

Grade Appeal Procedure

Student grade appeals may be expected to occur in a large and complex institution. The prevailing philosophy of the institution is that such appeals be handled informally if possible. Only after full and comprehensive attempts made by students and faculty to resolve grade appeals have failed should a formal procedure be initiated.

There is no appeal procedure if six months of calendar time have elapsed; therefore, the grade appeal procedure must be initiated by the student within six months from the time the grade is received. There are two procedures for appealing a final grade. The first applies if the appeal is within the first eight weeks of the semester immediately following the one for which the grade was received. The second final grade appeal procedure applies if the appeal is after the first eight weeks of the succeeding term.

A. Procedure for appealing a final grade during the first eight weeks of the following semester:

A student may appeal the final grade received for a course by following the procedures outlined here. Grades received during the academic term for performance, tests, or other activities are private and confidential material between the student and the instructor and are not intended to be covered by the procedures. Daily grades may be considered only as evidence in the formal part of the appeal process, viewed solely on the basis of "a need to know," and handled in such manner so as to continue confidentiality.

1. The student should consult with the instructor promptly after receiving a final grade which he or she feels is unwarranted. If the appeal is not satisfied at this level, the Dean of the Division should meet with either or both in an informal attempt to reach closure. The burden of proof in the grade appeal lies with the student. If the appeal is resolved at this point, a "memorandum of record" should be prepared by the Dean of the Division and be maintained on file. The memorandum will serve as the institution's record that the disagreement was resolved informally.
2. If closure is not reached by using the informal approach, the student may file a formal grade appeal with the appropriate Dean of the Division. This writing must be dated and filed with the appropriate person prior to the midpoint of the succeeding semester. The formal grade appeal must state the reasons for the request, include the dates involved, name the instructor who assigned the grade, and include the previous attempts at resolving the situation informally. The burden of proof in the grade appeal lies with the student.
3. Prompted by the Dean of the Division, a divisional grade appeal committee is limited to two calendar weeks from the date of the appeal to convene, gather evidence, and conduct a hearing. Appropriate evidence in support of the appeal must be provided by the student. However, the committee may request the student's materials from the instructor in cases where the instructor possesses the evidence. Grade and attendance records may be requested of the instructor. However, neither tangential issues nor individual personalities will be considered by the committee. To maintain the confidentiality of the hearing, only committee members, the instructor, and the student may be present at the proceedings.

Each division shall maintain a divisional grade appeal committee. Divisions may elect members or members may be appointed by the Dean of the Division. The divisional grade appeal committee should contain no fewer than three full-time faculty members. Members should rotate off the committee on a yearly basis. If a committee member is unable to serve due to involvement in the specific case being heard, the Academic Dean will appoint a substitute for that particular case. The chairperson of the Divisional Grade Appeal Committee will be elected by the membership and will have the following duties: arrange times and places for the committee meetings and hearings; inform in writing all parties of the committee's activities; ensure that proper records are prepared, maintained, and safeguarded; and chair all meetings and hearings.

The Chair of the committee shall ensure that hearings are reasonable and fair; that only matters properly before the committee are discussed; that meetings and hearings are conducted in a professional atmosphere; and that every attempt is made to protect the integrity of the parties involved.

Committee members must be present at all hearings in order to vote following deliberations. (If, in the committee's opinion, special experience or expertise is necessary for sufficient information to be available or if the appeal is of such sensitivity that the committee should not hear the appeal, the Chairperson shall so advise the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee. The Dean will then appoint a special appeals committee of institution-wide membership to hear the specific case.)

4. Following the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will deliberate privately as appropriate and prepare a written recommendation for the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee to be submitted not later than seven calendar days after the date of the hearing. Their recommendation will be either to retain the grade or to alter it. If the recommendation is to alter, the specific grade after alteration will be indicated. The recommendation should include a brief summary of the facts of the hearing and the reasons for the committee's decision. The deliberations and recommendation of the committee are confidential. The committee may meet with the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee at the Vice President's discretion to discuss actions, deliberations, and recommendations.
 5. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee will provide a statement of the decision to the student within one calendar week following the committee's recommendation. Copies of the statement of decision will be provided to the appeal committee, the Division Chairperson, and the faculty member involved. The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee is final.
- B. Procedure for appealing a final grade after the first eight weeks of the following semester:

Within six months from the time the student received the grade being appealed, the student must initiate the process with the instructor of the course for which the grade was received. This appeal process is strictly informal in nature and must remain a discussion between the student and the instructor of the course. The instructor's decision is final. There is no appeal procedure for final grades if six months of calendar time has elapsed.