

# University of Washington School of Medicine

## Grade Appeal Committee Bylaws

### Section 1: Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases

#### Article 1: General Governance

The following Bylaws govern the organization and procedures of the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases. The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases, are subcommittees of the Curriculum Committee of the University Of Washington School Of Medicine (UWSOM). The Curriculum Committee has reviewed and approved the Grade Appeal Bylaws on March 18, 2022.

#### Article 2: Authority and Accountability

- a. Authority: The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases is delegated authority by the Curriculum Committee, Vice Dean for Academic, Rural and Regional Affairs, and the School of Medicine Department Chairs, and has accountability for determining whether a petitioning student's grade and/or clinical evaluation summative comments were awarded arbitrarily or capriciously by the instructor/department.
- b. Accountability: The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases reports to the Curriculum Committee. Once a year, the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will provide a summary of the past year's activities, issues and resolutions to the Curriculum Committee, Vice Dean for Academic, Rural and Regional Affairs and department chairs.

#### Article 3: Purpose/Scope of Responsibility

- a. Purpose: Governance procedures are consistent with LCME requirements, University of Washington grade policy; and governance procedures incorporate appropriate representation from across the WWAMI region.
- b. Scope of responsibility: Processes leading to decision-making are based on open discussion, transparency, shared governance, and iterative consensus development.
- c. If the Grade Appeal Committees determine that the grade and/or evaluation summative comments were awarded arbitrarily or capriciously, then the Committee will assign the petitioning student an appropriate grade for the course in question.
- d. The Grade Appeal Committee serves as a mediator and arbitrator between the faculty member/department and student. Pursuant to the M.D. Program Handbook, the decisions and outcomes of the Grade Appeal Committee are binding upon all parties.

- e. Grades and/or clinical evaluation summative comments should not be determined in an arbitrary or capricious manner. The only factor that members of the Grade Appeal Committees may consider in determining the validity of a grade challenge is the alleged arbitrary or capricious award of a final grade and/or clinical evaluation summative comments.
- f. The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases is not empowered to make judgments concerning teacher competence, course/clerkship difficulty, or other matters of a purely academic nature.
- g. Arbitrary is defined as "an unreasonable *or* unpredictable use of one's authority in accordance with one's will or desire." Capricious is defined as "implying an instability or irregularity that seems to be the product of whim or erratic impulse."
- i. The decision of the Grade Appeal Committee for Foundations and Clinical Phases cannot be appealed.

#### Article 4: Membership

- a. Expectation of members: Although members are elected to ensure broad representation of the UWSOM, members have the responsibility to function as "members of the whole," working to optimize the curriculum, rather than to represent the interests of a particular constituency.
- b. Faculty: The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will consist of about 8 members in good standing at or above the rank of assistant professor, clinical assistant professor or research assistant professor, with member diversity to be considered in committee selection for WWAMI representation, gender/ethnicity, and phase and discipline.
- c. Students: The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will include two student representatives in good standing, preferably one student in the Foundations Phase and one in the Patient Care Phase. The student requesting the appeal has the right to request that student members of the Grade Appeal Committee recuse themselves from discussion.
- d. Terms: Faculty committee members will serve a two-year term with the option of serving one additional term. One third of the committee membership will rotate each year. Student committee members will serve a two-year term.
- e. Selection of faculty members: Faculty representatives who qualify for a category may self-nominate. Regional deans may also nominate faculty from the WWAMI region. All faculty members must be actively teaching within the curriculum, be a member of the UW Medicine faculty and be available to attend a majority of the meetings of the committee. The office of the Associate Dean for Curriculum will be responsible for issuing requests for self-nominations to the entire cohort of people in appropriate categories at appropriate intervals and times. Individuals self-nominating will be asked

to submit a statement of interest to the Curriculum Committee. A nominating committee appointed by Curriculum Committee will review the roster of candidates and move forward the final selected candidates for vote of the Curriculum Committee. The nominating committee will recuse themselves from the vote. In the event a committee member must step down from the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases prior to the completion of their term, the co-chairs will put out a call for self-nominations for a candidate in the appropriate category (i.e., students, clerkship representatives, etc.).

