

Emory Physics Graduate Program – Grievance Policy

The Department of Physics recognizes that a fair and rigorous assessment of student performance and progress towards the PhD is vital to the mission of the graduate program. The PhD necessitates a close, working relationship between the student and the advisor, and involves multiple courses and checkpoints of assessment where the student is evaluated by individual faculty instructors and faculty committees. Disagreements arising over assigned grades or other academic matters that may arise should be handled promptly and professionally.

Most disputes can and should be resolved privately between the student and assessors (i.e. advisor, the course instructor of record, or in the case of a qualifier, the committee). This is the starting point with all academic disputes. If the dispute remains unresolved, the student will meet with the director of graduate studies (DGS) to discuss the situation. In case of an obvious conflict of interest, the department chair will serve in this role. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved after meeting with the DGS, the student may initiate the following appeals procedure:

1. The student shall submit a written appeal to the DGS (or Chair if necessary) outlining the basic nature of the dispute.
2. The DGS (or Chair if necessary) will form an ad-hoc grievance committee comprised of 3 faculty in the physics graduate program.
3. The student shall assemble all relevant written materials that support their appeal, including course syllabi, written agreements, emails, etc. These materials need to be put together within two weeks of the date of the written appeal. They will be delivered to the grievance committee by the DGS (or Chair if necessary).
4. Concurrently, the instructor or assessors will assemble all relevant written materials retained for this student within two weeks of the date of the written appeal and provide them to the DGS (or Chair if necessary), who will deliver them to the grievance committee.
5. The grievance committee will adjudicate the student's appeal promptly, based on the following criteria:
 - Have the student and the assessors followed all written policies set forth by the Physics Graduate Program and the Laney Graduate School?
 - Is there an error in the way the student's work was evaluated, and in the case of a grade dispute, does this error rise to the level of reversing the instructor's grade?
6. The grievance committee will inform the student of the decision in writing, which will be shared with the DGS and assessors. The decision is final within the graduate program.

If the student feels that the dispute has not been resolved by the Graduate Program Grievance Committee or within the broader framework of the Physics administrative structure, the student may appeal through the Laney Graduate School, as detailed here:

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[https://www.gs.emory.edu/academics/policies-progress/conduct.html.](https://www.gs.emory.edu/academics/policies-progress/conduct.html)

From this point forward, the grievance will be handled according to the procedures outline in the Laney Graduate School Handbook.