



## **ACADEMIC CHALLENGES AND APPEALS**

Reference: [LCTCS Policy #1.020 “Academic Status”](#)

### **POLICY**

Delgado Community College has established a process for academic challenges and appeals. Academic challenges generally are resolved at the division level, while academic appeals are resolved by the college-wide Academic Appeals Committee.

Students may challenge and/or appeal 1) the final grade received in a class; and 2) their academic suspension. The challenge procedure for final grades must be completed before any appeal process is initiated, if applicable. Any academic challenge or appeal that is submitted beyond the prescribed deadline will be denied.

The College is committed to affording all students, including distance education students, the opportunity for accessibility and due process during academic appeals. To ensure this, alternative distance education modalities (electronic form submission, teleconferencing, etc.) will be available at each step of the process when appropriate. The process for academic challenges and appeals is addressed as follows.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **Definitions**

“Academic Challenges” involve the student, instructor and/or the dean of the division in which the course is housed. Generally, academic challenges are not addressed beyond the division dean level. Students may *challenge* the final grade received in a class.

“Academic Appeals” involve the student, the instructor (if applicable), and the Academic Appeals Committee. Students may *appeal*: 1) the final grade received in a class for any other basis other than a grade calculation following completion of the challenge procedure; and 2) an academic suspension, which does not go through the challenge process.

#### **Deadlines**

##### **Final Grade Challenge/Appeal Deadline**

A student must begin the challenge/appeal procedures for final grades before the end of the regular (fall or spring) semester immediately following the semester/session in which the final grade being challenged was issued.

### **Academic Suspension Appeal Deadline –**

A suspension is for one (1) regular (fall or spring) semester. Only first-time suspensions may be appealed; however, students suspended for a second time at the end of summer session do also have the option to appeal. The suspension appeal procedure must be initiated by the student by the Friday before the first day of registration for the semester/session of suspension.

### **Final Grade Challenges and Appeals**

Only final grades may be challenged and/or appealed.

- The challenge procedure must be completed before any final grade appeal process is initiated, *if applicable*. Final grade disputes based solely on grade calculations follow the challenge procedure.
- In order to change a final grade to a “W,” the final grade challenge and appeal processes must be followed. The procedure for challenging a final grade is as follows.

#### ***Final Grade Challenge Procedure:***

1. Before the end of the regular (fall or spring) semester immediately following the semester/session in which the final grade being challenged was issued, the student completes the [Academic Challenge/Appeal Form](#), Form 1440/003 and presents it to the instructor along with a written statement and/or supporting documentation regarding the final grade dispute. The student discusses the final grade dispute with the instructor and tries to resolve the issue. If the grade is changed, the instructor completes the grade change in accordance with the College’s [Grade Change Procedures](#). If the grade is not changed, the Instructor must sign form and attach a statement to document this. If the instructor is not available, the appropriate department chair or coordinator may sign the form and attach a statement.
2. If the final grade dispute is not resolved in Step #1, the student submits the Academic Challenge/Appeal Form, with the instructor’s signature (or the department chair’s or coordinator’s if the instructor is not available) along with a statement and any supporting documentation to the Division Dean (or his/her designee) of the division in which the course grade is being disputed. The Division Dean will attempt to resolve the final grade dispute through meetings with the student, instructor, and/or department chair or coordinator.
3. If the deadline to request an academic challenge has expired, the Division Dean will inform the student and the process must stop. The Division Dean will also inform the student if the matter is inappropriate for the academic challenge/appeal process (i.e., midterm grades are not appealable, or another matter handled through another process). The Dean may offer the student other options when appropriate.

4. If the academic challenge is based on changing the final grade from F to W, the Division Dean will submit the Academic Challenge/Appeal Form with the instructor's signature (or the department chair's or coordinator's signature if the instructor is not available) along with a statement and any supporting documentation to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee.
5. If the academic challenge is on the sole basis of a calculation of grades, the Division Dean will ensure that a review is conducted and resolved in the division office. If the recalculation of grades results in a grade change, the division office will complete the grade change in accordance with the College's [Grade Change Procedures](#). If the grade is calculated correctly, the Division Dean will also inform the student that his final grade is correct, and the process will end.
- 6.** If the final grade dispute is not solely based on a calculation of grades and is not resolved in Step #2, the Division Dean will inform the student that the matter is inappropriate for the academic challenge/appeal process (i.e., student complaint/grievance is not appealable, or another matter handled through another process). The Division Dean will attempt to resolve the final grade dispute through meetings with the student, instructor, and/or department chair or coordinator. The Division Dean may offer the student other options when appropriate, and the process will end.
7. If the Division Dean cannot resolve the dispute, he/she may refer the appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee. The Academic Appeals Committee will convene during the regular (fall or spring) semester of filing the appeal. However, if the appeal is filed after midterm of the semester, the Committee will convene no later than the end of the following semester except for cases of academic suspension, which are granted in the semester of requesting the challenge.

***Final Grade Appeal Procedure:***

If the final grade dispute is recommended for referral to the Academic Appeals Committee, the Committee must:

- a. Recommend to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs a change of grade for the student;
- b. Recommend alternative solutions to resolve the student's dispute; or
- c. Deny the student's appeal.
- d. If the appeal is denied, the student may submit in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs an explanation detailing why the appeal should be reviewed. Decisions by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs are final.

### **Academic Suspension Appeals**

1. A suspension is for one (1) regular (fall or spring) semester. Only first-time suspensions may be appealed; however, students suspended for a second time at the end of summer session do also have the option to appeal. A student suspended for the first time may enroll, while on suspension, in the coursework specified in the College's [Academic Status](#) policy. To enroll in these courses, the student must meet with an academic advisor.
2. To appeal the suspension, the suspended student must submit the [Academic Challenge/Appeal Form](#), Form 1440/003 (Attachment A) along with the statement to the Registrar's Office by the Friday before the first day of registration for the semester of suspension. For academic suspension appeals, the form must only be signed by the student.
3. The Academic Appeals Committee will convene during the registration period to review the appeals. The Committee may recommend to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs that the suspension be granted or may deny the appeal.
4. The student will be notified through email regarding the ruling on the appeal. If the appeal is denied, the student will be advised by the Academic Appeals Officer of his/her option to appeal to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs within 24 hours of notification of the denial. The student may submit in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs an explanation detailing why the appeal should be reviewed. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs issues a decision on the appeal in writing to the student within 24 hours of receipt of the appeal. Decisions by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs are final.

### **Guidelines for Academic Appeals Committee Meeting**

The Academic Appeals Committee, which will be formed to review academic *appeals*, will consist of voting and non-voting members. In the event of a tie, a non-voting member of the committee, predetermined by the Academic Appeals Officer, will vote to break the tie. The membership of the Academic Appeals Committee is as follows:|

#### **Non-Voting Members**

- 1) An Academic Appeals Officer (appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs); and
- 2) College Registrar or designee (ex-officio)

#### **Voting Members**

- 1) An Academic Advisor (from another division) or a Student Affairs representative;
- 2) Three (3) faculty members from different divisions; and
- 3) Two (2) Student Government Association (SGA) representatives from different campuses/sites.

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**Attachment:**

[Academic Challenge/Appeal Form](#) (Form 1440/003)

**Cancellation:**

Academic Procedures - Challenges and Appeals, dated November 6, 2014

**Policy Review:**

Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Challenges and Appeals 8/2/16

Deans' Council 12/14/16

Academic Affairs Council 3/16/17