

Grievance Policy

Grievances should always be resolved at the most immediate level possible. Student will not be subject to unfair actions as a result of initiating a complaint proceeding. No student shall suffer any negative administrative or academic consequences for the submission of either an academic or a non-academic grievance.

In the case of academic complaints or disputes:

1. The student is directed to communicate the problem to the faculty or other academic member involved and attempt to resolve the issue.
2. If a complaint or dispute is not satisfactorily resolved by the faculty member, the student appeals to an academic director or vice president (VP).
3. The director/VP investigate and may choose to involve other administrators, as appropriate.
4. If the complaint or dispute is still unresolved, the student may appeal in writing to the president, whose decision is binding.

In the case of non-academic complaints or disputes:

1. The student is directed to communicate the problem to the staff member involved and attempt to resolve the issue.
2. If a complaint or dispute is not satisfactorily resolved by the staff member, the student appeals to the supervisor of the staff member.
3. If the complaint or dispute is still unresolved, the student may appeal in writing to the president, whose decision is binding.

If the student complaint cannot be resolved after exhausting the university's grievance procedure, the student may file a complaint with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and/or the Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS).

Under the aegis of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) the University of North America accepts oversight by the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) for students enrolled in Distance Education courses or programs. Grade appeals and student conduct appeals are not allowed under SARA.

Appeals Process

Students may submit a written request and supporting documentation to the university's administration if they feel they have extenuating circumstances for not adhering to the academic integrity policy within two weeks of the occurrence. The request will be reviewed by a committee that includes a minimum of one academic representative, one administrator, and the university's president, who will determine the best option for the student while still maintaining compliance with all regulatory agencies. In addition, if a student thinks the request has not been satisfactorily resolved by the committee, they may follow the UoNA Grievance Policy as published in the current catalog to address their dispute.

Student Grade Appeal Procedure

Students must complete Steps 1-3 of the Appeal Procedure within 5 weeks after the term the disputed grade is received. A change of grade appeal will not be accepted after the 5-week period, unless the grade is undergoing the appeal process or is instructed to do so by the Director of Academic Administration.

1. A student who wishes to question a grade must discuss the matter first with the instructor of record within 5 weeks after the last day of class that the grade was received. In most

cases, the discussion between the student and the instructor should suffice and the matter will not need to be carried further. The student should be aware that the only valid basis for grade appeal beyond Step 1 is to establish that an instructor assigned a grade that was arbitrary, prejudiced, or in error.

2. If the student's concerns remain unresolved after the discussion with the instructor, the student may submit a written request to meet with the appropriate academic department director, after speaking with the instructor. After consultation with the director, the instructor may choose to let the grade remain, to change a course grade, or to petition for a change a grade. The director will communicate the result of these discussions to the student.
3. If the matter remains unresolved after Step 2, the student should submit a written request upon receipt of the grade to the President's Office to request an ad hoc administrative committee for appeal of a grade. The committee, whose members include an administrator, academic director, and lead faculty, would examine available written information on the dispute, would be available for meetings with the student and with the instructor, and would meet with others as it sees fit.
4. Through its inquiries and deliberations, the committee is charged to determine whether the grade was assigned in a fair and appropriate manner, or whether clear and convincing evidence of unfair treatment such as arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error might justify changing the grade. If the committee concludes that the grade was assigned in a fair and appropriate manner, the committee will report its conclusion in writing to the student and instructor and the matter will be considered closed. If the committee determines that compelling reasons exist for changing the grade, it would request that the instructor make the change, providing the instructor with a written explanation of its reasons. Should the instructor declines, he or she must provide a written explanation for refusing.

5. The committee, after considering the instructor's explanation and upon again concluding that it would be unjust to allow the original grade to stand, then will determine what grade is to be assigned. The new grade may be higher than, the same as, or lower than the original grade. Having made this determination, the members of the committee will sign the grade change form and transmit it to the Director of Academic Administration or designee. The instructor and student will be advised of the new grade. Should the committee feel that the instructor's written explanation justifies the original grade, the committee will report this in writing to the student and the instructor and the matter will be closed.

Appeals and Mitigating Circumstances

A student who disagrees with their SAP status, or feels that there are mitigating circumstances may appeal in writing to the campus VP or an academic director. The appeal must be filed within 14 business days after the student receives an Alert or notice of Probation or Expulsion.

A campus appeals committee will determine if the appeal is warranted. Mitigating circumstances must specifically consist of personal injury, poor health, family crisis, including death of an immediately family member or divorce, and other significant occurrences outside the control of the student for which the student is required to submit rationale stating its significance. All mitigating circumstances submitted for an appeal must be documented, and the student must demonstrate that such circumstances had an adverse impact on the student making SAP. The appeal must address the student's prior situation, what has changed that will enable the student to perform satisfactorily, and how the student will be able to make SAP and successfully complete his/her coursework within the maximum time frame. No waivers will be granted for graduation requirements. An appeal will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt by the Financial Aid Director or designed staff.

A student who is granted an appeal for mitigating circumstances will be placed on probation and sign an acknowledgement stating their understanding of an Academic Success Plan (ASP) that outlines the requirements that must be met in order to remain a student at UoNA. A student will be eligible for financial aid as long as the conditions of the ASP are met. If a student fails to meet the stated conditions, the student will be expelled.

If the initial appeal is denied, the student may elect to file a written appeal to the campus VP, who will chair a review committee consisting of the campus VP, Directors Financial Aid and Student Services, one Academic Director, and one senior faculty member, to comprise a five- member committee. The committee will review the written appeal and notify the student of its decision within 14 business days. The committee's decision, whether to allow the student to be placed on probation will be final.