

Internal Governing Policies

#45 - Grade Appeals

Approved: March 28, 2007

Monitor: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Introduction

Eastern Illinois University faculty members are responsible for assigning appropriate grades. The University will not review the judgment of a faculty member in assessing the quality of students' work. If, however, a student believes that a faculty member improperly assigned a semester grade due to one or more of the Grounds for Appeal, as described below, the student may appeal the grade by following the procedures described in this policy. Students are responsible for reading the Grade Appeal Policy and for complying with all procedures and meeting the deadlines established in the policy. All grade appeals are handled individually.

Grounds for Grade Appeal

The procedures described in this policy are available only for appeal of a semester or term grade based on one or more of the following reasons:

1. A mathematical error in calculation of the grade or clerical error in recording of the grade that remains uncorrected;
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 faculty member's previously announced standards.

Informal Conference with Faculty Member

Before initiating a formal grade appeal, a student who believe that a semester or term grade was improperly assigned must confer promptly with the faculty member who assigned the grade. If the conference does not result in a mutually agreeable resolution, the student may request formal review of the grade as described below.

If the faculty member who assigned the grade is not available - because of sabbatical, resignation, reassignment or other reason - the student should contact the chair of the department in which the course was offered. ([Dean/Department Chair Contact List](#)) If the chair determines the faculty member

is not available for informal conference, the chair will authorize the student to proceed with the formal grade appeal.

Formal Grade Appeal

Grade Appeal Request

A student may request a grade appeal only by completing all of the following steps:

1. Complete a *Grade Appeal Request* using [Form 1](#) available at the Grade Appeal web site ([Grade Appeal at EIU](#))
2. Make copies of any relevant support materials; and
3. Submit hard copies (paper documents) of the completed *Grade Appeal Request* and support materials to the chair of the department in which the course was offered. ([Dean/Department Chair Contact List](#))

Deadline for *Grade Appeal Request*: The *Grade Appeal Request* and support materials must be received by the department chair no later than the following:

- For a course taken in the fall semester, the *Grade Appeal Request* must be received no later than the Midterm Day of the following spring term.
- For a course taken in the spring semester or summer term, the *Grade Appeal Request* must be received no later than the Midterm Day of the following fall term.

Department Chair Review

Purposes

- To serve as the initial, administrative contact in the formal grade appeal process; and
- To facilitate a resolution of the grade appeal issue that is mutually agreeable to the faculty member and student including changing the grade.

Procedures

Upon timely receipt of the *Grade Appeal Request*, the department chair will:

1. Verify that the student and faculty member completed the required informal conference. If the informal conference has not occurred, the chair will postpone any further action until that conference is completed or until the chair determines that the faculty member is not available for an informal conference.
2. Provide written acknowledgment of the *Grade Appeal Request* to the student and written notification of the *Grade Appeal Request* to the faculty member.
3. Provide a copy of this ***Grade Appeals policy*** to the student and faculty member and address any questions raised by them.
4. Schedule a Chair Review Meeting with the student and faculty member at a mutually convenient time. If the faculty member is unavailable for a meeting, the department chair will request that

the faculty member provide documentation of the basis of the grade and may appoint another faculty member in the department to serve as a representative for the faculty member who assigned the grade.

5. Conduct the Chair Review Meeting providing an opportunity for both parties to explain their positions orally and/or through written documents.
6. Prepare a written summary of the meeting that, at a minimum, includes the following:
 - a. a statement of whether any of the grounds for an appeal were valid;
 - b. a statement of whether the grading issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the student and faculty member; and
 - c. a statement of whether the student and faculty member agreed to a change of grade. The chair may include in the written summary other information that s/he deems relevant.
7. Notify, within five working days after the Chair Review Meeting, the student and faculty member that the summary of the Chair Review Meeting is available at the department office and arrange for signing and distribution of the summary and [Form 2 Receipt of the Summary of the Chair Review Meeting](#) in accordance with the directions on that form.

Request for Review by the College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC)

If no mutually agreeable decision has been reached, the student may request review by the College Grade Appeal Committee, only by signing and submitting a copy of [Form 2, Part B](#) to the dean of the appropriate college or school. Appeals for undergraduate students are submitted to the dean of the college in which the course was offered. Appeals for graduate students are submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. Appeals for courses offered through the BGS (bachelor's in general studies) program are submitted to the Dean of the School of Continuing Education. [\(Dean/Department Chair Contact List\)](#)

Deadline for Request Review by the College Grade Appeal Committee. The student must provide *Form 2, Part B Request for Review by College Grade Appeal Committee* to the dean of the appropriate college or school no later than five (5) working days after the student received *Form 2*. If, within five (5) working days after receipt of *Form 2*, the student does not request review by the College Grade Appeal Committee, formal review of the grade will terminate.

