

# Grade Appeal

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## Undergraduate and Graduate Grade Appeal Policies

### Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy

All students have a legitimate right to seek redress when they consider their final grade in a course to be unreasonable, unjust, or capricious. This grade appeal procedure shall be initiated during the term immediately following issuance of the grade in question; in cases involving special and unusual circumstances, this time period may be reasonably extended.

#### Procedure:

1. The student should consult the faculty member who issued the grade for reconsideration of the grade.
2. If, after seeing the faculty member, the student wishes to pursue the issue or if the faculty member is unavailable, he/she should then approach the faculty member's Coordinator or Department Chair and ask for an investigation of the grade appeal.

At this time the student must present a written statement to the Coordinator or Department Chair explaining the reasons for believing the grade to be unreasonable, unjust, or capricious. The Department/Unit Head is responsible for consulting the parties involved, gathering all pertinent information, and for preparing a written statement of the facts which will be given to the student and faculty member and be used in reviewing the facts with the student and the faculty member. The Coordinator or Department Chair shall be responsible for:

- a) either concurring with the faculty member that the grade should remain as recorded, or
- b) suggesting to the faculty member that the grade be reviewed.
- c) The student and faculty member shall be informed in writing of this conclusion. If the student believes the grade appeal has not been resolved satisfactorily, he/she may appeal the grade in writing to the appropriate dean.

3. If the Coordinator or Department Chair is the teacher of record, the student shall appeal in writing directly to the appropriate dean, instead of to the Department/Unit Head as in 2 above. (For undergraduate and unclassified graduate students, the appropriate dean is the Dean of the College in which the academic department is located. For graduate students in a degree program, the appropriate dean is the Dean of the Graduate College). The Academic Dean shall be responsible for requesting a written statement from the Coordinator or Department Chair. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may write to the Dean and request a hearing by the Grade Appeal Committee.

4. The Dean, in consultation with the Grade Appeal Committee, will review the statement prepared by the Coordinator or Department Chair. If the Dean believes the issue should be pursued, he/she will convene the Grade Appeal Committee for a hearing. If the Dean decides the issue should not be pursued, the grade remains as recorded. The decision of the Dean is final. All parties must be so notified.

5. For undergraduate and unclassified graduate students, the Academic Dean will have a standing Grade Appeal Committee, to be selected each year, composed of five members as follows:

- Two faculty members and two alternates selected by the college assembly.
- Two student members with two alternates selected by the Student Senate.
- The dean of the college involved, or his/her representative. For students in a graduate degree program, the Dean of the Graduate College will have a standing Grade Appeal Committee, selected each year, consisting of five members, as follows:
  - Two faculty members and two alternates selected by the Graduate Advisory Committee.
  - Two students in good standing, in a Master's Degree Program, selected by the Dean of the College.
  - The graduate dean or his/her representative.

6. The Grade Appeal Committee will investigate the case, and hold a hearing in which the student, the faculty member, and the Coordinator or Department Chair shall be invited to participate. The Committee deliberations following the hearing will be confidential.

7. If the Committee decides the challenged grade is unreasonable, unjust, or capricious, it shall so recommend to the Dean, who shall have the power to change the grade from a letter grade to a grade of "P" (pass). The credits for this course will count toward undergraduate degree requirements. If the committee decides there is insufficient evidence to support the student's claim, it shall recommend to the Dean that the original grade should stand.

8. In all instances the Committee will reach a conclusion and submit its recommendation in writing to the Dean, who shall render a written decision, copies of which shall be sent to the student and faculty member. The decision of the Dean shall be final.

### Graduate Grade Appeal Policy

Every student has the right to appeal if they consider their final grade in a graduate-level course to be unreasonable, unjust, or capricious. A grade appeal can be initiated no later than two semesters (including summer) after the grade was assigned. The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research makes the final decision on graduate grade appeals.

