

Procedures for Disputed Academic Evaluation

Levels of Appeal

A student is entitled to dispute an academic evaluation by an instructor, to two levels of appeal after review by the instructor or other responsible faculty:

1. To the Director of the level of program the student is in, and if required
2. To the Dean of the USC School of Architecture.

The burden of proof in cases of disputed academic evaluation rests with the student.

Procedures

I. When an undergraduate or graduate student complains of prejudiced, capricious or unfair evaluation, the procedures below are to be followed except when a student has been charged with violating the academic integrity rules (see [Student Conduct Code, Section 14.00](#), Academic Integrity Review Process), or when the potential sanction for a graduate student is termination from a degree program (see [Section II](#)).

1. The student requests review by the instructor. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at this level.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response, the student may request a review by the studio coordinator or director of the academic program.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's and coordinator's or director's response, the student may appeal in writing through the Academic Advisor to the Director of Discipline, depending on the program in which the student is enrolled. If the Director is the faculty member in question, the appeal will instead be directed to the Vice Dean. The Academic Advisor must receive such an appeal by the end of the following semester (excluding summer) after the student has received the disputed grade or evaluation. The written explanation from the student must include:
 1. Statement that the student is officially appealing the grade and reasons for the appeal.
 2. Description of the lack of satisfaction after a review with the instructor and coordinator of the studio or director of the program, if applicable.
 3. Copies of course syllabus, descriptions of assignments, and documentation of design projects, tests, papers or other assignments that are the basis for the grade.
 4. If the student wishes to request a full time faculty member of the student's choice for a review committee, if constituted, that request should be made
 5. If the student wishes to have a student on an ad hoc committee, if constituted, this should be conveyed.

The Director may review the matter personally or conduct a formal hearing through an ad hoc committee. Such a committee, appointed by the Director, shall consist of the following members:

- A full time faculty member in the School of Architecture of the appealing student's choice.
- Two additional full time faculty members from the academic unit not including the faculty responsible for the grade in question.
- A student from the academic unit, if the student requests student participation in the grade appeal.
- The Director will chair the ad hoc committee.



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A written decision will be given to the student after the hearing panel decision. Normally a decision should be sent to the student within approximately 15 days after the hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing if the decision will be delayed.

If either the student or faculty member who assigned the grade wishes to appeal the decision of the Director and the hearing panel, if there was one constituted, he/she must appeal in writing to the Dean of the School of Architecture within two weeks after receiving the written decision.

The Dean of the School of Architecture may review the matter personally or, if a hearing has not been conducted, the Dean must conduct a hearing. The hearing panel shall consist of the same categories of personnel within the school as described in Section I above with the exception of the Director. The panel will make a recommendation to the Dean who will make a decision, which is final and binding. Normally a written decision should be sent to the student within approximately 15 days after a hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing if the decision will be delayed.

Appeals involving grade disputes for courses offered within the School of Architecture are reviewed and/or heard within the School of Architecture and terminate with the decision of the Dean, (graduate students see [Section II](#)).

II. When a graduate student complains of prejudiced, capricious or unfair academic evaluation (in a course, screening procedure, thesis, project, internship, fieldwork, qualifying or other examination or dissertation defense) and the potential sanction is termination from a degree program, procedures described in [Section I](#) are to be followed.

- a. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of [Section I](#) appeal procedures and the student will be terminated from a degree program, the student may appeal in writing to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or designee. Such an appeal must be received within six months after the student has received notice of the grade or outcome of the review specified in [Section I](#)
- b. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs or designee will conduct a hearing through an *ad hoc* or standing hearing panel. The hearing panel, if appointed by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or designee, must be composed of at least three members.

The panel must include the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or designee and two deans or designees.

The hearing panel shall follow the hearing procedures established by the Graduate School.

The Vice Provost for Academic Programs or designee will inform the student of the panel's decision in writing within 15 days after receiving the panel's recommendations. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing if the decision will be delayed. There is no appeal from the decision of the panel.

Amended from a procedure approved by the faculty of the USC School of Architecture on January 12, 2005.

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