

NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY	Policy No: 3349-AC-405
ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: COM - Grade Dispute	EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/01/2016 7/11/2017 rev. (Updated 7/24/2019)
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Office of the Dean and Medical Education, College of Medicine	Approval Authority: Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Responsible Office: Office of the Dean and Medical Education, College of Medicine

(A) PURPOSE

To establish a Policy by which medical students can dispute a final grade, in alignment with the University policy as specified in the *University Compass* and in accordance with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). LCME requires that “a medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single standard for the advancement and graduation of medical students across all locations and a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision relation to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.” (*LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School*, effective July 1, 2016, Standard 9.9)

(B) SCOPE

This policy applies to all College of Medicine students enrolled in a Credit-bearing Course and a Final Grade is assigned, regardless of the type of course.

(C) DEFINITIONS

- (1) **Course Director:** The appointed faculty member who is responsible for the overall design, conduct, student assessment within and evaluation of a credit-bearing course.
- (2) **Credit-bearing Course:** A course offered by the College of Medicine in which a student is enrolled, the course appears on the student’s official transcript with either contact hours or credit-bearing acknowledgment, and a grade is assigned.
- (3) **Final Grade:** A Final Grade is the cumulative assessment of a student’s performance in a single course. The grade is assigned by the faculty Course or Site/Rotation Director at the conclusion of the course offering. Final Grades are posted to the student record/official transcript by academic year and term. A student’s course grade is considered to be a Final Grade when it is posted in Banner Self-Service.

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- (4) **Grade Assignment:** The assignment of a Final Grade for a specific course or clerkship/rotation is the responsibility of the faculty member who has been designated as the faculty Course or Rotation Director in accordance with the guidelines of, and oversight by, the Curriculum Management and Assessment Committee (CMAC), as the guiding authority for the curriculum.
- (5) **Grade Dispute:** A Grade Dispute is a formal request made to a Course Director to change a Final Grade based on: 1) arithmetic, procedural or clerical error, 2) arbitrariness and capriciousness or 3) prejudice. Only Final Grades may be disputed.
- (6) **Grade Dispute Procedure:** Specific procedures exist in the NEOMED College of Medicine for students who wish to dispute a Final Grade based a valid reason (see Section III. E. Grade Dispute). More information on the grade dispute policy and procedure follows in section IV. Policy.
- (7) **Grade Dispute Waiver:** A student may waive, in writing, his/her right to dispute a Final Grade in accordance with the formal Grade Dispute Policy process. In this instance, the student must indicate his/her acceptance of the Final Grade as originally posted by completing and submitting the Grade Dispute Waiver. The Grade Dispute Waiver, once submitted, represents a final and irrevocable student decision.
- (8) **Grade Posting:** A student's grade is considered to be posted when the Final Grade itself appears for the student to view in Banner Self-Service (hereafter referred to as "Banner"). For M3 clerkships and M4 electives, Grade Posting includes the letter grade as well as the Final Grade Report Form.

(D) POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) The assignment of a Final Grade for a student's performance in an educational experience is the responsibility of the faculty member who is designated as the Course Director.

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- (2) Course Directors are considered to be the primary authority with respect to a student’s proficiency and Final Grade in a course, and in accordance with the approval of the course by the Curriculum Management and Assessment Committee (CMAC). As such, Course Directors are expected to judge the quality of academic work for their courses, providing that any judgement follows standards published for the course, and is not done in error, arbitrarily or capriciously, or with prejudice.
- (3) A student may file a Grade Dispute only when a Final Grade assigned to the student by the Course Director is assigned in error, is arbitrary or capricious, or is done with prejudice.
- (a) “Error” implies that:
- (i) a grade was miscalculated; or
 - (ii) there was an error in scoring a standardized test.
- (b) “Arbitrary or capricious” and “with prejudice” implies that:
- (i) The student has been assigned a grade on the basis of something other than his or her performance in the course and/or grading criteria specified in the approved course syllabus; or
 - (ii) The student’s grade was based on nonacademic criteria, which can include politics, race, religion, gender and/or national origin; or
 - (iii) Standards used in the determination of the student’s grade are not consistent with standards applied comparably to other students in the course; or
 - (iv) The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced and/or unreasonable departures from those

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documented and formally approved in the course description/syllabus distributed at the beginning of the course.

