



Academic Appeal Guide

Any student considering an appeal on a final course grade should understand that each faculty member has the academic freedom and responsibility to determine grades according to any method chosen by the faculty member, which is listed in the official course syllabi, that is professionally acceptable, communicated to everyone in the class, and applied to all students equally. A grade appeal is a request to change a course grade based on arithmetic or clerical error, arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment, or personal malice. Generally, students who wish to appeal a course grade should first attempt to resolve the issue with their instructor. The student may also consult the chair of the academic department that offers the class. Failing a satisfactory resolution, the student may appeal the grade.

For a grade change to be considered, it must be based upon one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground or grounds cited influenced the grade assignment to the student's disadvantage:

- Arithmetic or clerical error
- Arbitrariness, possibly including discrimination or harassment based on the race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation

Informal Meeting with Faculty Member

Before initiating a formal grade appeal, a student who believes that a semester grade was improperly assigned must confer promptly with the faculty member who assigned the grade. If the meeting 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. If the chair determines the faculty member is not available for informal meeting, the chair will authorize the student to proceed with the formal grade appeal.

How to Submit an Appeal

Students should begin by composing a statement explaining the grounds for the appeal. Submit the statement, the grade appeal form, and any and all relevant documentary support to the Administrative Office. Examples of materials that should be included are: the course syllabus, all graded work returned to the student, any communication with the instructor or others related to the case, timeline of the events relevant to the appeal, and any other documentation supporting the appeal.

Deadline for an Appeal

The Grade Appeal Request and support materials must be received by the department chair within 30 days of the issuance of the grade in dispute. Grades not appealed by that time become permanent.

What is the Review Process?

Your grade appeal will be referred to the Department Chair. If the Department Chair does not find sufficient grounds to require a further review, students will be so notified by email.

If the Department Chair does find sufficient reason to require further review, it will refer the student's grade appeal and all materials to the Dean of Academic Affairs or a faculty member (if the course is given by the Dean) from within the department for a review.

Please note: Grade appeal process may take several months. Students must dispute the grade within 30 days of the issuance of the grade in dispute.

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 all documentations and requests by the student were submitted within 30 days of receiving the final course grade. Any applications surpassing this time will automatically be declined.
2. Verify that the student and faculty member completed the required informal meeting. If the informal meeting has not occurred, the chair will postpone any further action until that meeting is completed or until the chair determines that the faculty member is not available for an informal meeting.
3. Provide written acknowledgment of the Grade Appeal Request to the student and written notification of the Grade Appeal Request to the faculty member.
4. Provide a copy of this Grade Appeal Policy to the student and faculty member and address any questions raised by them.
5. 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.
6. Conduct the Chair Review Meeting providing an opportunity for both parties to explain their positions orally and/or through written documents. An administrative officer will be present to transcribe the meeting.
7. Prepare a written summary of the meeting that, at a minimum, includes the following:
 - a statement of whether any of the grounds for an appeal were valid,
 - a statement of whether the grading issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the student and faculty member; and
 - 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.

8. 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 report.

Request to Review by The Dean of Academic Affairs

Failing to resolve the issue with the Department Chair, the student shall provide a written appeal request to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The written statement shall limit itself to a factual description of evidence pertaining to the valid ground for the appeal, documentation of all attempts to reach resolution, and the student's desired outcome. This initiates the last stage of the grade appeal process.

Upon receipt of the written appeal request, the dean will convene and chair meetings of the Grade Appeals Committee, which consists of faculty members appointed by the dean. The committee will make recommendations to the dean following the hearing proceedings.

If the dean affirms the instructor's decision, he/she will notify the faculty member, student, and chair, in writing. The decision made by the dean is a final institutional decision and may not be appealed further.

If the dean affirms the student's appeal, he/she shall prescribe the method by which the student will be reevaluated and communicate that to the faculty member, student, and chair in writing. The grade resulting from the reevaluation is a final institute decision and may not be appealed further.