendix). The student must complete a grade appeal form to initiate the formal process (Level 1). A medical student has three levels of appeal to contest a grade. The levels are outlined in the table below.

If a student receives a failing grade and is appealing that failed grade, he or she will be referred to the chair of the Committee on Student Performance and Conduct (CSPC) as are all students who receive a failing grade in a course or clerkship.

Table. Grade appeal actions and expected timelines by student and administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Appeal Action</th>
<th>Expected Time Frame*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting or conversation with Associate Dean for Student Affairs (Advising Dean)</td>
<td>May occur at any time for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 0:</strong> Informal conversation with the course or clerkship director</td>
<td>Within two weeks of grade being posted</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1:</strong> Initiate formal appeal to course or clerkship director by filing grade appeal form</td>
<td>Within two weeks of grade being posted but after Level 0 has occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision by course or clerkship director</td>
<td>Within two weeks of initial appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2:</strong> Appeal to year Associate Dean</td>
<td>Two weeks after decision by course or clerkship director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision by year Associate Dean</td>
<td>Within two weeks of appeal to year Associate Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3:</strong> Appeal to Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (SADME) and faculty panel</td>
<td>Two weeks after decision by year Associate Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision by faculty panel</td>
<td>Within four weeks of appeal to SADME and faculty panel</td>
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</table>

*Time frames for the review of the appeal are intended as goals. If any level of appeal will take longer than the expected time frame, the student will be made aware of this and a reasonable timeline will be followed.

The procedure for each level in a formal appeal is described below.

Students who decide to appeal a grade are encouraged to have a conversation with their Advising Dean who can review the protocol and provide guidance during the appeal process.

Contacting faculty or house staff for evaluation feedback outside the standard evaluation and assessment feedback mechanisms already in place is inappropriate. If a student is found to have done so, the appeal process will stop and the initial grade will stand.
Level 1: Course or Clerkship Director

The student may initiate the formal appeal process by completing the grade appeal form and submitting it to the course or clerkship director. The course or clerkship director will review the appeal with the course or clerkship grading committee, and make a determination within two weeks of receiving the student’s written appeal. If gathering the necessary information or making the determination will take longer than the expected time frame of two weeks, the student will be made aware of this and a reasonable timeline will be followed.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course or clerkship director, the student may proceed to the next level and appeal to the Associate Dean of that curricular year.

Level 2: Associate Dean

The student may initiate the Level 2 appeal to the Associate Dean of the relevant year of the curriculum with a written request clearly stating the reasons for the appeal. This appeal should be made within two weeks after the Level 1 decision from the course or clerkship director. If the course director is also the Associate Dean of the relevant year, then the Level 2 appeal would be heard by the Chair of the Department of Medical Education.

The Associate Dean will make a determination within two weeks of receiving the student’s written appeal.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Associate Dean, the student may proceed to the next level and appeal to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Level 3: Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (SADME)

The student may initiate a Level 3 appeal to the SADME by sending a written request describing the reason for the appeal. This written appeal should be made within two weeks after the Associate Dean’s Level 2 decision.

The SADME will convene a panel of three faculty members who are familiar with the relevant course or clerkship, but who do not currently have any course-level grading responsibilities for students at Geisel. This panel will review the written request by the student, review pertinent materials from the course, and may interview appropriate individuals.

A determination will be made within four weeks of appeal to SADME and faculty panel.

The decision of this panel is considered final.

Key Words

Appeal of Grade; Final Exam; NBME Subject Matter Exam; Quiz; “Shelf” Exam.
LCME Standard

Standard 9: Teaching, Supervision, Assessment, and Student and Patient Safety

9.9 Student Advancement and Appeal Process
A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single standard for the advancement and graduation of medical students across all locations and a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.

Standard 11: Medical Student Academic Support, Career Advising, and Educational Records

11.6 Student Access to Educational Records
A medical school has policies and procedures in place that permit a medical student to review and to challenge his or her educational records, including the Medical Student Performance Evaluation, if he or she considers the information contained therein to be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate.

Related Information

University Documents
None.

Other Documents
Grading Policy (Preclinical and clinical education). (Hyperlink to these policies.)

Related Links
Grade Appeal Form. (Hyperlink to this form.)

Policy Administration

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<th>Policy Number</th>
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<td>Written By</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Medical Education Committee</td>
<td>Date Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Reviewed</td>
<td>Date Revised</td>
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<td>Responsible Office</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education</td>
<td>Responsible Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Advising Deans; Associate Deans; Chair, Committee for Student Performance and Conduct; Chair, Department of Medical Education; Registrar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Contact Information

Title
Name
XXX@Dartmouth.edu
(603) 650-XXX

History
None.

Background
None.
Appendix. Grade appeal form.

Grade Appeal Form

Please complete and submit this form with your rationale and as documentation for your grade appeal request.

Today’s date: ________________________________

Student’s name (printed): ________________________________

NetID Number: ________________________________

Email address: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Course/Clerkship name: ________________________________

Course/Clerkship director’s name: ________________________________

Dates of course/clerkship: ________________________________

Final Grade received: ________________________________

Final Grade expected: ________________________________

Basis for Grade Appeal (Please check all criteria that apply):

☐ Computation dispute about the final grade.

☐ Unequal application of grading standards or applying grading criteria to one student or some students in a manner that treats them differently.

☐ Unfair or unannounced alterations of assignments, grading criteria, or computational process as stated in the syllabus.

☐ Other

Please provide a concise rationale that addresses each criterion checked above, including the reason why you expected the grade you indicated. (This is not space limited. Please use extra space as necessary.)

Type here.

The information I provided as part of this request for a grade appeal is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability. I also have read the Geisel Grade Appeal Policy found in the student handbook.

Student’s signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________