College Grade Appeal Committee Review

Purposes

- To provide a fair and unbiased fact-finding meeting;
- To determine whether the grounds for the grade appeal are supported by facts;
- To determine whether the student's grade should be changed and, if so, to request change of grade by the dean; and

- To communicate the results of the review to the parties.

Procedures

Upon timely receipt of the *Request for Review by the College Grade Appeal Committee*, the following procedures will be used:

1. The dean will notify the chair of the College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) of the request for review.
2. The CGAC chair will:
 - a. Notify the student, the faculty member, and the department chair that the CGAC has received the request.
 - b. Secure copies of all grade appeal documents from the department chair and distribute copies of the documents to the CGAC members.
 - c. Schedule a CGAC Fact Finding Meeting at a time when both the student and faculty member are able to attend. The Fact Finding Meeting will occur no earlier than five (5) working days after the CGAC chair distributes copies of the documents to the CGAC members.
 - d. Notify the student and faculty member in writing of the date, time and place of the Fact Finding Meeting.
 - e. Notify the student and faculty member in writing that they may bring additional persons who may provide relevant information to the meeting but only if the name(s) of the person(s) and their relationship to the grade dispute is provided to the CGAC chair at least 48 hours prior to the Fact Finding Meeting. (Email notification to the student and faculty member will satisfy the writing requirement.)
3. The CGAC will conduct a Fact Finding Meeting at which both the student and the faculty member have the opportunity to present relevant information through oral statements and/or written documents.
 - a. The Fact Finding Meeting shall not be open to the public.
 - b. Individuals other than the student or faculty member will be allowed to present relevant information only if adequate notice was received as provided in 2.e., above.
 - c. At the Fact Finding Meeting, the CGAC may request additional relevant materials from the student or faculty member.
 - d. Following the Fact Finding Meeting, the CGAC chair will convene a meeting or meetings as needed with the members of the CGAC and the committee will determine

whether the grounds for the grade appeal were supported by evidence presented at the Fact Finding meeting.

4. The CGAC chair will complete [*Form 3 Summary of Fact Finding*](#) in accordance with the CGAC's determination.
5. The CGAC chair will notify the student and faculty member within ten (10) working days of the final meeting of the CGAC that *Form 3 Summary of Fact Finding* and *Form 4 Receipt for the Summary of Fact Finding* are available at the Dean's office and will arrange for signing and distribution in accordance with the directions on *Form 4*. If either party fails to acknowledge receipt of the Summary, the CGAC chair will so note on the form.

Request for Review by the Dean

The student or faculty member may request Review by the Dean only by signing and submitting [*Part B of Form 4 Request for Review by the Dean*](#) to the dean of the appropriate college or school. Reviews for undergraduate students are completed by the dean of the college in which the course was offered. Reviews for graduate students are completed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Reviews for courses offered through the BGS (bachelor's in general studies) program are completed by the Dean of the School of Continuing Education. [\(Dean/Department Chair Contact List\)](#)

Deadline for Request for Review by the Dean. The student or faculty member must provide *Form 4, Part B* to the dean of the appropriate college or school no later than five (5) working days after receiving the *Summary of Fact Finding* and *Form 4*. If, within five (5) working days after receipt of *Form 4*, neither the student nor the faculty member submits the *Request for Review by the Dean*, formal review of the grade terminates and the decision of the CGAC becomes final.

Review by the Dean

Purpose

- To determine whether the procedures used by the CGAC were in compliance with this **Grade Appeal Policy**.

Procedures

Upon receipt of *Form 4, Part B*, the dean will:

1. Secure copies of all grade appeal documents from the CGAC Chair.
2. Review those documents and determine whether the procedures used by the CGAC were in compliance with this **Grade Appeal Policy**.
3. Notify the student, the faculty member, and the CGAC Chair of his/her determination no later than ten (10) working days after receipt of *Form 4, Part B*. The dean's determination is limited to either:
 - The CGAC correctly followed procedures and the decision of the CGAC will be implemented; or

- The CGAC failed to correctly follow procedures and the CGAC must repeat its review using the correct procedures.

If the college dean concludes that the GCAC correctly followed procedures, the grade appeal process ends and the decision of the CGAC becomes final.

Reporting Requirements

Within thirty (30) days after the end of each fall semester and the end of each spring semester, each dean will submit a Summary Report of Grade Appeals. Undergraduate appeals will be forwarded to the Council on Academic Affairs and graduate appeals will be forwarded to the Council on Graduate Studies. The Summary Report of Grade Appeals will include the following information on each grade appeal for which the CGAC conducted a Fact Finding Meeting:

1. The date of the Grade Appeal Request;
2. The grounds for the grade appeal; and
3. The disposition of the grade appeal.

