

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Procedure for Student Appeal of Grades

1. Procedure for Contested Grades a. Student Procedure

The student must, as the indispensable first step, approach the faculty member who gave the grade and request a review and change of grade. If the faculty member agrees to change the grade, then the faculty member has the responsibility to notify the Registrar. If the faculty member refuses to change the grade, then the student may submit a request for a review and change of grade to the Chairman of the Academic Standards Committee.

The student's request for the review and change of grade must be in writing and must include all supporting evidence. Evidence must be in the form of written documents, e.g., graded term papers, graded examination, etc. Neither hearsay nor remembered conversations or oral instructions can or will be construed as evidence. This requirement places a concomitant obligation on faculty members who do not return papers to keep all papers on file (all papers which are used as a basis for grading) until the appeal period is past.

Students should move promptly to initiate a request for a review and change of a contested grade. The request must be submitted to the Academic Standards Committee Chairman within six (6) weeks of the first day of class of the semester following that in which the contested grade was given. As noted above, the student must first approach the faculty member who taught the course in question. If, by the end of the fifth week, the matter has not been satisfactorily settled, the student has the responsibility to bring the matter to Academic Standards Committee before the end of the sixth week.

1. Committee Procedure

When a student submits a request for review and change of grade to the Academic Standards Committee, the chairman of that committee will invite the faculty member concerned to submit a statement in writing, explaining his decision not to change the grade, the instructor should submit all evidence pertinent to the appeal, i.e., the basis for grading in that class and their relative weights, and the particular grades earned on each base, etc. The Committee reserves the right to seek additional information from other pertinent sources.

The Committee will consider the evidence submitted by both the faculty member and the student, and will base its decision on that evidence. The decision of the Academic Standards Committee shall be final and binding on both the student and the faculty member.

2. Procedure for Change of Grades from F to W for Non-Academic Reasons

Students requesting review and change of final grade from F to W for other than academic reason, e.g., because of illness, must first submit that request, in writing and with supporting evidence, to the Associate Academic Dean.

The Associate Academic Dean will forward that request to the faculty member concerned. If the faculty member accedes to that request, the faculty member must notify both the Registrar, and the Associate Academic Dean. If the instructor who accorded the "F" is no longer a member of the faculty of St. Francis College, and cannot be reached for his or her approval after reasonable effort on the part of the Associate Academic Dean - the Associate Academic Dean shall have the authority to make the final decision.

Procedure for Dealing with Student Allegations of Professional Misconduct by Faculty Members

Before the formal proceedings described below are put into effect, the matter should be discreetly discussed at all appropriate levels, with a view to reconciling differences amicably. Failing this, the procedures described below should be used:

1. The student must file a written statement of charges with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean (the "VPAA")²;
2. The VPAA shall provide the faculty member with a copy of the charges and request a written reply. The faculty member's written reply must be submitted within 14 days of the faculty member's receipt of the copy of the charges. A copy of the written reply will be sent to the student;
3. An attempt should be made to resolve the matter through the offices of the VPAA or an appropriate officer of the College designated by the VPAA;
4. If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance cannot be reached, all written documents shall be forwarded to the Professional Standards Committee (the "Committee"), at which time a copy of these procedures shall be provided to both the faculty member and the student (the "Parties");
5. The Professional Standards Committee will hold an informal inquiry, inviting the student and faculty member in question to discuss the problem. The Committee may seek advice and information from any other persons who might aid in the problem's resolution;
6. The Chairman of the Committee will preside at any informal meetings of the Committee to consider the matter and at the formal hearing; however, decisions of the Committee concerning issues before the Committee, and the ultimate findings regarding responsibility and sanctions, if any, shall be made by a majority of the members;
7. If no satisfactory resolution of the problem is reached during the informal inquiry, and/or if the Committee deems an informal inquiry inappropriate, a formal hearing will be held with the following steps adhered to:
 - a) While both Parties are permitted to gather evidence and identify relevant witnesses, which may involve discussing the case with others, to the greatest extent possible, the Parties should not make public statements and publicity about the case until the proceedings have been completed.
 - b) During the proceedings, the faculty member and the student will be permitted to have an advisor of his/her choice who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
 - c) At the request of either Party or the Committee, a representative of a responsible educational association shall be permitted to attend the proceedings as an observer.