- f. Selection of students: Students may self-nominate. The Nominating Committee may also nominate students to serve on the committee
- g. Faculty or student member resignation or replacement: In the event an appointed faculty or student member resigns, the Academic Co-chair and Executive Co-chair shall appoint a member from the same category (basic scientist, clinician, WWAMI faculty, student). A nomination and Curriculum Committee approval to replace the member will take place during the following election cycle. If nominated, this interim period does not count toward the cumulative period of the term.
- h. Possible replacement for absenteeism: Members who miss three or more committee meetings in a six month period can be dismissed by the Academic Co-chair and Executive Co-chair after discussion with the member.

#### Article 5: Officers

- a. Designation: The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will be co-chaired by a committee member (Academic Co-Chair) and the Associate Dean for Curriculum (Executive Co-Chair). The Academic Co-Chair will be selected from faculty committee members who express interest and, in the event of multiple candidates, a vote of the Grade Appeal Committee members.
- b. Terms: Academic co-chairs will serve a two-year term with the option of serving one additional term. It is expected that the past chairperson will remain on the committee for at least one year to facilitate continuity of oversight.
- c. Duties: The Executive Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair are expected to work together to set agendas, lead meetings, ensure adequate and appropriate documentation of meetings and decisions, convene task forces and special groups as needed, serve as liaison to the Curriculum Committee, oversee or delegate oversight as appropriate the work of appointed committees and subcommittees, and report recommendations from the Committee. The Executive Co-Chair will be responsible for data gathering with course/clerkship director and students for agenda setting. The office of the Executive Co-Chair will be responsible for record-keeping associated with the responsibilities of the co-chairs and Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases.

## Article 6: Procedures

### a. Meetings

- i. Meetings of the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will be called by the co-chairs.
- ii. Each committee meeting will be chaired by the Executive Co-Chair, the Academic Co-Chair, or both co-chairs, at the discretion of the co-chairs. At least one co-chair will be present at each meeting.
- iii. The Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will meet at least monthly. Meetings without agenda items will be cancelled.
- iv. The co-chairs may call special meetings for the purpose of hearing reports, discussing matters of interest to the curriculum and seeking the committee's advice.
- v. Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases are closed meetings and not open to Ex-Officio members unless at the invitation of the Committee.
- vi. The academic co-chair will serve on the Curriculum Committee during their active service as a full voting member.

### b. Parliamentary authority: The conduct of meetings will be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

### c. Voting

- i. Voting members: Voting members are the faculty and student members, not including the Executive Co-Chair.
- ii. Quorum: The quorum required for meetings will be more than 50 percent of the voting members. Motions will be decided by a majority vote of those members present (including the Academic Co-Chair but not the Executive Co-Chair).
- iii. Tie votes: The vote of the Executive Co-Chair will be cast only in the event of a tie vote of the committee members, including the Academic Co-Chair.
- iv. Outcomes: The possible outcomes, as determined by the vote of a simple majority of the members present, of any Council deliberation will be:
  - (a) rejection of the student's appeal for a change of grade and/or evaluation summative comments;

- (b) acceptance of the student's appeal for a change to the grade requested; and
- (c) acceptance of the student's appeal for a change of grade other than the grade requested.

Article 7: Communications, records and approval

- a. The co-chairs of the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will be responsible for ensuring administrative staff maintain accurate and confidential records of all meetings. A full set of minutes of each meeting of the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases will be retained for at least 10 years. Minutes of the meetings will remain confidential.
- b. Within two weeks after the committee meeting, a letter in which the Committee's decision is detailed will be sent by the Co-Chairs to each participant as well as the appropriate department chair. In the case of a grade change, a copy of the letter will be sent to the Registrar.

Section 2: Management of Conflicts

When conflicts occur in the course of management or oversight of the grade appeal process, resolution will be attempted through iterative discussion at the committee level. If conflicts cannot be resolved in this way, further advisory input will be sought from the Curriculum Committee and, if needed, the Vice Dean for Academic, Rural and Regional Affairs and department chairs. Ultimate authority rests with the Curriculum Committee, Vice Dean for Academic, Rural and Regional Affairs and department chairs.

Section 3: Amendments and Other Provisions

Amendments to the Grade Appeal Committees for Foundations and Clinical Phases Bylaws will be presented to the Curriculum Committee for review, discussion and a vote.

Approval date: Curriculum Committee Approval on October 26, 2018  
Curriculum Committee Approval on December 7, 2020  
Curriculum Committee Approval on March 18, 2022