

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

The final responsibility for assigning grades rests with the faculty member teaching the course. This procedure provides a clear, fair, and impartial process for students to appeal a final grade based on specific, verifiable criteria. Requirements and specific expectations concerning the level and way in which requirements are to be met are specific to a given course; it is inappropriate to expect that evaluations of course work can be made by third parties.

Faculty members are expected to evaluate student performance based on the criteria and requirements outlined in course syllabi. All students are to be treated impartially and fairly in relation to those requirements. The primary goal of this policy is to resolve grade appeals at the lowest possible step and as quickly as possible.

Bases for an Appeal

A grade appeal must be based on one of the following three criteria. Disagreement with the strictness or difficulty of a course is not grounds for an appeal, provided the standards were applied equitably.

1. Alleged failure of a faculty member to assign the proper weight as stated in the course syllabus to various parts of the assessment elements that contribute to the final grade.
2. Allegations that a student received disadvantageous treatment compared to their peers. This unequal treatment is defined as a differential application of the course standards outlined in the syllabus.
3. Alleged violation of the Academic Rights for Students as stated in this catalog and the *Faculty Handbook*.

The burden of proof in grade appeals falls on the student. The student should be prepared to demonstrate a direct link between the circumstances of the awarding of their grade and one of the bases above. Additionally, the student should address their anticipated resolution,

An appeal cannot be based on a challenge to the difficulty of a course or on strictness of grading. Each faculty member is responsible for these standards, and, so long as they are applied equitably and fairly, their strict application is not a basis for an appeal.

At any point during the grade appeal process, attacks on an individual's character or person will not be tolerated. The process should remain civil, respectful, and reciprocal.

Process/Participant Definitions

SDASA: Senior Director of Academic Success and Advising

DPC: Department/Program Chair

AVPAA: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

ASC: Academic Standards Committee

DoF: Dean of the Faculty

Office of the Registrar

VPAA: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Class Days: Weekdays in the fall and spring semesters when classes are in session

1. Initial Steps Before a Formal Appeal

The initial focus is on direct communication to resolve the matter at the lowest level and as quickly as possible.

Step	Action Required	Details	Timeframe
Step 1: Overview of Process	The student meets in-person or virtually with the Senior Director of Academic Success and Advising (SDASA) who serves as the facilitator in the grade appeal process, ensuring that all parties are clear on the process.	The appropriateness of the potential appeal will be confirmed by the SDASA. An official form outlining the grade appeal process and timeline will be completed at this time by the SDASA and the student.	This meeting must take place within the first 10 class days of the following fall/spring semester.

Step 2: Conference	The student meets in-person or virtually with the faculty member who taught the course.	<p>The purpose of this conversation is to determine whether the matter can be settled between the student and the faculty member.</p> <p>If the faculty member is no longer employed, the student proceeds to Step 3, working with the DPC.</p>	This meeting must take place within 10 class days of the meeting with the SDASA (Step 1).
Step 3: Chair Review	If the matter is not resolved in Step 2, the student must communicate that in writing to the instructor followed by an in-person or virtual meeting with the department/ program chair (DPC).	<p>This is the final attempt at resolution before moving forward with the formal appeal.</p> <p>If the instructor is also the chair, the student meets in-person or virtually with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) instead.</p>	This meeting must take place within 10 class days of the meeting with the faculty member (Step 2).

2. Formal Appeal Process

If resolution is not reached after Step 3, the formal appeal process begins.

Step	Action Required	Details	Timeframe
Step 4: Intent to Appeal	The student meets again with the SDASA to begin the formal appeal process.	Should the student choose to continue the process, they will sign a statement indicating that intent on the Grade Appeal Form.	This step must be completed within 10 class days of the meeting with the DPC (Step 3).
Step 5: Written Submissions	<p>A. The student provides a written statement outlining the basis for the appeal, which is then shared with the faculty member.</p> <p>B. The SDASA will direct the faculty member to provide a written response to the student's written statement.</p>	<p>This statement must refrain from including information that is not directly related to the three grade appeal bases noted above.</p> <p>Attacks on the faculty member's character or personal qualities will not be tolerated. In such cases, the student will be advised by the SDASA to redact these statements. Should the student refuse to do so, the statements will be redacted by the SDASA in consultation with the Registrar.</p> <p>Attacks on the student's character or personal qualities will not be tolerated. In such cases, the faculty member will be advised by the SDASA to redact these statements. Should the faculty member refuse to do so, the SDASA, in consultation with the</p>	<p>This statement must be submitted within 5 class days of the meeting with the SDASA (Step 4). The faculty member's response must be submitted within 5 class days of receipt of the student's statement. A copy of the faculty member's response will be shared with the student immediately.</p> <p>Should the faculty member elect not to respond to the student's statement, the process will move to Step 9.</p>

	C. The student may elect to provide a reply to the faculty member's response.	Dean of the Faculty (DoF), will redact the statements. If the student elects not to provide a reply, the process moves to the next step.	The reply must be received within 5 class days and is shared immediately with the faculty member.
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3. Academic Standards Committee

The membership of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) includes four faculty representatives, the Senior Director of Academic Success and Advising (SDASA), and the Registrar.

Step	Action Required	Details	Timeframe
Step 6: Committee Deliberation	The student appeal, faculty and student responses, and other supporting documentation will be forwarded to the AcademicASC). The ASC is charged with evaluating all of the submitted information and the evidence presented.	Meetings of the ASC are held in closed session in as timely a manner as possible. Neither the student or the faculty member participate in these meetings. Examples of supporting documentation may include copies of emails, texts, course assignments, grading rubrics, or any other factual information.	All of the appeal materials must be forwarded to the ASC within 5 class days via the SDASA. The ASC must meet within 5 class days of receipt of the materials.
Step 7: Committee Findings	A. Should the ASC conclude that there are not sufficient grounds for a student's claim of prejudicial or unfair treatment, this decision will be reported to the student and to the faculty member in writing. B. Should the Committee determine that there is a basis for the appeal, this decision will be reported in writing by the SDASA to the AVPAA.	The matter is then closed. The Committee's decision is final with no further appeal options.	Within 2 class days after the decision is rendered. Within 2 class days after the decision is rendered.

<p>Step 8: Decision Outcome</p>	<p>In cases where the Committee determines that there is a basis for the appeal, the AVPAA is then responsible for discussing the findings and recommendation of the ASC with the DPC and the faculty member involved.</p> <p>A. Should the faculty member accept the decision of the ASC, the grade change will be reported by the faculty member to the Office of the Registrar on a Change of Grade Form. B.</p> <p>B. In cases where a faculty member refuses to accept the decision of the ASC, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) may authorize that the grade in the course be changed to a "CR" or a "W".</p>	<p>The DPC and the faculty member will then consult to determine whether or not the faculty member accepts the decision of the ASC.</p> <p>The grade change will be communicated to the student by the AVPAA in writing.</p> <p>This change will be reported to the student and the Office of the Registrar by the AVPAA in writing.</p>	<p>Within 5 class days after the decision is rendered.</p> <p>Within 2 class days of the meeting with the AVPAA and the DPC.</p> <p>Within 5 class days of the meeting with the AVPAA and the DPC.</p>
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