

Appeal of Course Grade

It is the responsibility and the prerogative of every faculty member to determine grades in those courses to which he or she is assigned. Except in accordance with stated university policies, no other individuals or group can make these decisions.

The only two bases on which a student can legitimately appeal a course grade and/or suspension from an academic program are:

1. The student has not been evaluated according to the same criteria as his or her classmates, OR
2. An error has been made in grading and/or posting.

The procedure for requesting a course grade change and/or retention in an academic program is as follows:

1. The student must consult with the appropriate instructor, unless the instructor is no longer on staff.
2. If this does not resolve the problem, the student should present a formal written appeal to the dean of the college in which the course was taught. This must be done no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the first day of the next long semester. In cases where the student was terminated from a program, the student should submit his or her petition for reinstatement to the dean of the college in which the program is located. The dean should immediately request a written response to the student's complaint from the faculty member.
3. Within ten working days from receipt of the appeal, the dean of the college should respond to the student in writing as to his or her disposition of this appeal.
4. Should the appeal not be disposed of by the dean of the college in a manner satisfactory to the appellant, the appeal may be presented to the university's Academic Appeals Committee. In such cases the following procedures should be followed:
 - A. The student should obtain from the Office of the Provost a REQUEST FOR HEARING form and a copy of this policy. The student should fill out the form carefully and submit it, along with all other information pertinent to the student's position, to the Provost. These materials will constitute the student's formal written appeal and will then be forwarded by the Provost to the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee.
 - B. Upon receipt of the appeal, the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee will at once distribute a copy to each member of the Academic Appeals Committee. Within five working days from receipt of the appeal, each committee member will inform the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee in writing whether or not he or she believes the appeal has established, on its face, at least one of the bases for appeal as noted above.
 - C. If a simple majority of committee members finds no basis for the appeal, a hearing before the Academic Appeals Committee shall be denied, and the chair of the committee will at once inform the Provost of this decision in writing. The Provost should then inform the student by letter that the appeal has been denied because it did not meet either of the stated bases for appeal.
 - D. If, however, a simple majority of the Academic Appeals Committee finds that the appeal appears to have a basis, then the chair will as soon as possible inform the student, the faculty member, and the dean of the college that a legitimate appeal has been filed and of specific procedures to be followed. The chair will also provide copies of the appeal to the faculty member and the dean of the college and by the same letter will inform the faculty member (or in certain situations noted as follows, the dean of the college) that he or she has ten working days in which to respond in writing to the Academic Appeals Committee.Both the student petitioning for a hearing by the Academic Appeals Committee and the

faculty member involved have the right to challenge one member of the committee. This is a peremptory challenge, and the chair will choose a replacement from among the alternate members of the committee. The initial correspondence between the chair of the committee and the principals should specify this right and request prompt written response.

In cases where the appeal concerns the performance of a teaching assistant or part-time faculty member, the dean of the college or other full-time faculty member directly responsible will represent the university before the Academic Appeals Committee. A teaching assistant or part-time faculty member may appear before the Academic Appeals Committee. In cases where the faculty member responsible is not available, the dean of the college involved will represent the university.

- E. Upon receipt of the faculty member's written response, the chair will provide copies to all members of the Academic Appeals Committee and to the appellant and will schedule a meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee.
- F. The first meetings of the committee should be within ten working days from receipt of the faculty member's response. At the written request of the student, the committee may consider the case based on the student's written appeal without an appearance by the student before the committee.
- G. The number of meetings necessary to reach a decision will be dictated by each individual case. However, general guidelines are provided:
 - 1. Both parties involved reserve the right to bring information considered pertinent before the committee. This may include, but is not limited to written documents as well as orally presented information from designated individuals. Although these hearings are considered informal, reasonableness and fairness should prevail in this area.
 - 2. No representation of the student by legal counsel, parent, or other representative or of the faculty member by legal counsel or other representative except the dean of the college, where warranted, is entertained by the committee.
 - 3. Testimony from the parties involved should be taken independently, thereby avoiding any open confrontation which could be detrimental to the proceedings.
 - 4. In its deliberations, the committee should seek to focus only on the issue of the grade appeal or retention in the program in question.
 - 5. Likewise, the committee's final recommendation should deal only with these issues.
 - 6. Prior to the proceedings, copies of all written or recorded evidence to be considered must be made available to all parties involved (student, instructor, and dean of the college). Additionally, any party specifically mentioned in a written document will be provided access to that document or the portion thereof relating to that party.
- H. Once the committee has reached a decision, a letter communicating this decision should be delivered to the Provost within ten working days. In addition, a summary of the proceedings outlining all pertinent points and reasons for the decision should be attached as well as the original petition from the student and the faculty member's response. Any minority opinions from the committee should also be attached.
- I. If the committee has rendered a decision favoring the faculty member, the Provost should communicate this by letter to the appellant with a copy to the faculty member. If the decision rendered recommends a grade change, the Provost should write a letter to the faculty member with a copy to the dean of the college requesting the faculty member's intended action.

- J. Should the faculty member decline to change the grade, the Provost may, based on the Academic Appeals Committee's recommendation, change the grade by administrative action to the specific grade recommended by the committee. If there is an administrative grade change, the student's transcript will reflect this. In addition, on request from the Provost, the committee may reconsider its findings and recommendations. However, once the committee's decision has been accepted by the Provost along with the other documents specified above, the committee's work will be considered complete.