

Clerkship Grade Appeals

—This information applies to Legacy Curriculum students.—

Background

Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM) is committed to rigorous, equitable, and credible processes for the assessment and grading of our students. Students who do not feel their grade accurately reflects their performance because of (1) a failure to follow a course's stated processes for gathering and judging assessment evidence or (2) unfair bias have the right to appeal the grade.

The Grade Appeal Policy at WUSM is in place to allow for the identification and — if confirmed — remediation of a systematic error in the assessment and/or grading process outlined in the relevant course syllabus and/or policies. In keeping with LCME standards 9.9, 10.3, and 11.6, we adhere to the following policy for the appeal of all clerkship grades at WUSM.

Policy

If a student believes there was a systematic error in the assessment and/or grading process or the presence of bias as stated above, they may file a formal appeal. Students wishing to appeal their grade must do so by filing a Grade Appeal Form (https://wustl.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6YFTYDqu1I5c5ds/) within 10 business days after final grades are due for a given course per WUSM's Grade Notification Policy (<http://bulletin.wustl.edu/medicine/policies/md-grade-notification/>). Grade appeals received after this deadline will not be accepted unless approved by the Director of Student Assessment and the Registrar in the case of unusual circumstances outside the student's control (e.g., a clerkship posts a final grade after WUSM's deadline).

The student must provide a detailed explanation of the basis for the appeal and pertinent documentation. Any factors not directly relevant to the assessment of performance within the specific course/clerkship (e.g., a student's stated career goals) cannot be taken into consideration when processing a grade appeal.

The Clerkship Director, Associate/Assistant Clerkship Director, and/or their designee will investigate the basis of the student's appeal. They will meet with the student (either in person or via virtual meeting) and any other stakeholders as needed to investigate the appeal, following which they will render a decision.

If the student still perceives systematic flaws in the process or bias impacted the final outcome of the grading and/or appeals process, they can submit a second appeal to the Associate Dean for Medical Student Education. They must do so within 10 business days of the decision of the Clerkship Director/Associate/Assistant Clerkship Director during the original appeal. The Associate Dean for Medical Student Education will convene an ad hoc appeals committee to adjudicate the appeal based on adherence to the stated processes of the clerkship for assessment and grading. In the event that this ad hoc committee finds systematic flaws or bias in the grading process, they will render a new review of the

assessment evidence and a new judgment. The appeals committee will reach a decision by majority vote ordinarily within 21 days of receipt of the second appeal. The Associate Dean for Medical Student Education retains discretion to make reasonable adjustments to this timeline as necessary. If identified, patterns of failure to adhere to procedures by a grading committee will be addressed by the Director of Student Assessment.

In the event that evidence of bias in the grading process is found, this will be considered a failure of the original grading decision to adequately adhere to the predetermined processes, and the appeals committee will issue a new grade. The appeals committee must also provide a summary of the evidence to the course director, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Assessment. Further handling of the matter will take place according to WUSM's Policy Against Medical Student Mistreatment and other applicable policies.

Guidelines

Students are advised that feedback from any one individual front-line assessor does not guarantee a specific grade. Front-line assessors are not in a position to grade students.

The perceived absence of formative/constructive feedback from any individual front-line assessor similarly does not guarantee a specific grade. Receiving insufficient feedback cannot be the sole basis for a grade appeal. If a student feels that they are getting insufficient feedback, even after asking, they are encouraged to discuss this with the course director *before* the end of the course.

When relevant, mid-course/clerkship feedback is not a guarantee of any specific final clinical grade.

Students actively participating in the residency match process should also notify the office of career counseling whenever a grade appeal is in process.

Last approved on July 8, 2021