

Policy Title: Policies and Procedures for Student Grievances and Appeals
APR-PA Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education, 6th Edition
Standards Addressed: A3.14g
Approved by: Program Director & Faculty
Approval Date: 04.01.2025
Effective Date: 05.01.2025
Last Reviewed: 04.01.2025
Next Review: April 2026

ARC-PA Standard(s) Addressed

A3.14 The program publishes, consistently applies, and makes readily available to enrolled and prospective students:

- g) policies and procedures for student grievances
- h) policies and procedures for student appeals

Policy**Grievances**

The Trevecca Nazarene University Physician Assistant Program (TNUPAP) is committed to mutual respect among all members of the university community. It is the philosophy of TNUPAP to be responsive to student concerns. If students feel they have been treated in an inappropriate or unfair manner, they are encouraged to follow the outlined procedure.

1. Students with grievances or problems with the way a particular course is conducted and how their grades are being assigned should submit their concerns in writing to the professor of the course within 10 days of receiving the grade report.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the student should file a written appeal with his or her program director to help solve the problem. The appeal must be filed within 10 days of the professor's final decision concerning the student's appeal.
3. The Program director then has 10 days to consult with appropriate parties and respond to the student.
4. If the program director's solution is not satisfactory, students may appeal to the university provost for a final resolution. If a program director is the professor, the line of appeal would be to the university provost. Face-to-face discussions with professors and program directors about concerns are appropriate, but grievances and outcomes need to be in writing to ensure that all decisions are made with a mutual understanding of the issues.

If a final grade for the course has already been submitted to the Office of Academic Records, the guidelines outlined in the Final Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures should be followed.

Appeals

TNU Final Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures

Trevecca Nazarene University recognizes a student's right to appeal decisions and practices that affect his or her academic status without fear of punishment or unfair treatment. A student can expect the University to deal with a final course grade appeal sincerely, objectively, within a reasonable time frame, and as appropriate, in confidence. Appeals will be heard when the student alleges that an arbitrary, capricious, or prejudiced evaluation or a mechanical error has occurred. The purpose of the appeal process is to treat all parties fairly and to alert all parties to the appeal procedure. Every student will have the right to have his/her appeal considered by the professor and the Grade Appeal Committee. During the appeal, the burden of proof is on the student, except in the case of alleged academic dishonesty, in which case the professor must support the accusation. The student may elect to discontinue the appeal process at any level. The grade appealed shall remain in effect until the appeal process is completed, or the problem is resolved.

Order of Appeal

Should a student feel there is concrete reason to appeal a final course grade, these procedures should be followed sequentially:

1. The University supports and encourages responsive and respectful dialogue between faculty and students when there is a disagreement about a final course grade. Whatever the nature of the grade appeal, the student must make an effort to first discuss the matter with the faculty member. To begin the appeal process, students must initiate a complaint to the faculty member in writing or via e-mail within 15 calendar days of the posting of a final grade. The faculty member will provide a written response within 15 calendar days of receiving the letter or e-mail from the student.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the faculty member's response or lack of response, the student shall contact the Student Progress Committee within 30 calendar days of the posting of a final grade. The contact needs to be in writing. Upon receipt of the written appeal, the Committee will communicate with the student within 30 calendar days to attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If after communicating with the Student Progress Committee the student is still not satisfied with the decision, the student may choose to file an appeal in writing to the Physician Assistant Program Director within seven calendar days of the Student Progress Committee's decision notification. The Program Director will respond within seven calendar days.
4. If the Physician Assistant student desires to appeal the decision of the program director, the student may make their appeal to the University Provost. Student appeals must be made in writing and received by the University Provost within 15 calendar days of the program director's decision notification date. The provost will contact the student within 15 calendar days of receiving the appeal in an attempt to resolve the issue. The provost may elect to include or consult with others in evaluating the appeal. The decision of the provost is final.

The failure of the student to proceed from one level of the appeal procedure to the next level within the prescribed time limits shall be deemed to be an acceptance of the decision previously rendered. All further considerations and proceedings regarding that particular appeal will cease at that point. Under unusual circumstances, deadlines may be extended.

Student Progress Committee and Dismissal Appeal Process

The Trevecca PA Program recognizes students' rights to due process and provides an opportunity to appeal dismissal decisions. Students may appeal dismissal decisions based on new evidence, procedural errors, or other circumstances affecting fairness. The appeal must include a clear rationale for reconsideration and provide all supporting documentation. Acceptable grounds for an appeal includes, but is not limited to, procedural error, new evidence, or extenuating circumstances that may have impacted the student's performance or the fairness of the dismissal decision.

The following procedure outlines the appeal process for students who wish to appeal a Student Progress Committee decision that is not covered under the *Final Grade Appeal Policy*, *Academic Grievance Policy for Courses in Progress*, or *Dismissal Appeal*.

1. The student must submit an appeal in writing to the program director within five (5) working days of the SPC decision notification. Included in the appeal must be justification for the appeal such as procedural errors, new evidence, or circumstances affecting fairness.
2. The program director will oversee the appeal process and convene the Student Progress Committee (SPC) within ten (10) working days of receiving the appeal. The SPC may request the student's presence if clarification is needed. Students may also request to attend their SPC appeal meeting, subject to Program Director approval. Students may request a non-program faculty member to attend the SPC meeting as an advisor, subject to Program Director approval. This meeting is purely for academic or professional problems. Legal counsel is not permitted. Proceedings may not be recorded in any manner (audio, video, digital, etc.). The SPC will issue a final program-level decision. The program director will notify the student in writing immediately upon receiving the SPC's decision, but no later than five (5) working days.
3. If the SPC appeal is denied, the student may submit a final written appeal to the university provost within ten (10) working days of receiving the decision from the program director. The ruling of the provost is final and binding.