- (4) A Grade Dispute is not intended for use because a student disagrees with the Course Director's judgement about the quality of the student's work. Examples of legitimate grounds for disagreement could include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (a) Students were not informed of the basis for grade calculation in the syllabus, on AIMS, or prior to the assignment of the Final Grade.
 - (b) The student's Final Grade was not calculated in accordance with the stated procedure in the syllabus, on AIMS, or as provided prior to the grade assignment.
 - (c) There was a significant and unwarranted deviation from grading procedures defined in the course syllabus set at the beginning of the course, or a Final Grade was assigned arbitrarily and capriciously, and contrary to that outlined in the syllabus.
 - (d) There was an error in the computation of the Final Grade that was not corrected.
- (5) This procedure applies only to Final Grades and does not apply to individual examinations and/or components of a course.
- (6) In the event a student's failure in a course triggers an invitation to the Phase 2 Committee on Academic and Professional Progress (hereinafter referred to as CAPP 2), the student will be scheduled for the next meeting of CAPP 2. If the meeting of CAPP 2 falls within the Grade Dispute period, a student may waive his/her right to dispute the Final Grade by completing and submitting a Grade Dispute Waiver Form, thus accepting the Final Grade as it was originally posted. The Grade Dispute Waiver must be received no later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled meeting of CAPP 2.

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- (7) Every attempt will be made to adhere to the deadlines specified in this Policy and procedures that follow, but deadlines may be reasonably altered considering personal and professional circumstances of all parties involved in the processes.
- (8) Policy and procedures as applied to courses, clerkships, and electives
- (a) All Courses (regardless of curriculum year)
- (i) If a student disagrees with the Final Grade that he/she is assigned by a Course Director, the student must first discuss the concern with the Course Director within five (5) working days of the grade being posted, as well as notify, in writing M1-M2GradeDispute@neomed.edu regarding the intent. Following the discussion between the student and Course Director, the Course Director must provide a written response to the student within five (5) working days of the meeting and copied to M1-M2GradeDispute@neomed.edu
- (a) If the Course Director agrees with the student, the Course Director must complete and submit a Change of Grade Form and indicate the new Final Grade to be assigned and the rationale for the change.
- (b) If the Course Director disagrees with the student's case for changing the Final Grade, the student may bring forward, in writing, his/her request to dispute the grade formally. The student must submit a Course Grade Dispute Form, including all requested documentation, within five (5) working days of receipt of the negative response from the Course Director to M1-M2GradeDispute@neomed.edu who will forward the dispute documents to the Associate Dean of Medical Education.

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- (i) An ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee composed of the Associate Dean of Medical Education and two additional Course Directors from other courses will review the Grade Dispute. The student may be invited to discuss, or request to meet with, the Grade Dispute Committee as part of the process. A decision by the Committee will be made within ten (10) working days of receipt of the request, and a response will be sent to the student in writing. If the Committee supports the student's request for a change of grade, the Associate Dean of Medical Education will submit a Grade Change Form. The decision of the Committee is the final, binding resolution.
 - (A) In the event that the Associate Dean of Medical Education is also the Course Director who assigned the original Final Grade, an alternate Associate Dean or the Vice Dean in the College of Medicine will replace the Associate Dean of Medical Education on the Grade Dispute Committee.
- (b) M3 Clerkships
 - (i) If a student disagrees with his/her Final Grade for a required third-year clinical clerkship, the student must first discuss the matter with the Clerkship Site Director assigning the grade within five (5) working days of posting of the Final Grade Report Form, as well as notify, in writing, M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu regarding the intent. Following the discussion between the student and the Clerkship Site Director, the Clerkship Site Director must provide a written response to the student within five (5) working days of the meeting and copy M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu

