

University of Washington School of Medicine Grade Appeal Committee Bylaws

Section 1: Grade Appeal Committee

Article 1: General Governance

The following bylaws govern the organization and procedures of the Grade Appeal Committee. The Grade Appeal Committee is a subcommittee 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 December 2, 2024.

Article 2: Authority and Accountability

- a) **Authority:** The Grade Appeal Committee 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 Committee reports to the Curriculum Committee. Once a year, the Grade Appeal Committee 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) The Grade Appeal Committee is responsible for adjudicating grade appeals for all students enrolled in the Foundations and Clinical phases of the four-year M.D. program.
- d) If the Grade Appeal Committee determines 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.
- e) 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.

- f) 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 is the alleged arbitrary or capricious award of a final grade and/or clinical summative comments.
- g) The Grade Appeal Committee is not empowered to make judgments concerning teacher competence, course/clerkship difficulty, or other matters of a purely academic nature.
- h) 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 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 and Staff: The Grade Appeal Committee will consist of about 8 UWSOM faculty and staff members in good standing with a minimum of 2 faculty members from the Foundations Phase, 2 clinical faculty members, and member diversity to be considered in the Committee selection for WWAMI representation.
- c) Students: The Grade Appeal Committee will include 2 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 and staff Committee members will serve a two-year term with the option of serving one additional term. No more than one third of the Committee membership will rotate off the Committee each year. Student committee members will serve a two-year term.
- e) Selection of faculty and staff members: Faculty and staff representatives who qualify for a category may self-nominate. Regional deans may also nominate faculty and/or staff 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. All staff members must be actively engaging with curriculum operations. 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 the 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 member must step down from the Grade Appeal Committee 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, Foundations representatives, etc.).

- f) Selection of students: Students may self-nominate. The Nominating Committee may also nominate students to serve on the Committee.
- g) Member resignation or replacement: In the event an appointed Committee member resigns, the Academic Co-Chair and Executive Co-Chair shall appoint a member from the same category (Foundations faculty, clinical faculty, staff, or 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 Committee will be co-chaired by a committee member (Academic Co-Chair) and a Curriculum Dean (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. In the event of no interested candidates from the faculty Committee members, the Academic Co-Chair will be selected in accordance with Article 4: Section e) above.
- 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. Academic Co-Chairs are required to serve at least one two-year term plus the subsequent year as a regular voting member.
- 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 Academic Co-Chair will be responsible for data gathering with course/clerkship director and students for agenda setting. The Curriculum office will be responsible for record-keeping associated with Grade Appeal Committee.

Article 6: Procedures

- a) Meetings
 - a. Meetings of the Grade Appeal Committee s will be called by the Co-Chairs.
 - b. 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 o-hair will be present at each meeting.
 - c. The Grade Appeal Committee will meet at least monthly. Meetings without agenda items will be cancelled.
 - d. 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.

- e. Grade Appeal Committee is a closed meeting and not open to Ex-Officio members unless at the invitation of the Committee.
- f. The Academic Co-Chair will serve on the Curriculum Committee during their active service as a full voting member.
- g. Parliamentary authority: The conduct of meetings will be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

b) Voting

- a. Voting members: All active voting members of the Grade Appeal Committee are voting members with the exception of the Executive Co-Chair.
 - i. Quorum: Quorum is reached when more than 50 percent of the voting members are present. Motions are decided by a majority vote of present members (including the Academic Co-Chair but not the Executive Co-Chair).
 - ii. Tie votes: In the event of a tie vote The Executive Co-Chair will cast the deciding vote. .
 - iii. Outcomes: The possible outcomes of any Committee deliberation, as determined by the vote of a simple majority of the members present, could potentially include:
 - 1. rejection of the student's appeal for a change of grade and/or evaluation
 - 2. summative comments.
 - 3. acceptance of the student's appeal for a change to the grade requested; and,
 - 4. acceptance of the student's appeal for a change of grade other than the grade requested.
 - iv. Conflict of Interest: To prevent conflicts of interest, Grade Appeal Committee voting and ex officio members should recuse themselves from any appeal discussion or vote if they have a pre-existing relationship with the student being discussed. Students may request that specific members of the Grade Appeal Committee recuse themselves based on a direction relationship with those Committee members. If the Committee member disagrees with the student's request for recusal, the Co-Chairs will make the final decision.
 - v. Confidentiality: The Grade Appeal Committee maintains strict confidentiality surrounding all aspects of a student's grade appeal.

Article 7: Communications, Records and Approval

- a) The co-chairs of the Grade Appeal Committee will be responsible for ensuring administrative staff maintain accurate and confidential records of all meetings. A full set of minutes will be retained for at least 10 years. Meeting minutes will remain confidential.
- b) Students who have submitted a Grade Appeal will receive a letter from the Co-Chairs detailing the Committee's decision within two weeks of a Committee meeting in which their case is discussed. A copy of the letter will be provided to the appropriate Clerkship Director. In the case of a grade change, a copy of the letter will be sent to the SOM 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 Committee 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
- Curriculum Committee Approval on November 6, 2023