



GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

If a student has reason to believe that a grade he/she received is incorrect, the student should first try to resolve the issue with the faculty member. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, the student should attempt to resolve the matter by consultation with the appropriate program coordinator/program director and the faculty member. If no satisfactory resolution has been reached through this consultation and the student still believes that he/she has a basis for a complaint, the student shall then initiate the formal grade appeal procedure.

The **only grounds** for a student grade appeal shall be as follows:

1. The grade is allegedly based on an error in calculation.
2. The grade assigned allegedly did not follow the grading criteria as stated in the course syllabus.

It is the responsibility of the student to prove that the grade is incorrect or unjustified. Please note an appeal **cannot** be based on “personal dislike of the instructor”, “dislike of the instructor’s teaching style including speaking too fast or too slow”, or “dislike of or disagreement with the assignments”, among other things not based on Items #1 and #2 above.

Any appeal for a change of grade, other than a final grade, must be initiated in the semester during which the student is enrolled in the course. Appeal of a final grade for the semester must be made prior to the end of the fourth week of the subsequent semester, excluding spring and summer sessions. There will be no formal grade appeals during the week of final exams or during semester breaks.

LEVEL ONE APPEAL

Student must contact the instructor of the course requesting a meeting to review the grade. The instructor is expected to review with the student all assignments, exams, papers, as well as grading rubrics, and the grading scale. The student is encouraged to bring whatever official class documents to the meeting with the instructor as support of their request for an appeal. Most grade appeals are resolved at this level between the instructor and student. If, however, the student does not agree with the instructor’s decision, he/she has the option to pursue the appeal to the next level.

LEVEL TWO APPEAL

The student must submit an appeal request to the faculty program coordinator (see below list) within ten (10) days following of the Level One decision rendered by the faculty member. The appeal request should include a cover letter stating clearly why the student believes the final grade rendered by the instructor is incorrect and supporting documentation. The coordinator will also ask the faculty member to submit their documentation. Please note grade appeals are not to be based on “personal differences or dislikes”, “dislike of teaching style or assignments”,

etc. The appeal must be substantively based on grade miscalculation or the grade did not follow the grading criteria outlines in the course syllabus.

The faculty program coordinator will attempt resolution by a review of these documents, and consultation with the student and faculty member. The coordinator will render his/her decision. If, however, the student does not agree with the coordinator's decision, he/she has the option to pursue the appeal to the Dean level.

LEVEL THREE APPEAL

The student and the faculty will be required to submit their documentation to the college-wide Grievance Committee comprised of faculty and student representatives, within ten (10) days following the Level Two decision rendered by the faculty program coordinator. The Dean of Academic Affairs will convene the Committee and have the chair of the committee serve as the dean's designee. The committee will review the written grade appeal and related materials.

The hearing will be closed to all but the parties concerned; however, the Committee (as well as the student and the faculty member) may request individuals who may testify as to the **specifics** of the alleged complaint. Such witnesses shall be limited to persons with actual knowledge of the specific incident under dispute. Also, the student and/or faculty member may request an additional person (**legal counsel/attorney not allowed**) to be present at the hearing for the purpose of advice and support. **Such support persons shall not participate in the proceedings, but are available only for consultation by the party that they are supporting.**

Meeting process:

1. The Committee shall consider the facts and circumstances of the grade appeal. Persons providing validation of the specifics of the appeal will only be present during their own period of testimony (for example, the student and the faculty member will not appear together, but separate before the committee).
2. The student shall present his/her case without interruption, including the presentation of factual evidence and the calling of persons providing validation of the specifics of the appeal.
3. The faculty member shall present his/her case without interruption, including the presentation of factual evidence and the calling of persons providing validation of the specifics of the appeal.
4. After both parties have presented their case, the student has the right to question the faculty member and/or his/her witnesses. Following this, the faculty member shall have the right to question the student and/or his/her witnesses.
5. Following the questioning period, members of the Grievance Committee shall have the right to direct questions to either party or their witnesses or request additional information.
6. Modifications to the questioning may be requested by the Committee to help in the facilitation of the understanding of the complaint.
7. When testimony is completed, the members of the Committee, shall enter into deliberations which will be conducted in private and shall remain confidential.
 - a. The Committee shall consider only evidence presented during the hearing when making its recommendation to the Dean of Academic Affairs or additional evidence requested by the Committee;
 - b. The Committee shall then reach a decision on the merits of the student's grade appeal within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the hearing;

- c. The recommendation of the Committee, whether to support or change the existing grade, shall be unanimous. If there is no unanimous recommendation, no action shall be taken. The vote on the recommendation shall be by secret ballot.
 - d. The recommendation to the Dean of Academic Affairs shall be to support or change the existing grade. The Committee can also provide any recommendations as needed to either the faculty member or student.
8. The Committee shall provide the Dean with a written recommendation on the grade appeal. The Dean will review the recommendation, along with all related material, and render a final decision. The Dean shall provide a letter on the final decision to all parties concerned within (5) business days of the conclusion of the hearing. The decision shall be implemented within five (5) business days of the conclusion of the hearing.