

Appeals and Dismissals

Communication Regarding Appeals and Dismissals

Students are expected to check their email on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. Communication throughout the appeal process for both final grades and dismissals will be through university email at each step.

Appeal of a Final Course Grade

This section defines the formal appeal process of a final grade. The appeal process is based on a review of documents, and there is no requirement to meet with a student or instructor to conclude an appeal.

The Graduate School encourages resolution of appeals at the lowest possible level.

Only a final grade in a course can be appealed. Midterm grades, exam results, and specific assignment grades cannot be appealed. Instructors have wide discretion in issuing final grades and evaluating student performance. Therefore students should understand that a final grade will only be changed in exceptional circumstances.

Basis of an Appeal of a Final Grade

The only bases of an appeal of a final grade are the following:

1. The instructor made a clerical or computational error.
2. The instructor departed from the grading scheme established in the course syllabus, or other course documents, and the departure caused an incorrect grade to be assigned.
3. The instructor relied upon some standard or basis other than student performance on assignments and assessments to establish a final grade.
4. The Instructor grade was based on an unlawfully discriminatory practice.

For clarification, violation of academic, ethical, or professional standards of the Program include plagiarism and cheating. Violations of plagiarism or cheating related to Graduate School work will not proceed through the Student Conduct Process.

Final Grade Appeal Process

Graduate students who wish to appeal a final grade are required to follow the procedural format outlined below:

1. Appeal of a grade must begin no later than ten working days from the final grade posting date, as posted in BengalWeb. Any appeal submitted beyond the ten day time limit will be dismissed.
2. All appeals must be completed in an electronic format through ISU official emails, with each appeal and response copied to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. This is used to ensure that all time frames are met and appropriate parties are notified.
3. Content of Appeal: An appeal must include the student's name, department/college, and class. The student is required to explicitly reference the reason for the appeal and it must comply with a permitted basis of appeal listed in this section.
4. The student must also state the requested remedy. Appeals that are not based on one of the above four factors or address issues beyond a final grade will be dismissed at the Department Chair level.

Deadline for Appeal and Response to Appeal

Timelines for appeals and responses are provided in the procedures below. Failure of student to submit an appeal within the required time period will result in the denial of the appeal and the grade will be finalized. Failure of the University official to respond to an appeal by the timeline listed will result in the requested remedy being granted.

Procedures for the Appeal of a Final Grade

After each step in the procedures for the appeal of a final grade, all written appeal requests and decision statements must be copied to all involved parties, in each respective step (e.g., the student, the instructor, the Department Chair, the Dean (or Dean's designee) of the academic college/division, and Associate Dean of the Graduate School). The Associate Dean of the Graduate School will maintain a file of formal final grade appeals.

Step 1: The Department Chair

A student must submit a written appeal for a final grade to the Department Chair within ten working days of when a final grade is posted in BengalWeb. The student must also submit the same written appeal and documents to the Course Instructor and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Instructor has the opportunity to provide a written response to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will review the documents, including the response of the instructor before rendering a decision. The Chair will determine first whether the appeal contains a permitted basis of appeal and if it was submitted within the required appeal period. The Department Chair may conduct whatever additional investigation is deemed appropriate to help in the decision-making process. The Department Chair must render a written decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the student's appeal documents. If the Department Chair denies the appeal, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean of the academic college/division. If the Department Chair determines the grade should be changed, the Department Chair will issue a written final decision and there will be no further appeal.

Step 2: The Dean of the Academic College

A student who wishes to submit an appeal at this level must do so within ten working days of receipt of the Department Chair's decision. The Dean will review documents submitted by the student and instructor and Department Chair. The Dean may interview the student, the instructor, and department chair, and conduct any other investigation deemed necessary. The Dean's decision is to be submitted within fifteen working days of receipt of the student's appeal.

Step 3: The Graduate Council via the Dean of the Graduate School

A student who wishes to submit an appeal at this level must do so within ten days of receipt of the Dean of the Academic College denial. The Graduate Council will meet within thirty working days of receipt of the appeal, during the fall and spring academic semesters, to make a final decision. The Graduate Council may interview the student and instructor and carry out any other investigation deemed necessary. This is the final institutional appeal. The Dean of the Graduate School will communicate the Graduate Council's decisions to the student in written form, within the same thirty working days.

