A. Purpose

To outline appropriate steps the student should take to clarify any questions about final grades or grading practices.

B. Background

Questions and concerns about final grades are often the result of misunderstandings about grading practices and expected standards. Direct communication between the instructor and the student usually clear up these misunderstandings.

C. Responsibility

1. It is the responsibility of every student to follow these guidelines to resolve the problem.

2. It is the responsibility of each faculty member and administrator to fulfill his or her role in accordance with these procedures.

D. Procedures

1. The student should make an appointment with the appropriate instructor when there is any question about a particular grade or the instructor's grading policy. Examples of questions that may be discussed include the following:

   a. Clarification of the overall grading plan for the course, including relative weights of exams, etc.

   b. Correction of errors made in grading.

   c. Explanation of specific grading questions such as the correct answer to an exam question or the basis for a grade received on a term paper.

2. The student seeking additional clarification or information on matters related to grading should make an appointment with the appropriate department chair. Questions such as the following may be answered by the department chair:

   a. Department policy on grading for a particular course.
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Student Final Grade Appeal

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b. Departmental attendance policy or an instructor's approved attendance policy.

c. Questions related to differences in interpretations of approved policies.

3. Students seeking further recourse related to a final grade received should make an appointment with the division dean. The division dean should discuss the questions raised with the instructor and the department chair, give the student an official interpretation of the grade, and explain the appeal process.

4. Should the student choose to appeal, the process is as follows:

a. The student should make an appeal in writing to the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management stating the sequence of events leading to the appeal and any personal interpretations related to the case. This written appeal must be made not later than the mid-term of the semester following the semester in which the grade was received.

b. The Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management notifies the instructor that an appeal has been made and activates a committee to hear the student's appeal. Membership of the Final Grade Appeal Committee is as follows:

   (1) Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management.
   (2) Vice President for Academic Affairs
   (3) An instructor from the department involved, selected by the instructor's department chair. (The Chief Officer for Academic Affairs will select an instructor from another department within the division if the department chair's grading policy is appealed.)
   (4) A faculty member selected by the student making the appeal.
   (5) An instructor selected by the instructor whose grade is being appealed.
   (6) An instructor selected by the president of the Faculty Senate. This instructor should be a member of the Senate from a division other than the one in which the appeal is made.
   (7) One additional instructor may be selected by the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management, if needed, to insure a balanced representation.

2. A meeting of the Appeal Committee is scheduled by the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management.
3. The committee examines the evidence and discusses the case with the instructor and the student.

4. The committee arrives at a decision which is sent as a recommendation to the instructor. (The student and Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management are also informed of the recommendation.)

5. If the instructor does not follow the recommendation of the committee, the President’s Executive Council will determine the appropriate course of action.

6. In all cases, the faculty member has recourse through his/her department chair, division dean, and vice president.

7. After the Final Grade Appeal Committee has heard the student’s complaint, this completes the appeal process for the student.

E. Academic Forgiveness

Purpose

This policy allows Gaston College students who have experienced academic difficulty at Gaston College to have one opportunity to have grades below a “C” excluded from the cumulative grade point average (GPA). Academic difficulty is defined as less than a 2.00 cumulative grade point average at Gaston College. This policy provides for raising the cumulative grade point average by excluding all grades of “D” or “F” earned prior to the date of eligibility for Academic Forgiveness. A student may be granted Academic Forgiveness only once.

1. Criteria for Applying for Academic Forgiveness
   
   a. A student must have been out of school for at least three sequential semesters OR have changed his/her major.
   
   b. Grades must reflect at least a 2.00 grade point average in at least 12 semester hours in the new major before a student is eligible to apply for Academic Forgiveness.

2. Procedures for Academic Forgiveness
a. Students who are interested in applying for Academic Forgiveness must obtain the Academic Forgiveness Petition and information from the Office of Student Registration and Records.

b. Once completed by the student, the Office of Student Registration and Records will review the petition to determine basic eligibility. Eligible petitions will be forwarded to the student’s divisional dean for review and a final decision.

c. The student’s divisional dean will act upon the petition and return it to the Office of Student Registration and Records.

d. If forgiveness is approved, the Office of Student Registration and Records will notify the student of the decision and include an updated student transcript which will reflect the excluded grades.

e. The new GPA calculation on the updated student transcript will exclude all “D” and/or “F” grades. All other grades that are “A,” “B,” and/or “C” will be included in the GPA calculation and will count toward graduation requirements unless other policies supersede this policy.

f. The student’s GPA will be calculated based upon the date of eligibility and all criteria being met. The excluded courses will remain on the student’s transcript but will not count toward program/graduation requirements or be calculated in the student’s grade point average. No courses are removed from the transcript. If Academic Forgiveness is approved, the excluded course grades will be preceded by an “E” on the student’s transcript.

g. If forgiveness is denied, the Office of Student Registration and Records will notify the student with a letter of explanation.

h. Review and processing of Academic Forgiveness generally takes two to four weeks.

3. Exclusions and Limitations of Academic Forgiveness

a. Any credits for courses earned with a grade of “D” are not retained.

b. Students who plan to transfer to another college or university should know that the receiving institution is not required to disregard the
excluded course grades. Once approved, Academic Forgiveness cannot be reversed.

c. The minimum grade point average needed for admission for specific programs may or may not utilize the new grade point average.

d. Financial Aid policies regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress are still applicable. Students who receive any type of financial aid should contact the Office of Financial Aid prior to applying for Academic Forgiveness.