

Student Grade Appeal Process

Policies and Procedures

PROCEDURES A STUDENT SHALL FOLLOW TO CHALLENGE THE FINAL GRADE ASSIGNED BY A FACULTY MEMBER.

In order to successfully appeal a grade, a student must offer convincing written arguments that good cause exists for mandating a change of grade. If a student fails to appeal a final grade within 15 work days from the date the grade is posted to the student's record, the student forfeits the right to appeal.

I. Cause for Grade Appeal

Each of the following reasons, if supported by sufficient written evidence, shall constitute "good cause."

- A. Assignment of a grade that is malicious and/or discriminatory. This is applicable if, in determining the grade, the professor clearly did not apply the same standards used for grading other members of the class whose work and behavior were similar to those of the appealing student.
- B. Assignment of a grade that is arbitrary and/or capricious. This is applicable if the professor apparently had no discernible rationale for arriving at the grade given.
- C. Assignment of a grade that has resulted from innocent human error. The professor reported an incorrect grade as the consequence of a mistake in computation, in recording, or in some other mechanical aspect of the grading process.

None of the following shall constitute "good cause" for the purpose of appealing a grade.

- A. Disagreement with the course requirements established by the professor.
- B. Disagreement with the grading standards established by the professor.
- C. Disagreement with the judgment of the professor in applying grading standards as long as he or she has made a reasonable effort in good faith to be fair and consistent in exercising that judgment. Good faith on the professor's part shall be assumed unless the student can offer convincing arguments to the contrary.
- D. The student's desire or "need" for a particular grade. While this sort of reason may seem compelling to the individual on the personal level, it shall not be considered "good cause" for purposes of appeal and shall not be regarded as relevant in consideration of the student's appeal. Examples of the student's need to have a higher grade include, but are not limited to, the need to graduate, to transfer course credits, gain employment or promotion, or to qualify for a more advanced course.

II. Process for Grade Appeal

The following steps constitute the established administrative procedures for appealing a final grade. All paperwork and documentation of Steps 1 through 3 will be kept in the office of the division chairperson.

All deadlines refer to work days. It is the student's responsibility to meet the established deadlines. Failure to attend any of the scheduled meetings or the College Hearing Board hearing without reasonable justification will forfeit the student's right to appeal the grade.

If the appeal concerns a final grade given by a division chairperson, a substitute faculty will be selected to act in his/her place throughout the process.

Step 1

The student must submit a written appeal of the final grade to the faculty member and the division chairperson. This must be done within 15 work days from the date the grade is posted to the student's record.

Step 2

The faculty/student conference will occur as soon as possible, but no later than the 10th work day of the following semester. The occurrence and outcome of the meeting will be documented by the faculty member who assigned the grade and will include the signatures of the student and faculty member. A copy of the documentation will go to both parties.

Step 3

If the appeal cannot be resolved, the student has seven calendar days after the student/faculty conference to appeal, in writing, to the division chairperson. As part of this appeal, the student is responsible for presenting documentation regarding the faculty/student conference.

After reviewing the written materials, the division chairperson will schedule a conference with the student and the faculty member within 10 work days. The results of the meeting will be documented and will include the signatures of all three participants. A file of all written materials will be maintained by the division chairperson. If the appeal is not resolved, the student has 10 work days from the date of the conference to appeal the grade, in writing, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Step 4

At this stage, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will review a file of all written materials submitted by the division chairperson regarding the grade appeal. The Vice President will schedule a meeting with the student, faculty and division chairperson to review the materials and discuss the appeal within 10 work days. The Vice President's written decision will be rendered within three work days and must be signed by all participants.

If the student or faculty member disagrees with this decision, a request for an appeal to the College Hearing Board can be made, in writing, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within five work days.

Step 5

The College Hearing Board will consist of three faculty and three students. The Hearing Board will be chaired by an administrator, who will vote only in case of a tie. The student will be notified via registered or certified mail, of the day and time of the hearing. The Hearing Board will convene in a closed session no more than seven calendar days after the request for a hearing has been made to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

If the student wishes to have an advisor present for the hearing, the individual may not be an attorney and may include a spouse, parent, other relative, or friend. The student must notify, in writing, the Vice President of Academic Affairs regarding the presence of an advisor at least one calendar day before the hearing. The advisor may confer with the student during the hearing, but may not address the Hearing Board.

Following the presentations by the student and the faculty member, the Hearing Board will vote on its decision.

The Hearing Board chair will inform all parties that the Vice President of Academic Affairs will receive the decision in writing.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs will notify the student, the faculty member, and the division chairperson within five work days after receiving the Hearing Board's decision. If the Vice President of Academic Affairs is unavailable, it is then the Dean of Student Affairs' responsibility to do so.

Step 6

The student or faculty member may appeal, in writing, the decision of the College Hearing Board to the President of the College within five work days. The President will review all written documentation and may conduct further

inquiries. The President will render a decision within five work days of the request for appeal. The decision of the President shall be final.

Responsibilities in the Grade Appeal Process

Student

- Submit all appeals in writing, as well as provide appropriate documentation, within established time deadlines specified in each step of the process
- Present case in person if grade is appealed to the College Hearing Board
- Inform Dean of Student Affairs that a nonlegal advisor will be present

Faculty Who Assigned the Final Grade

- Meet with student in an attempt to resolve the grade appeal and document occurrence of meeting
- Maintain and present appropriate documentation as requested throughout subsequent steps if appeal cannot be resolved with student
- Present case in person if grade is appealed to the College Hearing Board

Division Chairperson

- Maintain all written documentation of appeal, including student's reason for appeal and all paperwork, including signed documentation that meetings in Steps 1-3 have taken place
- Schedule conference with the student and faculty member who assigned the grade after reviewing all documentation to date
- If the appeal concerns a grade given by division chairperson, a substitute faculty member will be selected to act in his/her place throughout the process

Vice President of Academic Affairs

- Schedule and document the meeting with the division chairperson, faculty member, and student in Step 4
- If the appeal is filed against the Dean, an administrator will be selected to act in his/her place throughout the process
- Receive student's request for appeal to the College Hearing Board
- Consult with the Dean of Student Affairs to select an administrator to chair the College Hearing Board, as well as the three student members
- Appoint three faculty to serve on the College Hearing Board
- Schedule date and location for the Hearing Board hearing. Notify Hearing Board members, faculty, and student making the appeal of date and location of appeal

- Select recorder
- Notify student, faculty member and division chairperson of the Hearing Board's decision

Dean of Student Affairs

- Consult with the Vice President of Academic Affairs in selection of the chairperson for the College Hearing Board
- Select student membership for the College Hearing Board
- Notify chairperson of the Hearing Board of the presence of a nonlegal advisor for the student at least one calendar day before the hearing
- Communicate Hearing Board decision within one calendar day to student, faculty member, and division chairperson in the event that the Vice President of Academic Affairs is unavailable

Chairperson of College Hearing Board

- Call Hearing Board to order and preside over hearing
- Inform student and faculty member of time parameters for their respective presentations
- Call for a vote; chair will vote only in case of a tie
- Submit decision in writing to Vice President of Academic Affairs within one calendar day after the hearing
- Submit final summary to Vice President of Academic Affairs within five calendar days of the hearing

College Hearing Board Members

- Ask questions for clarification during presentation by student and faculty
- Vote to keep or change the final grade

Recorder

- Take notes
- Will neither participate in discussion or vote, but may ask questions for clarification
- Will type the Hearing Board's recommendation to Vice President of Academic Affairs within one calendar day of hearing
- Will prepare and submit a summary of proceedings for the Hearing Board chair within five calendar days of hearing