

GRADE APPEALS

The Grade Appeals Policy is based on the premise that only the instructor who gave a grade can change that grade. Prior to initiating a formal grade appeal, the student should discuss the grade issue with the faculty member to determine whether it can be resolved informally. If the informal discussion with the faculty member does not resolve the issue, the formal appeal of a grade must follow the procedure outlined below.

Basis/Bases for Grade Appeals

All aspects of the grade appeals procedure shall be conducted with confidentiality to protect both student and faculty member. The basis/bases for an appeal of a grade are listed below:

1. An obvious error in the calculation of the grade.
2. The assignment of a grade to a particular student by application of more exacting requirements than were applied to other students in the course.
3. The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course.
4. The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.

The grade appeal procedure is not to be used to review the judgment of an instructor in assessing the quality of a student's work.

Procedure for Grade Appeals

Step 1 Formal Initiation of a Grade Appeal with the Student, Faculty Member, and Department Chair

Timeline: The student must initiate a formal grade appeal on or before the official closing date of the next term whether or not the student is enrolled during that term. The formal procedures involving the student, faculty member, and department chair should be concluded within six weeks of the initiating date.

Procedure: The student formally initiates a grade appeal with a written (email excluded) request to the department chair to review the issue with the faculty member and department chair. Upon receiving this request, the department chair should provide the student with the guidelines for a grade appeal, review any questions about the appeal process, and arrange for a meeting with the student and the faculty member to review the basis/bases for the appeal. During the meeting with the faculty member and the department chair, the student identifies the basis for his or her appeal and provides supporting evidence. Evidence may include course syllabi, papers, tests, correspondence

with the faculty member, or other materials that were exchanged during the time the student was enrolled in the course. In consultation with the faculty member and the student, the department chair will attempt to arrive at a solution. If the consultation does not resolve the appeal, the student may request a formal review by the Department Grade Appeals Committee (DGAC).

Step 2 Appeal to the Department Grade Appeals Committee

Timeline: The appeal to the Department Grade Appeals Committee must be filed within ten weeks after the appeal was initiated.

Department Grade Appeals Committee: The Department Grade Appeals Committee is established by procedures approved by the faculty in the department. The policies below must be followed in selecting the voting members of the committee:

- At a minimum, three faculty members who hold tenured or tenure-track positions in the program should serve on the DGAC; one of them should be designated as the chair of the DGAC. If a sufficient number of faculty are not available in the program, the program chair may appoint members from other programs who hold tenured or tenure-track positions.
- For schools and departments with graduate programs, at least one of the faculty members should hold a regular appointment as a member of the graduate faculty.
- Department chairs should exempt themselves from the DGAC because of the role the department chair serves in Step 1 of the appeal process.
- A faculty member whose grade is being appealed is prohibited from serving on the DGAC; therefore, a process for appointing a replacement to the DGAC should be established.
- For undergraduate appeals, one voting undergraduate student selected collaboratively by the Student Vice President for Academic Affairs and by the department chair shall serve on the DGAC; the Student Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee will serve in an advisory (non-voting) capacity to the DGAC.
- For graduate student appeals, one voting graduate student selected collaboratively by the Student Dean of the Graduate School and by the department chair or graduate coordinator shall serve on the DGAC; the Student Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee will serve in an advisory (non-voting) capacity to the DGAC.

Procedure: The student initiates this step in the appeal process by requesting a formal review by the DGAC and submitting to the department chair appeal documents, including the basis for the appeal and supporting documentation. The department chair will provide copies of these materials to the DGAC and the student advisor. In the case of graduate student appeals, the department chair may assign the procedure of collecting and distributing appeal materials to the graduate coordinator.

Fact Finding Session: Following sufficient time to review the documents, the DGAC and student advisor will hold a fact-finding session with the student and faculty member to verify the basis for the appeal. This session shall not be open to the public. The student, the faculty member, and the DGAC have the right to request additional information or to invite other persons to present evidence related to the basis for the appeal. Additional participants must be restricted to a reasonable number; a list of their names must be included with the meeting notification.

Recommendations: Upon conclusion of the fact-finding session, the DGAC and student advisor will deliberate privately to arrive at one of the recommendations listed below:

- The basis for the appeal is not supported; therefore, the grade should not be changed.
- The basis for the appeal is supported; therefore, the grade should be changed.

The faculty member and the student seeking the appeal are excluded from this meeting. The chair of the DGAC shall notify the student and faculty member of the committee's recommendation in writing (email excluded). If the DGAC's recommendations are unsuccessful in resolving the appeal, the student may initiate the final step in the appeal process by appealing to the appropriate dean.

Step 3 Final Appeal to the Dean of the College, Dean of the Graduate School, or Dean of the School of Continuing Education

Timeline: The written appeal (email excluded) to the dean must be filed within two weeks of the student's receipt of the recommendation of the Department Grade Appeals Committee.

Procedures: Undergraduate appeals are forwarded to the appropriate Academic Dean, graduate appeals are forwarded to the Graduate Dean, and appeals from students majoring in the Board of Trustees Program are forwarded to the Dean of the School of Continuing Education. To initiate the final step in the appeal process, the student must send a written request (email excluded) to the appropriate dean citing the basis for continuing the appeal and requesting that the dean review the DGAC's recommendations and render the final decision. A copy of this letter will be sent to the DGAC chair, who will forward all materials associated with the appeal, including statements, summaries, and DGAC minutes, to the appropriate dean. The dean shall consult with the DGAC chair and graduate coordinator in the case of graduate appeals, and anyone else deemed appropriate, and make a final recommendation regarding the basis for the appeal. The dean shall notify the student of the final recommendation in writing and forward copies of the letter to the faculty member, department chair, graduate coordinator if appropriate, and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The dean's recommendation concludes the appeal process.

Approved:
Council on Graduate Studies
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Approved:
Council on Academic Affairs
April 22, 2004

Approved:
President
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Monitor: Vice President for Academic Affairs