

GRADE APPEALS (ACADEMIC DISPUTES)

If there is a dispute between a student and a faculty member concerning a decision of the faculty member, every effort should be made by them to resolve the matter. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, the student may request a review of this decision no later than the end of the following semester, recognizing that the burden of proof is on the student. Complaints that do not involve grade disputes are handled through the General Complaint procedure, which is outlined in the *Student Handbook* and in the UMW Online Policy Manual (policy number D.9.1 (<https://go.boarddocs.com/va/umw/Board.nsf/goto/?open&id=A72NJL5A4B39>)).

The Academic Disputes policy described below applies to students enrolled in all UMW courses, including ones offered in fully online formats.

In Academic Dispute cases, the following procedure is to be followed:

The student will submit a written statement of the grade dispute, with any supporting material, to the chair of the department of the faculty member concerned, if the grade dispute is with a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). For grade disputes in the College of Business (COB) or College of Education (COE), the written statement is sent to the associate dean in COB or COE. If the grade dispute is with the chair of a CAS department, or with the associate dean in COB or COE, the written statement is sent to the college dean. The student must also send a copy written statement of the grade dispute (with supporting materials) to the faculty member.

1. Within seven (7) days, the chair of the CAS department or the COB or COE associate dean will review the dispute, consulting with the faculty member and student concerned, with other department or college members as appropriate, and will attempt to settle the dispute. If agreement is reached at this level, the process ends.
2. If either party does not accept the recommendation of the department chair or the COB or COE associate dean, the chair or associate dean will forward all material including their recommendation to the college dean.
3. The college dean will review the material submitted and will determine whether or not further consideration of the matter would be fruitful. If the decision is that additional consideration would not be fruitful, the college dean will render a final decision.
4. If the college dean determines that further consideration is needed, the matter will be referred to an academic review board. The dean of the college in which the faculty member is housed will determine the makeup of the academic review board.
5. The academic review board will hear the evidence of both the student and the faculty member on the matter and, within two weeks of being convened, communicate its recommendation to the college dean with copies to the student, faculty member and chairperson involved.
6. The college dean will then render a decision, which will be final.
7. Either party may appeal the dean's decision on procedural grounds only by submitting, within seven (7) days, a written appeal to the provost outlining the specific procedural irregularities being alleged to

have occurred during the review of the academic dispute. The provost will determine whether or not a procedural review is warranted, who should be requested to undertake that review, and the timeline for completing the procedural review and reporting to the provost. The appeal process is completed with the provost's decision.

Note:

If a student has exhausted the avenues provided by the policy described above and the complaint has not been resolved, the student may submit a "Student Complaint Form (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StudentComplaintForm/>)" to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Upon receiving a completed form, SCHEV will open an investigation if the matter being disputed falls within its authority. If preliminary findings indicate a violation of SCHEV regulations by UMW, SCHEV shall attempt to resolve the complaint through mediation. All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation. UMW fully accepts SCHEV oversight in resolving complaints from students taking distance education courses under the aegis of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA).