

Policy Name: Appeal Process for Academic Student Grievances
Policy Number: ACA 1.06
Title of Policy Owner: Executive Council
Approved by: Executive Council
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Policy Status: Approved

I. Policy

It is the policy of the College that appropriate processes and procedures be followed in all matters pertaining to the rights of students.

II. Purpose

The appeals policy described below is applicable to academic student grievances.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all students and faculty of Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS).

IV. Definitions

Academic Grievance: a formal process through which a student can appeal through his/her course faculty and the college's administrative leadership the student's final grade in a course. A final course grade appeal must be based on at least one of the following claims:

- Capricious action on the part of the faculty member that affects the student's final grade; A capricious action is defined as one made on a whim or without justifiable reasons.
- Prejudicial treatment of the student by the faculty member with respect to the application of the course syllabus, thereby affecting the student's final grade; Prejudicial treatment is defined as treating the student lodging the final grade appeal differently than other students in the course with respect to the instructor's application of the course syllabus.

- Erroneous judgment of the faculty regarding the correct answer for exam item(s). A claim of erroneous judgment means that the student is able to produce evidence (from textbooks, class notes provided directly from the faculty, or other valid materials) to substantiate that a different answer other than that keyed is a correct response.
- A documented error in calculating the student's final grade.

Student: any person who is officially registered at the College during specific academic semester in which the grievance occurs.

V. Policy Details

Initiation of a Grievance:

Academic grievances may be submitted electronically by email.

An academic grievance must be initiated at the end of the semester, no later than two (2) business days after the day final grades are due as published in the academic calendar. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Student Services or designee if assistance is needed in understanding this policy.

Academic grievances must be submitted according to the following order:

Level I	Level II	Level III
Faculty (copied to Program Director)	Program Director (copied to Vice President)	Vice President

Procedures:

Level I

Student

1. The student with an academic grievance must provide in writing a formal letter/email to the faculty member, with a copy to the Program Director including the following:
 - Description of the grade the student is grieving
 - Supporting information for the grievance
 - Request to meet with the faculty member
2. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted

during the meeting, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.

3. At the meeting, the student must clearly present his/her case regarding the grieved grade and the resolution that he or she would like to occur. Every reasonable effort should be made by both parties to resolve the matter at this level.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level I, he/she may continue to Level II.

Faculty Member

1. The faculty member has a maximum of five (5) business days from the date the grievance is received to schedule a meeting with the student. The meeting may be conducted in person, virtually or by phone.
2. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the meeting, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.
3. Within five (5) business days after meeting with the student, if an agreement regarding the appeal is made, a copy of the agreement and other appropriate documentation, including the original grievance letter, is sent to the student and forwarded to the Program Director.
4. If the faculty member and student do not have an agreement a copy of the original grievance letter and reason for the faculty decision is sent to the student and Program Director. If the student chooses to elevate the grievance to Level II, the faculty member will provide the student with guidance on initiating a Level II grievance and inform the Program Director of this outcome.

Program Director

1. The Program Director ensures the Level 1 meeting between faculty member and student is held.
2. In the event the faculty member is unavailable, the Program Director has the discretion to move to Level II or postpone the hearing until the faculty member is available.
3. The Program Director will communicate his/her decision to move the Level I meeting to a Level II hearing, or to postpone the hearing until the faculty member is available to the student and faculty member.

Level II

Student

1. The student must file a written appeal, utilizing the Appeal Form, of the Level I grievance decision to the Program Director within five (5) business days after the written decision from the Level I meeting has been communicated.
2. The written statement provided for Level I describing the grade being grieved must be part of the student's written request for the Level II meeting.
3. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the conference, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.
4. At the meeting, the student must clearly present his/her case regarding the grieved grade and the resolution that he/she would like to occur. Every reasonable effort should be made by both parties to resolve the matter at this level.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level II, he/she may continue to Level III.

Faculty Member

1. Faculty member provides information to the Program Director as requested for the investigation.
2. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the meeting, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.

Program Chair

1. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Level II written grievance, the Program Director will fully investigate the grievance.
2. This investigation may include review of material submitted by both parties, and the scheduling of a meeting with the parties if needed, in an effort to resolve the grievance (the actual conference may occur after the 5 days, but its date should be established within this time frame). The meeting may be held in person, virtually or by phone.
3. If a meeting is called, the role of the Program Director is to chair the meeting, facilitate the discussion, seek to mediate a resolution between the parties, ensure that college policies have not been violated, and render a decision concerning the matter.
4. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the conference, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.