The Summary Report of Grade Appeals will not identify the student or faculty member by name and will not include the course number or name.

Procedures for Selecting Faculty and Student Representatives to the College Grade Appeal Committees

Committee Composition

Each academic college will have a College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) that will conduct reviews for undergraduate and graduate appeals. Appeals for courses in the BGS (bachelor's in general studies) program will be conducted by the College of Education and Professional Studies Grade Appeal Committee. Each committee will include four faculty members with vote, two faculty members who serve as substitutes without vote unless called to replace a voting member, one undergraduate student member with vote for undergraduate appeals and one graduate student member with vote for graduate appeals. Selection to the College Grade Appeal Committees is outlined below.

Faculty Member Selection

Six faculty members from the academic college who are elected or appointed according to procedures established by the college faculty will comprise the cohort of faculty who serve on the committee.

- Faculty members serve three-year terms so that each cohort includes two faculty members who are in their third term, two in their second term and two who are in their first term.
- Four of the six faculty members serve as voting members of the committee. These include the two in the third term and two in the second term. While all six members of the CGAC are required to attend meetings and participate in discussion of the appeal, only the four faculty members in their second and third terms may vote on the appeal. Faculty members in their first term only serve as voting members of the committee if the CGAC chair appoints that member as a substitute to replace a voting member.

- At least one member of every pair of faculty elected to the committee must hold a graduate faculty appointment, so that half of the members are members of the graduate faculty.
- Department chairs may not serve on a College Grade Appeal Committee because of the role that the department chair already serves in the process.

Student Member Selection

For undergraduate appeals, one voting undergraduate student selected from one of the academic programs in the college shall serve on the committee. The voting member will be selected collaboratively by the Student Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

For graduate appeals, one voting graduate student selected from one of the graduate programs in the college shall serve on the committee. The voting member will be selected collaboratively by the Student Dean of the Graduate School and by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Terms of Service

The term of service is the fiscal year that begins on July 1 and concludes on June 30 each year. Faculty members serve three terms. Student members serve one term.

Committee Orientation

Prior to hearing any appeals in the new fiscal year, the new CGAC chair will convene the new committee members to provide an orientation for all members. The orientation will include a comprehensive review of the policy, procedures, and forms used to administer the Grade Appeal Policy.

Chair Selection

The CGAC vice chair will become the new CGAC chair with each new fiscal year. Prior to hearing any appeals in the new fiscal year, the new GCAC chair (former CGAC vice chair) will convene an initial meeting to elect a new CGAC vice chair from among the two faculty members who enter their second year of service. The new CGAC vice chair will become the new CGAC chair during the third year of service.

CGAC Chair Responsibilities

- **Faculty Member Substitutes:** The CGAC chair may name a substitute for a voting faculty member for a specific grade appeal if a faculty member is not able to participate due to illness, leave, or conflict of interest. If the CGAC chair determines that a faculty member's illness or leave prevents the committee from fulfilling its charge in a timely way, the CGAC chair may appoint a non-voting first year faculty member to serve as a substitute for a specified appeal. The CGAC chair may also name a substitute for a voting faculty member if the chair determines that there is a conflict of interest with the appeal. A conflict of interest occurs when the appeal involves the CGAC faculty member in any way. The CGAC chair will request a substitute faculty member from the first year faculty serving the cohort unless the substitute faculty member is directly involved in the grade appeal. When a substitute is named for a voting member, that voting member will not attend or participate in the appeal in any way.

- **Student Member Substitutes:** The CGAC chair may name a substitute for a voting student member for a specific grade appeal if the student member is not able to participate due to illness, academic assignments away from campus, or conflicts of interest. The CGAC chair will select a substitute student member in collaboration with the appropriate student leader. When a substitute student member is named for a voting student member, that voting student member will not attend or participate in the appeal in any way unless the student member is directly involved in the grade appeal.
- **Chair substitutes:** If the chair is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities for a specific grade appeal due to illness, leave, or conflict of interest, the chair will request that the CGAC vice chair will assume the CGAC chair's responsibilities for the specific appeal. When a vice chair substitutes for the chair, the chair will not attend or participate in the appeal in any way unless the chair is directly involved in the grade appeal.
- **Annual Reports:** At the end of each fall and spring term the CGAC chair will complete a report for the dean that provides a confidential summary of each appeal for the specified term and its outcome or its status at the time of the report. Within thirty (30) days after the end of each fall semester and the end of each spring semester, each dean will submit a Summary Report of Grade Appeals for the appropriate council.

CGS Approval: March 6, 2007

CAA Approval: March 8, 2007