

Grade Appeal

The awarding of grades for work done in courses is the domain of the faculty.

Students have a right to a grade review to correct an erroneous grade and to a grade appeal as a remedy for an unfair grade in a course. The term appeal used herein refers to any of the following:

1. the assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than academic or behavioral performance in the course;
2. the assignment of a grade to a particular student by using more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in that course;
3. the assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced or written standards.

Grades found to be in error may be changed by the instructor or, if the instructor is unavailable, the department chair, upon discovery and confirmation of the error. Judgments of unfair grading, however, can only be made by a grade appeal committee, usually within the same discipline.

During the grade appeal process, all procedures and meetings, including names and related information, will be confidential unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties involved.

To request a grade change or appeal, this procedure is to be followed as expediently as reasonably possible, using the following guidelines.

Students have a right to a grade review to correct an erroneous grade and to a grade appeal as a remedy for an unfair grade in a course. The term appeal used herein refers to any of the following:

1. The student contacts the instructor by midterm of the following semester (excluding summers) and requests a review and an accounting of how the grade was determined. If the student is satisfied with the response, the procedure ends. (If the student does not wish to or is unable to contact the instructor, he or she may begin with step 2, by midterm of the following semester [excluding summers].)
2. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response, he or she then contacts the department chair or designee (e.g., program director). The department chair will proceed to review the grade by gathering all relevant information from the student and the instructor.
 - a. If the department chair determines that an error has occurred, and the instructor is in agreement, the student's grade will be changed accordingly.
 - b. If the instructor, upon review, reconsiders the grade and believes a different grade is more suitable, he or she may change the grade accordingly.
 - c. If the review does not result in a grade change, and if the student accepts the grade, no change is made.
 - d. If the review does not result in a grade change, and the student still wishes to appeal the grade, the department chair will arrange for a grade appeal.
 - e. A student utilizing the grade appeal process is precluded from using the Student Grievance hearing process for the same occurrence.
3. A grade appeal will involve three impartial faculty members, selected by the department chair, from the discipline or a closely related discipline who are knowledgeable about the requirements of the course and the criteria for evaluating student performance. One student selected by student government who has earned a minimum of fifteen (15) hours with at least a 3.0 GPA will also serve on the committee as a voting member. The appeal faculty and student government representative will independently and separately consider all relevant information from the student and the instructor, the student work in the course, and all the other performance requirements (attendance, timeliness of work, etc.) in determining whether the student's grade is in line with normal course, discipline, departmental, college, and professional guidelines and standards.
 - a. If the appeal committee finds, by simple majority vote, that the grade is fair and correct and should not be changed, the appeal for a grade change will be denied.
 - b. If the appeal committee finds, by simple majority vote, that the grade is not fair or correct and should be changed, its decision will be forwarded to the department chair, who will change the grade.
 - c. If the review does not result in a grade change, and if the student accepts the grade, no change is made.
 - d. In the case of a tie vote among the appeal committee members, the department chair will vote to break the tie.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the result of the appeal, he or she may petition the Student Affairs Committee.
 - a. The committee may review the process followed by the department and determine whether it has been carried out completely and fairly, in accordance with due process. If not, the case will be remanded to the department for reconsideration following appropriate guidelines. If all procedures have been followed appropriately and no errors detected, the appeal process is complete and the grade will remain the same as originally issued.
 - b. The committee may review the case to determine if the instructor's requirements and demands are compatible with college policies (attendance, etc.). If not, the case will be remanded to the department for reconsideration with recommended changes in course requirements and reconsideration of the grade appeal. If there are no policy violations, the appeal process is complete and the grade will remain the same as originally issued.
 - c. No reprisal shall be taken by the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, or staff against any student or faculty because of participation in a grade appeal. (*Approved by PCA 10/16/97*)