5. Within five (5) business days after receipt of the grievance, or completion of the meeting if called, the Program Director shall prepare a report of the disposition of the matter providing copies to the student and the faculty member.
6. A copy of the report and the official grievance letters (Level I and Level II) must be forwarded to the Vice President.

Level III

Student

1. If the student is not satisfied with the disposition at Level II, within five (5) business days from the communication of the disposition from the Program Director, the student may file a Level III written appeal to the Vice President.
2. The written appeal describing the grade being grieved, and reasons for the grievance must be part of the student's written request for the Level III meeting. The student must submit an Appeal Form with the following information:
 - Witness(es) and date(s) when relevant (be concise and specific)
 - Current contact information for the student
 - Name the person(s) or policy involved in the appeal
 - State the act or decision being challenged
 - State why the action or decision is unjust or not within policy
 - State the requested resolution
 - Brief description of the student's attempt to resolve
3. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the meeting.

Vice President

1. Within five (5) business days of receipt of this appeal, the Vice President will fully investigate the grievance and schedule a meeting with the student, Program Director, and faculty member, either together or separately. The meeting may take place after the five (5) business days but must be established in this time frame. The meeting may be held in person, virtually or by phone.
2. The role of the Vice President is to chair the meeting, facilitate the discussion, seek to mediate a resolution between the parties, ensure that college policies have not been violated, and render a decision concerning the matter.
3. Attorneys or other advisors/counselors are not allowed to be present to represent either party. No audio taping or other recording will be permitted during the meeting, but both parties are encouraged to make notes as they feel appropriate.

4. Within five (5) business days after the meeting, the Vice President shall prepare a report of the disposition of the matter providing copies to the student and the instructor.
5. Level III outcome decisions are final.

Note:

All appeals of Academic Integrity outcomes (See ADM 3.13 Academic Integrity) are automatically classified as a Level III proceeding and are subject to Level III Procedures as detailed in ADM 1.05 Appeal Process for Non-Academic Student Grievances.

Final Disposition of Records

All materials and decisions related to the appeal will remain confidential and will be retained by the Director of Student Services for three years from the date of final decision, and not before the aggrieved student graduates, at which time all materials will be destroyed, unless the Director of Student Services directs otherwise.

External Complaints

In the event of a complaint about the College, as a last resort, students may contact the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), Virginia Board of Nursing (VBON), Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) via the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS), or the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS). Contact information for the agencies are listed below.

In the event of a written complaint to one of these agencies or a “Standards” non-compliance issue, and subsequent notification to the College, immediate priority will be given to resolution of the deficiency in order to maintain accreditation. The Vice President is expected to respond to the agency in the time frame provided outlining the resolution/plan for resolution of the issue addressed.

Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)
7777 Leesburg Pike, Suite 314 North
Falls Church, Virginia 22043
(703) 917-9503
www.abhes.org

State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV)
101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-2600
www.schev.edu

Virginia Board of Nursing (VBON)
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300
Henrico, VA 23233
(804) 367-4400
www.dhp.virginia.gov/Boards/Nursing/

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400
Atlanta, Georgia 30326
(404) 975-5000
www.acenursing.org

Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)
20 N. Wacker Drive Suite 2850
Chicago, IL, 60606-3182
(312) 704-5300
www.jrcert.org

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) via
the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography
(JRC-DMS)
9355-113th St. N, #7709
Seminole, Florida 33775
(727) 210-2350
www.caahep.org

Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography
(JRCDMS)

6021 University Boulevard, Suite 500

Ellicott City, MD 21043

(443) 973-3251

www.jrcdms.org

VI. Attachments

Appeal Form

VII. Related Policies

ADM 1.05 Appeal Process for Non-Academic Student Grievances

ADM 3.13 Academic Integrity

ADM 4.07 Establishing Principles of Excellence – Military

VIII. Disclaimers

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretions, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

Non-retaliation – Students will not be subjected to adverse actions by any school officials as a result of initiating or participating in the investigation of a complaint.

Decision Standard - Decisions made in grievance/appeal cases are determined on a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence is evidence that shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

IX. Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Prepared by
1.0	08/01/2021	Revised and new template	Executive Council

Appeal Form

Name: _____

Student ID: _____ Program: _____

Home Address: _____

Email Addresses: _____

Phone Numbers: _____ (cell) _____ (home) _____ (work)

Date Grievance Initiated: _____

The issue(s) is/are:

Individuals involved:

The facts supporting this are (include attachments as needed):

How is/are previous appeal decisions unjust or unfair:

The resolution I desire: _____