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Academic Appeals Procedures and Board Policies For Undergraduate and Graduate Students

General Procedures

An Academic Appeal is a request by a student for resolution of a matter in dispute between the student and one or more instructors. The matter under appeal must be related to academic evaluation in a course within the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences (AGS). The only issues to be resolved by an appeal are allegations of prejudiced¹ or capricious² evaluation and allegations of inability to speak the English language to the extent necessary to instruct students adequately. This document describes the AGS procedures adopted by the University of Oklahoma Regents. No statement here will be interpreted to supersede the Student Code, Regents' Policies or University Policies adopted by the University of Oklahoma Regents.

The responsibility of proof rests with the student filing an academic evaluation appeal (hereinafter referred to as "Student Appellant"). In the event of multiple students filing an academic evaluation appeal with one faculty member from the same course section, the appeals may be considered together as one appeal; however, all written information to the students and instructor will be sent separately.

General University procedures concerning Academic Appeals can be found in the Academic Appeals Boards Policy, and are also published on the University of Oklahoma Office of Academic Integrity [web site](#). These procedures identify important timelines and initial steps to resolve a disputed academic evaluation. Please note that all timelines

¹ A **capricious evaluation** occurs when a grade is assigned in an arbitrary, inconsistent, or unreasonable manner that departs from stated standards or established grading procedures.

² A **prejudiced evaluation** occurs when an instructor's grading or assessment decisions are influenced by bias or personal animus, rather than by objective academic performance. Examples include differential treatment based on identity, background, or beliefs, or grading decisions influenced by personal conflict or retaliation.

outlined in the sections below correspond to the **nine-month academic year; in general, appeals will only be considered during the nine-month academic year**, except in special cases and by mutual agreement of the Student Appellant and the instructor.

In cases of an evaluation made known to a student during the term, the student must notify an instructor of a dispute over academic evaluation and must attempt to resolve differences no later than 15 calendar days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and University holidays from classes, and hereafter referred to as “business days”) after the results of the evaluation are made known to the student.

In cases of end-of-term evaluations, a student must notify an instructor of a dispute over an academic evaluation and must attempt to resolve differences no later than February 15 for the previous fall semester or winter intersession; and no later than September 15 in cases of end-of-term evaluations for the previous spring semester, spring intersession, or summer session.

AGS Academic Appeals Board

The AGS Appeals Board (hereafter referred to as the Board) shall be structured in the following manner:

When a case arises, the Assistant Dean of AGS will oversee the appeals process and appoint a case specific board with board members selected from the AGS Grades Appeal Committee. The Board will consist of an equal number of faculty members and student representatives (minimum of two).

One of the faculty members will be selected by the Assistant Dean to serve as the chair of the Board and will be responsible for convening meetings, coordinating communications, and compiling the official summary and notes from the Board’s deliberations.

The Assistant Dean will facilitate the process, ensure that all relevant materials are provided to the Board, address procedural questions, and confirm that University policies are followed throughout the review. The Assistant Dean will not vote in the decision except in a tie breaker. The Board will hear cases in which the issue to be resolved is that of *prejudiced or capricious evaluation, or alleged inability to speak the English language to the extent necessary to instruct students adequately.*

Each Board shall be given the responsibility of establishing its own rules of procedure consistent with the full protection of the rights of all parties involved and the general rules stated below. The meetings of the Board shall be closed to the public.

General Rules for the Appeals Board

1. To come before the Board, the Student Appellant, after consultation with the instructor and department chair, should submit a written statement to the Dean's Office setting forth the action being appealed and stating the reasons for believing that they have received prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation, or that the instructor was unable to speak English to the extent necessary to instruct students. In addition, the statement should contain the student's name and student ID number, name of the instructor, the course and section number, important dates, where the action took place, a description of efforts to resolve the situation with the instructor and the department, other pertinent information about the appeal, and what remedy is desired. This information must be submitted using the [AGS Academic Appeals Form](#) within the appeal deadlines stated above.
2. The Dean's Office will contact the instructor and the department chair to inform them of the pending appeal.
3. A copy of the Student Appellant's statement will be sent to the instructor for their individual response. The instructor will have two weeks³ to submit that response. Once received, the instructor's response will be forwarded to the Student Appellant for review. After reviewing the instructor's response, the Student Appellant must notify the AGS Assistant Dean by the deadline stated in the email, typically within one week, whether they wish to proceed with the appeal to the Board or withdraw the appeal. The Student Appellant may not amend the original appeal statement at this stage, and the instructor will not be asked to provide any additional written response.
4. If the Student Appellant decides to proceed with the appeal, all written material will be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Board for initiation of action by the Board. The Chair of the Board will work with the Dean's Office to schedule an initial meeting. The members of the Board will be given copies of the written materials described above 5-7 business days in advance of this initial meeting. If the Board

³ This applies for appeals submitted during the fall and spring; for appeals submitted during the summer, the timelines will need to be established based on availability of the instructor and the committee.