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- (a) If the Clerkship Site Director agrees with the student, the Site Director will work in conjunction with the third-year (M3) clerkship Course Director (Director of M3 Clinical Experiences) who will submit a Change of Grade Form and indicate the new Final Grade to be assigned and the rationale for the change. The discussion also may result in an alteration of the Site Director’s Summary Comments on the Final Grade Report Form, which will be coordinated by the clerkship Course Director.
- (b) If the Clerkship Site Director disagrees with the student’s case for changing the final grade, the student may bring forward, in writing, his/her request to dispute the Final Grade formally. The student must submit a Course Grade Dispute Form, including all requested documentation, within five (5) working days of receipt of the negative response from the Site Director to M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu, who will forward the dispute documents to the Associate Dean of Medical Education.
- (i) An ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee composed of the Associate Dean of Medical Education, the clerkship Clinical Experiential Director of the discipline of the clerkship in which the grade is being disputed, and the third-year (M3) clerkship Course Director (Director of M3 Clinical Experiences) will review the Grade Dispute. The student may be invited to discuss, or request to meet with, the Grade Dispute Committee as part of the process. A decision by the Committee will be made within ten (10) working days of receipt of the request, and a response will be sent to the student in writing. If the

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Committee supports the student's request for a change of Final Grade, the clerkship Clinical Experiential Director will submit a Grade Change Form and may work with the Clerkship Site Director to amend the Clerkship Site Director's Summary Comments on the Final Grade Report Form accordingly. The decision by the Committee is the final binding resolution.

(A) In the event that the clerkship Clinical Experiential Director is also the clerkship Site Director who assigned the original Final Grade, an alternate clerkship Clinical Experiential Director will be appointed to the Committee.

(c) M4 Electives

(i) Core and elective rotations (electives): If a student disagrees with his/her Final Grade for a fourth-year (M4) core or elective rotation, the student must first discuss the matter with the Elective Site Director assigning the Final Grade within five (5) working days of posting of the Final Grade Report Form, as well as notify, in writing, M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu regarding the intent. Following the discussion between the student and the Elective Site Director, the Elective Site Director must provide a written response to the student within five (5) working days of the meeting and copy M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu.

(a) If the Elective Site Director agrees with the student, the Elective Site Director will work in conjunction with the fourth-year (M4) electives Course Director who will complete and submit a Change of Grade Form and indicate the new Final Grade to be assigned and the rationale for the

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change. The discussion also may result in an alteration of the Elective Site Director's Summary comments on the Final Grade Report Form, which will be coordinated by the elective Course Director.

- (b) If the Elective Site Director disagrees with the student's case for changing the final grade, the student may bring forward, in writing, his/her request to dispute the grade formally. The student must submit a Course Grade Dispute Form, including all requested documentation, within five (5) working days of receipt of the negative response from the Elective Site Director to M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu who will forward the dispute documents to the Associate Dean of Medical Education.
- (i) An ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee composed of the Associate Dean of Medical Education, the Elective Site Director, and the electives Course Director will review the dispute. The student may be invited to discuss, or request to meet with, the Grade Dispute Committee as part of the process. A decision by the Committee will be made within ten (10) working days of receipt of the request, and a response will be sent to the student in writing. If the Committee supports the student's request for a change of Final Grade, the elective Course Director will submit a Grade Change Form, and may work with the Elective Site Director to amend the Elective Site Director's Summary Comments on the Final Grade Report Form

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accordingly. The decision by the Committee is the final binding resolution.

- (ii) In the event that the Elective Site Director is also the fourth-year (M4) elective Course Director who assigned the original Final Grade, an alternate Elective Site Director will be appointed to the Committee.