Step 4: Change of Grade Within the Specific College/Division (instructor, department chair, dean)

After all institutional appeals are exhausted, if a grade change is required, it will be processed by the University Official who authorized the change of the final grade.

Appeals Outside the Institution

All students or former students of the Institution may apply to the Idaho State Board of Education Executive Director for review of any final institutional decision in accordance with Idaho State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures Section III.P.17.ii. The student must have exhausted all complaint and grievance processes that have been established at the institution's level.

Dismissal from a Graduate Program

Dismissal from a Graduate Program can be initiated by a graduate program for a failure to meet certain standards, or by Student Affairs as a consequence of a student conduct process. Only dismissals initiated by a Graduate Program can be appealed through the process in this section. A dismissal initiated by the Division of Student Affairs for a conduct code violation may not be appealed through the process below.

Dismissal Appeal Process

1. All appeals must be completed in an electronic format through ISU official emails, with each appeal and response copied to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. This is used to ensure that all time frames are met and appropriate parties are notified.
2. Content of Appeal: An appeal must include the student's name, department/college, and class. The student is required to explicitly reference the reason for the appeal and it must comply with a permitted basis of appeal pursuant to this section.

Contact Financial Aid for questions regarding aid received in the term of dismissal.

1. Criteria for Student Dismissal

A Graduate Program may dismiss a student based on the following criteria:

1. The student has failed to make appropriate progress in the graduate program as determined either (a) by the Program through its program policies or (b) by a two-thirds vote of the full graduate faculty in the department.
2. The student fails to meet minimum grade requirements (see Section on Course Levels, Credits and Grading, specifically the section title Grading) or other academic standards imposed by the Program.
3. Violation of academic, ethical, or professional standards of the Program, including plagiarism and cheating. Violations of plagiarism or cheating related to Graduate School work will not proceed through the Student Conduct Process.

2. Notice of Pending Dismissal

Prior to a Program's decision to dismiss a Student, the Student should be provided a Notice of Pending Dismissal that provides the following: (1) official notice to the student of the impending dismissal; (2) the specific grounds for dismissal; (3) an opportunity for the student to provide written evidence or statements to the Program decision makers, who are indicated in the notice; (4) the date and time of the meeting at which dismissal will be considered; and (5) notice of the student's right to appeal a decision of the Program. The Notice of Pending Dismissal must be provided to the Student fifteen working days prior to the date the Program decision makers will meet. The student can make a written request to attend the dismissal meeting with the Program decision makers in person, which the Program may or may not approve. The Student does not have a right to bring an advisor or advocate with her/him to this meeting, or the right to question any person interviewed during this meeting. If the Program dismissal requires a vote of faculty members, the student does not have a right to be present for this vote.

3. Notice of Dismissal

If the Program determines a student has met the criteria for dismissal and moves forward with the dismissal of the student, the student will be provided a Notice of Dismissal within five working days of the decision. This Notice of Dismissal will contain a copy of the Form A, specifying the appeal process as well as appeal deadlines. The Notice of Dismissal will be provided to the student in an electronic copy sent to the student email account as well as hardcopy sent to the student's last known address by certified mail. The electronic Notice of Dismissal will be copied to the Dean of the Academic College and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

The Notice of Dismissal will state the specific standards the student failed to meet. The Notice of Dismissal will also provide the Student with the email address of the appropriate Academic Dean if the student chooses to initiate an appeal. The student is required to also send a copy of the appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

4. Appeal of Dismissal - Appeal to Dean of Academic College

After a student receives a Notice of Dismissal, that student will have fifteen working days to submit an appeal to the Dean of the Academic College. If the appeal is not received by the appropriate Dean of the Academic College within fifteen working days of the student receiving the Notice of Dismissal, the student will no longer have a right to an institutional appeal and the Program dismissal will be deemed final. The appeal must include the following: (1) the name of the student; (2) the name of the Program the student was dismissed from; and (3) must address directly the specific reason the student was dismissed and why that dismissal should be overturned.