Under extra ordinary circumstances that prevent the instructor from responding to the appellant, the Board may decide to proceed with the appeal using all otherwise available information.

needs additional information, the Chair of the Board may request it from the Student Appellant and the instructor before the initial meeting. At the initial meeting, the Board will consider all written materials and decide, by simple majority, as follows:

- The case is WITHOUT MERIT, or it has been resolved satisfactorily at the departmental level, so a hearing is not necessary and no further action is required. The Dean's Office will communicate this decision to all parties.
 - The case HAS MERIT and can be resolved based on the written materials alone, including a recommendation for a grade change if supported by the evidence. The Dean's Office will communicate this decision to all parties.
 - The case HAS MERIT, but additional clarification is needed, so a hearing is necessary. The Board will inform all parties and advise them that they may bring relevant witnesses and/or counsel⁴ to the hearing and that they must provide the Dean's Office with the names of the individuals who will be attending and for what purpose. The Board will establish a date, time, and place for the hearing, and the Dean's Office will communicate this information to all parties.
5. The information with regard to the presence of witnesses and/or counsel will be transmitted to the other party or parties so that all participants in the hearing will be identified.
 6. The Board's hearing is not a Court of Law; it is an appeals procedure to bring forth the facts in the case to reach a decision.
 7. At the hearing, all parties – student, instructor, and department chair (if necessary) – will be given an opportunity to state their cases, present their witnesses (if any), and to question the other party or parties and their witnesses (if any). The hearing order will be determined by the Chair of the Board. The Chair is responsible for ensuring testimony relates to the case being heard. As counsel is present in an advisory capacity, the student or the instructor is expected to present his or her own oral presentations when requested by the Board and also to answer questions at

⁴ Counsel as used here refers to a person providing advice and not necessarily a person professionally trained in legal matters or a student advocate. Counsel is intended to help the student or instructor present their side of the case.

appropriate times. Counsel may present initial or closing statements or ask questions of a client.

8. After the hearing, in a closed meeting of Board members only, the Board will arrive at a settlement based on a vote of a simple majority of the members present.
9. The decision of the Board shall be communicated in writing to the Deans of the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences, the student, and the instructor within a week of the hearing.
10. Any appeal of the Board's decision will follow procedures listed in the Academic Appeals Boards Policy. The decision of the Hearing Panel shall be final and shall be implemented unless either the Student Appellant or the instructor makes an appeal under the general University procedures concerning Academic Appeals.
11. After the hearing, all copies of written materials must be shredded. A copy of the recorded hearing will be saved in the Academic Dean's Office.

To view the University's requirements for an Academic Appeal, including deadlines for submission, please consult the *University of Oklahoma Student Code of Responsibilities and Conduct for the Norman Campus* at <http://www.ou.edu/studentcode/OUStudentCode.pdf>

COLLEGE OF ATMOSPHERIC AND GEOGRAPHIC SCIENCES

ACADEMIC APPEALS HEARING

PROCEDURES

The following is a suggested guideline for a hearing. No aspect of this case should be discussed outside this hearing. **The hearing must be tape recorded.**

1. Introductory remarks by the chair
 - i. Purpose of hearing
 - ii. What is to be accomplished in hearing
2. Hearings are closed to everyone except parties and their counsel and witnesses unless both parties and the Board agree to any additions.
3. Challenge of Board Members by either party. Challenge will be ruled on by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board.
4. All parties should have a reasonable opportunity to present relevant information and question witnesses.
5. At the discretion of the Chair, members of the Board, the faculty or the student may ask questions as points arise or after the presentation and test.
6. Student outlines case
7. Questions of clarification
8. Faculty outlines case
9. Questions of clarification
10. Student summarizes case
11. Faculty summarizes case
12. Final Board questions

13. Faculty and student dismissed

14. Deliberation by Board

15. Notifications of Board decision