(9) Phase 2 CAPP Referral

- (a) In the event that a student receives a Final Grade of fail for a course and is referred to CAPP 2 during an active grade dispute period, the Associate Dean of Medical Education and the CAPP College of Medicine chair will determine whether or not a student should be reviewed by CAPP 2 during an active grade dispute period.
- (b) In the event a student's failure in a course triggers an invitation to CAPP 2 and to expedite CAPP 2 review, a student may waive his/her right to dispute a final grade by completing and submitting a Grade Dispute Waiver Form, thus accepting the Final Grade as it was originally posted. The student will be scheduled for the next meeting of CAPP 2, in accordance with CAPP 2 guidelines. The Grade Dispute Waiver must be received no later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled meeting of CAPP.

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(10) Timeline of Sequence and Timing of Events in a Grade Dispute

M1 and M2 Courses and Applicable M3 and M4 Courses		
Time	Running Time	Timeline
0	0	Final Grade posted in Banner
Within five (5) working days	Five (5) working days	Student meets with Course Director regarding intent to dispute grade
Within five (5) working days	Ten (10) working days	Course Director responds to student
Within five (5) working days	Fifteen (15) working days	Student submits formal paperwork to dispute grade
Within ten (10) working days	Twenty-five (25) working days	Ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee renders a final and binding decision

M3 Clerkships		
Time	Running Time	Timeline
0	0	Final Grade and Final Grade Report Form posted in Banner
Within five (5) working days	Five (5) working days	Student meets with Clerkship Site Director regarding intent to dispute grade
Within five (5) working days	Ten (10) working days	Clerkship Site Director responds to student
Within five (5) working days	Fifteen (15) working days	Student submits formal paperwork to dispute grade
Within ten (10) working days	Twenty-five (25) working days	Ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee renders a final and binding decision

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M4 Electives		
Time	Running Time	Timeline
0	0	Final Grade and Final Grade Report Form posted in Banner
Within five (5) working days	Five (5) working days	Student meets with Elective Site Director regarding intent to dispute grade
Within five (5) working days	Ten (10) working days	Elective Site Director responds to student
Within five (5) working days	Fifteen (15) working days	Student submits formal paperwork to dispute grade
Within ten (10) working days	Twenty-five (25) working days	Ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee renders a final and binding decision

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Attachment 1

Northeast Ohio Medical University
College of Medicine
Course Grade Dispute Notification Form

The NEOMED College of Medicine recognizes that at times students may believe that a Final Grade has been unfairly assigned and want to dispute the grade. Students who wish to dispute a Final Grade must follow the steps outlined in the *NEOMED Compass*. This procedure does not apply to individual examinations and/or components of an overall course. It applies only to Final Grades in courses. The NEOMED College of Medicine adheres to all academic policies outlined in the *NEOMED Compass*.

Grade Disputes:

Grade disputes may only be filed when a student contends that his/her Final Grade in a course as assigned by the Course Director is arbitrary or capricious, assigned with prejudice, or assigned in error.

(a) "Error" implies that:

- a grade was miscalculated; or
- there was an error in scoring a standardized test.

(b) "Arbitrary or capricious" and "with prejudice" implies that:

- The student has been assigned a grade on the basis of something other than his or her performance in the course and/or grading criteria specified in the syllabus; or
- The student's grade was based on nonacademic criteria, which can include politics, race, religion, gender and/or national origin; or
- Standards used in the determination of the student's grade are not consistent with standards applied comparably to other students in the course; or
- The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced and unreasonable departures from those documented and formally approved in the course description/syllabus distributed at the beginning of the course.

A grade dispute must be for legitimate disagreement and is not intended for use because a student disagrees with the Course Director's judgement about the quality of the student's work. Examples of disagreement could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Students were not informed of the basis for grade calculation in the syllabus, on AIMS or prior to the assignment of the grade.
- (b) The student's grade was not calculated in accordance with the stated procedure in the syllabus, on AIMS or as provided prior to the assignment.

