

**Portland Community College**  
**Grade Appeal Procedure**  
~ ADOPTED JULY 2013 ~

**1. Purpose**

As set forth in PCC's Policy on Student Rights (Section 2.a), students have the right to protection from improper academic evaluation. The Grade Appeal Procedure provides the student with a process for appealing a final course grade when he or she believes that an improper evaluation has occurred. "Improper evaluation" is defined as 1) the evaluation standards and grading criteria contained in the course syllabus were not followed by the instructor or 2) the final grade was imposed in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

**2. Scope**

- a. The Grade Appeal Procedure only applies to disputes about posted final course grades. Concerns about grades given for assignments or examinations during the term, or concerns or complaints about instructional quality should be addressed through the Complaint Procedures may be found as a link at: <http://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/student-rights/>
- b. The Grade Appeal Procedure does not invalidate the requirements mandated by any department, program, and/or the curriculum of any particular course. Specific course assignments, instructor-specific policies, or other formal course-related materials cannot be challenged or appealed through this process. This process applies only to assertions of improper final evaluation as described above.

**3. Authority**

- a. The instructor and/or the appropriate academic Division Dean have the authority to authorize a change to a final course grade as an outcome of this appeal process.
- b. The Dean of Student Development will serve as steward of the Grade Appeal Procedure. When the appeal process is concluded, all documentation will be forwarded to the campus Dean of Student Development, who will maintain such documentation in accordance with appropriate retention schedules.

**4. Student Protections**

- a. A student may have a support person of his/her choice (such as a PCC counselor or advisor, or student government representative) throughout the appeal process. The support person is not permitted to present the appeal, but may advise the student throughout the appeal process. The Dean of Student Development's Office can assist the student with identifying a support person, or arranging for assistance with language translation, if needed.
- b. Both PCC and the student may seek legal advice at their own expense; however, neither PCC or the student may be represented by a lawyer during any meeting pertaining to the Grade Appeal Procedure.

- c. Concerns involving harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, or other legally protected status should be directed to PCC's Office for Affirmative Action and Equity (OAAE). Information may be found at: <http://www.pcc.edu/about/affirmative-action/Nonharassment.html>. The OAAE and the academic division considering the grade appeal may engage in parallel investigations if the College determines parallel investigations are appropriate.

## **5. Procedures**

### **STEP 1: Attempt to Resolve the Final Grade Concern With The Instructor**

- a. If the student believes his or her grade was a mistake, he or she must first directly communicate with the instructor about the final grade by sending a written inquiry to the instructor requesting an explanation of how the grade was determined and stating his/her questions and concerns about the grade assigned. The communication should include specific reasons why the student believes he or she was graded improperly, and supporting evidence, such as statements in the course syllabus, alleged discrepancies in points or grades received, emails to and from the instructor, etc. This written inquiry must be received by the instructor within 14 calendar days of the final course grades being posted, or the student forfeits the right to appeal the grade.
- b. Upon receiving a written inquiry regarding a final course grade, the instructor is expected to respond to the student's inquiry in writing within 14 calendar days of the documented date of the student's inquiry. If the instructor is unable to respond within 14 days of the documented inquiry, the Department Chair or Division Dean may initiate an appropriate response if the inquiry is made known to them by the student. For instructor and department contact information see the Staff Directory on the PCC website <http://www.pcc.edu/about/contact/advanced-search.html> and the Department Chair Directory <http://www.pcc.edu/about/administration/faculty-department-chairs.html>. The campus Dean of Student Development offices can assist with Step 1.
- c. If questions remain after the student receives explanation from the instructor, the student is encouraged to discuss those concerns in person with the instructor.

### **STEP 2: Submit a Grade Appeal Form to the Dean of Student Development**

- a. If the student's concern is not resolved through Step 1, the student may submit a Grade Appeal Form, with supporting evidence, to the campus Dean of Student Development or designee within 30 calendar days of the student's documented inquiry to the instructor in Step 1.

Grade Appeal Forms are available at the Dean of Student Development offices and online at <http://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/student-rights/documents/grade-appeal-form.pdf>

- b. The Dean of Student Development or designee will review the Grade Appeal Form and determine the next steps, which may include, but are not limited to: (1) referral of the appeal to the instructor's academic Division Dean or other immediate supervisor for review, investigation, and response; (2) request for additional information and supporting documentation from the student, or (3) a decision not to proceed with the appeal if the academic evaluation being contested does not fall within the scope of this policy.
- c. Once sufficient information and documentation has been received from the student and the appeal has been deemed appropriate, the Division Dean or other immediate supervisor will investigate the final course grade in question, make a decision about the appropriateness of that grade under the standards described above, and communicate the decision in writing to the student. A copy of the written decision will also be sent to the Dean of Student Development.
- d. Generally, Step 2 will be completed within 14 calendar days of receipt of the Grade Appeal Form, unless more time is needed to investigate.

### **STEP 3: Appeal Decision to Dean of Instruction**

- a. The student may appeal the decision in Step 2 only on the grounds that (1) the procedures outlined in this policy were not followed; or (2) relevant evidence concerning the final course grade becomes available that was not available during Step 2. An appeal must be made within 14 calendar days of receipt of the division dean's written decision. The student must submit written justification for further review and provide evidence that there are grounds for the appeal to the Dean of Instruction.
- b. The Dean of Instruction will objectively investigate how the grade appeal process was conducted in Step 2, and/or consider relevant evidence that was not available or not considered during Step 2, make a final decision on the appeal, and communicate it in writing to the student, with a copy to the Dean of Student Development.

#### **CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Cascade: SSB 209	#971-722-5292	Email: dos.ca@pcc.edu
Rock Creek: Building 9, Rm. 115	#971-722-7215	Email: dos.rc@pcc.edu
Sylvania: CC 247	#971-722-4529	Email: dos.sy@pcc.edu
Southeast Center: SCOM 116	#971-722-6191	Email: dos.se@pcc.edu

Distance Learning: Students may contact any of the above campus offices