

Academic Grievances

Academic Mediation: Appealing a Grade

Students may appeal grades and evaluations on procedural grounds. That is, they may question whether the grade was awarded fairly, according to clear standards, and in a manner consistent with Earlham's stated practices, such that, a grade may not be appealed simply on grounds of disagreement of the instructor's evaluation. An appeal should begin with a conversation between student and instructor. If this discussion leads to no agreement, the student, possibly along with their adviser, should contact one of the Deans in Academic Affairs. The Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Academic Dean or Registrar may advise the student on the merits of the case and shall, at the request of the student, mediate between student and instructor. This mediation must occur within one semester after completion of the course. A meeting of all parties or separate meetings of the Dean with each party may be arranged. Sometimes the Dean from Academic Affairs may recuse themselves and refer the case to another dean within the academic administration.

If this mediation does not lead to a result agreeable to the parties, either or both may request a mediation hearing before an ad hoc Academic Mediation Board. A Dean from Academic Affairs (or their designee) shall convene a board, comprising two faculty members and two students. The Dean shall choose two faculty members and invite the student members from a short list selected from the Student Judicial Council. Either the student appellant or the faculty member whose grade is being appealed may reject nominations to the Board. Board hearings shall be recorded during the presentation and discussion of evidence with all parties present. The Board shall meet in executive session for deliberation.

The Mediation Board will review the documents of the case and listen to both parties. It then meets by itself and frames a recommendation. The Board shall consider itself charged to act equitably and in the interest of both parties as it seeks to determine if grading procedures were somehow faulty and if a remedy is feasible. By Earlham's bylaws, grading is in the province of the faculty, and a Board's recommendations may not force an instructor to change a grade.

If the Board finds itself unable to reach a consensus, or if either party is unwilling to accept the recommendation of the Board or the other party's response to it, then the convening Dean shall confer with the Academic Dean and the Clerk of the Faculty to devise a way forward.

If the faculty member is no longer at the college, a Dean from Academic Affairs will consult with the department convener to review work and work toward a resolution.

Requesting an Exception to an Academic Policy

Academic policies have been approved by the faculty and are applied consistently to all students. Students may petition Academic Affairs for special permission when they feel they've experienced exceptional circumstances that warrant an exception to Earlham's academic policies. Students requesting special permission should fill out the petition form available on the Registrar's Office website. Academic Affairs will review all written requests within two weeks of receipt. Once a determination is made, the decision is final.