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- (c) There was a significant and unwarranted deviation from grading procedures and course syllabi set at the beginning of the course, or a grade was assigned arbitrarily and capriciously on the basis of whim or impulse.
- (d) There was an error in the computation of the grade that was not corrected.

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Northeast Ohio Medical University ~ College of Medicine

GRADE DISPUTE FORM

Name:		Student Number:	
Email:			
Course Number:		Course Name:	
Course Director:			
Semester and Year Taken:		Final Grade Received:	Final Grade Requested:
Date Final Grade Posted:		Date of Discussion with Course Director:	

Disputes will be considered by the Associate Dean of Medical Education and the appointed ad hoc Grade Dispute Committee only when they meet one or more of the following criteria. Please indicate which of the following criteria is/are being used as the basis for the dispute: (check all that apply)

- Course director failed to inform students of the basis for the grade calculation.
- Course director violated the terms of the syllabus.
- Course director made an error in calculating or recording a grade.
- Course director violated a university policy when he/she gave assignments, administered exams or assigned grades.
- Course director assigned the grade in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

Attach the required following supporting documentation (unless otherwise noted):

- Explanation of what occurred and how the criteria checked above applies to the situation
- Response correspondence from the course director
- Course syllabus
- Timeline of events relevant to the appeal
- Assignment or exam in question (if applicable)
- Correspondence with instructor (if applicable)
- Any other documentation supporting the dispute (information from course director if in final dispute stage)

I declare that the information on this form, and all supporting documentation, is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I also understand that purposeful misrepresentation of my situation constitutes scholastic dishonesty and may make me subject to disciplinary action.

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Student Signature

Date

Submit the completed form and required documentation to:

M1-M2GradeDispute@neomed.edu for all courses regardless of curriculum year
M3-M4GradeDispute@neomed.edu for M3 clerkships and M4 elective rotations

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Attachment 2

Northeast Ohio Medical University
College of Medicine
Grade Dispute Waiver Form

Northeast Ohio Medical University College of Medicine adheres to the academic policies outlined in the *NEOMED Compass*.

Grade Disputes and Waivers:

The College of Medicine recognizes that, at times, a student may believe that a Final Grade has been unfairly assigned and may want to dispute the grade. Grade disputes may only be filed when a student contends that a Final Grade in a course as assigned by the Course Director is arbitrary or capricious, is done with prejudice or is assigned in error. A Grade Dispute is not intended for use because a student disagrees with the Course Director's judgement about the quality of the student's work. Students who wish to dispute a Final Grade in a course must follow the steps outlined in the *NEOMED Compass*.

The Phase 2 Committee on Academic and Professional Progress (CAPP 2) evaluates the records of students on the basis of CAPP 2 Academic Guidelines and enforces specific guidelines for academic advancement. In the event a student's failure in a course triggers an invitation to the Phase 2 Committee on Academic and Professional Progress (hereinafter referred to as CAPP 2), the student will be scheduled for the next meeting of CAPP 2. If the meeting of CAPP 2 falls within the Grade Dispute period, a student may waive his/her right to dispute the Final Grade by completing and submitting a Grade Dispute Waiver Form, thus accepting the Final Grade as it was originally posted. The Grade Dispute Waiver must be received no later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled meeting of CAPP 2.

Northeast Ohio Medical University ~ College of Medicine GRADE DISPUTE WAIVER FORM

Name:		Student Number:	
Email:			
Course Number:		Course Name:	
Course Director:			
Semester & Year Taken:		Final Grade Received:	

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Date Final Grade Posted:	Date of Scheduled CAPP 2 Review:
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My signature on this form is an indication of my intent to waive my right to dispute the Final Grade assigned to me, as specified above. I accept the Final Grade as originally assigned, and I acknowledge that this is an irrevocable decision.

Student Signature

Date

Accepted by:

Associate Dean of Medical Education

Date

Date forward to CAPP 2: _____

Submit the completed form to the Associate Dean of Medical Education at: rpalmer@neomed.edu no later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled CAPP 2 meeting.