- d) The hearing will be recorded and a transcript will be made available to the faculty member and the student, without cost, at their request.
- e) The burden of proof rests with the student. The standard of proof is clear and convincing evidence.
- f) The Committee may grant adjournments to enable either Party to investigate new or unexpected evidence.
- g) The student and faculty member will be afforded the opportunity to provide documentary or other evidence to the Committee. Both Parties shall provide their documentary evidence and a list of their witnesses to the Committee within 10 days of their notification that a formal hearing will be held. Once the deadline for submission of evidence and witness lists has passed, a hearing will be scheduled by the Committee. The Parties shall be given an opportunity to review the witness lists and submitted evidence prior to the hearing.
- h) The faculty member and the student will have the right to question and/or cross-examine witnesses. If a witness cannot or will not appear, but the Committee determines that the interest of justice require admission of their statements, the Committee may accept a written statement from the witness in lieu of an appearance, which will be read into the record at the hearing. Parties will be given the opportunity to respond to the statement in lieu of cross-examination.
- i) Witnesses at the hearing may include qualified faculty members from this or other institutions of higher education.
- j) The Committee will not be bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may admit any evidence that is of probative value in determining the issues involved. Every possible effort will be made to obtain the most reliable evidence available.
- k) The finding of fact and the recommendations will be based solely on the hearing record, and the Committee members shall have the opportunity to prepare separate findings and recommendations.
- l) The VPAA and both Parties will be notified of the Committee's findings regarding responsibility and sanctions, if any, in writing within ___ days of the conclusion of the hearing. If any College policies or contracts require additional processes before a specific sanction can be imposed on the faculty member, the Committee will refer the matter for action under the additional process at the time that it issues its findings to the Parties and the VPAA.
- m) The Committee's decision is final, however sanctions covered by processes in other College policies or contracts may be modified as a result of those processes as necessary.

² Please note that all responsibilities of the VPAA in this process can also be performed by the VPAA's designee.

Course Repetition

Students are allowed to repeat courses and attempt to earn a higher grade for classes taken at the College; students are encouraged to repeat any course(s) they have failed as soon as the course is again offered. The policy for the computation of the quality-point index changes for courses repeated in the Fall 2004 semester or later. When a course has been attempted more than once, only the last grade received for that course will be used to compute the cumulative quality-point index. The previous grade(s) will remain on the transcript, but will not be calculated as part of the cumulative index, even if the last grade received is lower than the previous grade. Repeated courses that culminate in grades of X or IP that later convert to an F, will count as the last grade. This policy does not

apply to courses that have been forgiven as part of our Academic Major Forgiveness Policy.

This policy requires that both attempts are for the same course, and that the student completes these courses at St. Francis College. Lecture, lab, and/or recitation components of a course, must be all be retaken together if the course is repeated. Courses that may have been completed at another institution are not eligible for this course repetition policy.

Courses repeated before fall 2004 follow the previous policy, viz., when the succeeding grade is higher than the previous grade(s), only the higher grade is calculated in the cumulative quality point index. When the succeeding grade is the same as or lower than the previous grade(s), all grades are calculated in the index, but credit is granted only once. It is at the discretion of other institutions and organizations to honor this policy.

Midterm Grades

Available on WebAdvisor, mid-semester grades alert students to their learning and performance at the mid-point of every semester (about 6 weeks into the term). Used extensively for advising purposes, midterm grades are collected to support student academic performance and are not recorded on the student's permanent academic record. Students are encouraged to use the valuable feedback they receive from their professors, along with the midterm grades, to make any necessary adjustments to ensure academic success by the end of the term. If students are not performing at the level they expect, it is strongly recommended that they speak with their professors, review course syllabi to identify opportunities for improvement, and schedule appropriate tutoring services in the Academic Enhancement Center (room 3002). Workshops on study strategies as well as time management are offered through the Removing Obstacles to Success (ROS) program. Online academic success workshops are available by visiting www.studentlingo.com/sfcsupport (<http://www.studentlingo.com/sfcsupport/>). Visit the Center for Student Success (room 3001) if you have any questions regarding the in-person or online workshops.

Academic Major Forgiveness Policy

The forgiveness policy offers the opportunity to improve an undergraduate student's academic record after not having successfully completed required courses in an initial chosen major area of study. This policy entails that the student complete an application to petition for forgiveness whereby the poor grades in the initial major are forgiven.

To apply for forgiveness, the student must have declared and, if relevant, been formally accepted in a new major program of study. Forgiveness is granted only once during the entire time a student is enrolled or re-enrolls at the College. The application, available from an Academic Dean, must be submitted before the student has attained lower junior standing (the equivalent of 60 credits).

The following criteria apply:

- The initial major must have been an officially declared major. Only courses from an initial declared major are eligible for forgiveness.
- A maximum of two required courses in the original major discipline may be forgiven. Courses that were previously repeated are not eligible for forgiveness.
- The forgiven grades are no longer computed as part of the student's GPA and the related credits that may have been earned will not apply towards graduation.
- The Course Repetition Policy does not apply to forgiven courses, even if the forgiven courses are retaken at a future time.

- The student's academic record cannot be reversed to its prior standing.
- Enhanced GPA's that are a product of this policy cannot be retroactively applied to one's academic standing for any reason (e.g., to meet a prior term's requirements for Dean's list and/or to remedy academic dismissal/probation).
- The forgiveness policy does not apply to Core, elective or graduate courses.
- It is at the discretion of other institutions and organizations to honor this policy. As such, students should note that each course attempt becomes part of their permanent record and will appear on their transcript.
- The student is aware that changing a major, especially with grade forgiveness, will likely result in degree completion beyond the date stated on their program evaluation.
- Final acceptance of forgiveness is granted at the discretion of the Provost and/or the Academic Deans.