Process for appealing a grade in a graduate course:

1. The student must first consult the faculty member who issued the grade for reconsideration of the grade. The Chair or Coordinator and other members of the department are encouraged to be available for consultation with the faculty member and the student at this stage. Note: This is the only stage at which an appealed grade can be changed to an A, B, C, D, or F. At every subsequent stage of the grade appeal process, the Chair, Associate Dean of the graduate program's college or Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research can change the grade to a P only.
2. If the faculty member is unavailable or the student contests the faculty member's decision and wishes to continue the appeal, the student should (next) approach the Chair of the department in which the course was taught. The Chair may designate the relevant program's Coordinator to serve this role for this stage, if the department has a Coordinator. The student must present a written statement to the Chair explaining the reasons he/she believes the grade is unreasonable, unjust, or capricious. The Chair is responsible for investigating the student's claims by gathering relevant information, and preparing a written statement of the findings of the investigation. At the conclusion of this investigation, the Chair must recommend that the student's grade appeal be supported or denied. The Chair shall communicate this recommendation and its rationale in writing to the student and the faculty member.
3. If the faculty member who issued the grade is also the Chair, the student should appeal directly to the Associate Dean of the college in which the course was taught, submitting a written statement explaining the reasons he or she believes the grade is unreasonable, unjust, or capricious. The Associate Dean is responsible for investigating the student's claims by gathering relevant information, and preparing a written statement of the findings of the investigation. At the conclusion of this investigation, the Associate Dean must recommend that the student's grade appeal be supported or denied. The Associate Dean shall communicate this recommendation and its rationale in writing to the student and the faculty member (Chair).
4. If the student believes that the process was flawed or that there was evidence that was not considered, he/she can bring the appeal to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research. In addition to the appeal materials already provided to the Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean in Step 2 above, the student must justify in the appeal why he or she believes the decision should be reconsidered, including any new pertinent information. Disagreement with the outcome of the deliberations of the Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean is not sufficient on its own to pursue an appeal with the Dean. If the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research agrees that the process was possibly flawed or there was evidence not considered, he/she will convene the Graduate Grade Appeal Committee to hear the grade appeal. The Graduate Grade Appeal Committee, selected each year, will consist of five members, as follows:
  - a. Two faculty members from the Graduate College Advisory Committee,
  - b. Two master's degree program students in good standing selected by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research, and
  - c. The representative of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research.
5. Before hearing any appeals, any student serving on the Graduate Grade Appeal Committee must fill out and sign a FERPA Privacy and Confidentiality Understanding/Agreement, available from the Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research or the University Registrar.
6. The Graduate Grade Appeal Committee will investigate the case and will hold a hearing. The student, the faculty member, and the Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean involved with Step 2 shall be invited to participate. If the student fails to attend the agreed-upon, scheduled hearing, then the hearing will be cancelled and the grade appeal dismissed without further review.
7. The Graduate Grade Appeal hearing generally takes about one hour and has the following format:
  - a. The student has 10 minutes to present the appeal, after which the committee members may ask questions of the student.
  - b. The faculty member of the course has 10 minutes to respond, after which the committee members may ask questions of the instructor.
  - c. The Chair (if he/she is not the faculty member), Coordinator, or Associate Dean may add comments and answer any questions the committee members may have.
  - d. The student does not ask questions of the faculty member, Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean, and the faculty member, Chair, Coordinator, and Associate Dean do not ask questions of the student.
  - e. The student may have 2 or 3 minutes for final rebuttal and the committee may ask final questions of the student, faculty member, Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean.
  - f. Everyone except for the Graduate Grade Appeal Committee leaves the hearing room.
  - g. The committee members discuss the appeal. The Dean's representative will lead the discussion. When the discussion is complete, the committee members will take a vote on the appeal.
8. The committee will communicate to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research its written recommendation, which will be one of the following:

- a. If the Committee decides that the challenged grade is unreasonable, unjust, or capricious, it shall so communicate to the Dean its recommendation that the grade be changed to a P.
  - b. If the Committee decides there is insufficient evidence to support the student's claim, it shall recommend to the Dean that the original grade should stand.
  - c. If the committee cannot agree on the appeal, the lack of agreement will be communicated to the Dean.
9. After receiving the recommendation of the committee and reviewing the materials submitted by the student, the faculty member, and the Chair, Coordinator, or Associate Dean, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research may decide that the grade should remain as recorded, or that it should be changed to a P (Pass). If the grade is changed to a P, the credits for the course will count toward the student's degree requirements, but the grade will not contribute to the GPA.
  10. The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research will share his/her decision in writing with the student, the faculty member, and the Chair, Coordinator, and/or Associate Dean, and a copy of the decision will be placed in the student's records. The decision of the Dean is final.