Upon receiving the student's appeal of dismissal from a student, the Dean will have thirty working days to respond to the student, either sustaining or overturning the appeal. The Program will provide the Dean with the written information used to make the decision, any documentation supplied by the student, and a copy of the Notice of Dismissal. The Dean may interview the student or other faculty members as the Dean determines necessary. The Dean can also choose to make a decision based solely on the written documentation provided to them. The Dean will retain any documentation used to render a decision regarding the appeal, which will be provided to the Dean of the Graduate School upon the rendering of a decision.

The Dean must overturn a dismissal if it is determined that the Program's decision was: (1) based on clear error, (2) based on unlawful consideration, or (3) the Program failed to follow the procedure set forth within this policy to dismiss a student. The Dean should accord discretion to the determination of a Program, but the Dean may overturn a dismissal based on an examination of the substance of the decision.

If the Dean sustains the Program's decision, then the Dean will provide a Notice of Denial of Appeal to the student and to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Notice of Denial of Appeal will contain a written explanation of the Dean's decision to sustain the dismissal, as well as a statement indicating the student's right to appeal to the University Graduate Council and a copy of the Graduate Appeal Policy with the specific parties to address in future appeal steps. If the Notice of Denial of Appeal is not issued within thirty working days of receipt of the student appeal, the student's appeal will be overturned.

5. Appeal to Graduate Council

A student has fifteen working days to submit an appeal to the Graduate Council after receiving the Notice of Denial of Appeal from the Dean of the Academic College. If the appeal is not received by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School within fifteen working days, then the decision of the Dean of the Academic College is final and there are no further institutional appeals available to the student. The student may provide additional documentation to the Graduate Council with the submission of their timely appeal. The Graduate Council will

review the documentation provided by the student, as well as the documentation retained by the Dean and all appeal documents. The Graduate Council will meet within thirty working days of receipt of the appeal, during the fall and spring academic semesters, to make a final decision.

The student will be provided the date of that meeting and may attend in person and may address the Graduate Council. The student may have an advisor/advocate with him/her during the meeting, but this person will not act in a legal capacity and may not address the Graduate Council. All Graduate Council members will have an opportunity to review the materials. The Graduate Council will render a decision within ten working days, via a majority vote of the quorum of voting members.

The Graduate Council may overturn a Dismissal if the student was not provided due process throughout the appeal process, or was dismissed for an unlawful practice. The Graduate Council will not scrutinize the substantive decisions of Programs as each Program is in the best position to consider the standards and ethics of each discipline. If a dismissal is overturned, the Graduate Council, via the Dean of the Graduate School, shall provide notice to the student, the Program, the Dean, and the Registrar, within the same ten working days as noted above. If a dismissal is sustained, the Graduate Council, via the Dean of the Graduate School, will provide a Final Denial of Appeal to the student via certified mail and email with a written rationale of the decision, within the same ten working days as noted above. The student will be provided a copy of the dismissal policy. The Graduate Council's decision will be kept in the student's file in the Graduate School.

Appeals Outside the Institution

All students or former students of the Institution may apply to the Idaho State Board of Education Executive Director for review of any final institutional decision in accordance with Idaho State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures Section III.P.17.ii. The student must have exhausted all complaint and grievance processes that have been established at the institution's level before making an appeal to the State Board of Education. To initiate this process the student should contact the Idaho State Board of Education directly.

If a Dismissal is Overturned

When a dismissal is overturned at the institutional level, the party that overturned the dismissal will be responsible for providing written notice of the decision to contacting the Program, the student, and the Registrar. The Program, in consultation with the overturning party, will determine if any remediation is required before the student reenters the Program.

Appeals During Summer Semester

Faculty who review appeals of dismissal are often not on contract and working during the summer months. If faculty are not present to review a student dismissal during the summer months, the timeline for a student to submit an appeal will be tolled and will not count against the student. Similarly, the response time for faculty members will also be suspended until faculty resume their duties in the Fall semester.

Re-Applying After a Dismissal

A student may re-apply to a different program at Idaho State University after being dismissed from his/her current program.