

13.99.99.H0.01

Student Grade Appeals

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Procedure Statement

This procedure provides guidance for the discussion and resolution of grade disputes. Students may not use this process to appeal grades for individual assignments, academic misconduct or illegal discrimination.

Reason for Procedure

This procedure is intended to provide consistency in the student grade appeal process.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Faculty are responsible for outlining the objectives and setting standards for each course and for making clear the means of evaluation for purposes of grading students. Students are responsible for participating in and out of class, for learning the content of any course of study, and for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
- 1.2 While faculty should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression, student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis and not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
- 1.3 Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or arbitrary academic evaluation. A student who believes that his/her final grade reflects academic evaluation, which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in the class syllabus, may appeal the grade given for the course.
- 1.4 This procedure does not cover grievances related to illegal discrimination (see University Rule 08.01.01.H1, *Civil Rights Compliance*) or grade

disputes that may be affected by academic misconduct or dishonesty.

- 1.5 The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal and a preponderance of the information standard of proof will be used. A preponderance of the information is defined as a standard of proof that indicates that the information provided leads the hearing body to the conclusion that “more likely than not” a violation did or did not occur.
- 1.6 Each college will be responsible for maintaining records of all grade appeals, including collecting and storing files associated with individual appeals. These records must be retained for a period consistent with the Texas A&M System Records Retention Schedule.
- 1.7 A student appealing a final grade must demonstrate through documentation (course syllabus, graded homework, etc.) that the instructor
 - 1.7.1 assessed on a basis other than performance;
 - 1.7.2 used standards different from those applied to other students in the same course section; or
 - 1.7.3 made a substantial, unreasonable, and/or unannounced departure from previously articulated standards on the syllabus.

2. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 2.1 Students who believe their final grade to be unfair must first discuss the matter with the instructor. The student must contact the instructor within ten (10) business days following the beginning of the next regular semester, following the semester in which the disputed grade was earned. If the next semester is a summer term and the instructor is not available, the student may wait and contact the instructor within ten (ten) business days following the beginning of the fall semester. An instructor should make every effort to accommodate the student’s schedule if a grade appeal meeting is requested.
- 2.2 If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student-instructor level, within ten (10) business days, the student should then discuss the complaint with the instructor’s coordinator/department head. The coordinator/department head will subsequently meet, if necessary, with the instructor in an attempt to resolve the issue. If successful, or not, the coordinator/department head will issue a written statement of the findings to the student, instructor and Associate Dean/Dean.
- 2.3 If the instructor in the case is the coordinator/department head, the role of this officer will be assumed by the Associate Dean/Dean.

3. FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the student remains dissatisfied after meeting with the coordinator/department head, he/she may file a formal, written appeal with the appropriate College Dean within ten (10) business days following the meeting with the instructor. The student must utilize the [Grade Appeal Petition Form](#) found in the Appendix of this procedure. The Dean shall send a copy of the written appeal to the instructor as soon as practicable but no later than three (3) business days after receiving the formal appeal.

3.1 The written appeal must:

- 3.1.1 Identify and provide a thorough explanation of the complaint
- 3.1.2 Define the basis of the complaint
- 3.1.3 Identify the desired outcome
- 3.1.4 Attach any appropriate documentation to support the appeal
- 3.1.5 Provide contact information including email address, cell and home phone numbers, and current address

3.2 Within ten (10) business days of receiving a copy of the student's written appeal, the instructor shall provide a written response, including supporting documentation, to the College Dean.

3.2.1 Within ten (10) business days, the College Dean will establish a grade hearing committee to render a recommendation regarding the grade appeal.

3.2.1.1 The Grade Appeal Committee shall be an ad hoc committee comprised of two students who are members of the Student Government Association (SGA), three faculty (two from the college of the appeal and one from the other college), and the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, the latter of whom will be a non-voting member. All appointees will be recommended by the College Dean and confirmed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA) who shall appoint the committee chair.

3.2.1.2 The College Dean will forward all written documentation to the chair of the committee. Only evidence that is presented with the written appeal will be considered.

3.2.1.3 The grade appeal hearing must be held within twenty (20) business days of the committee chair's receipt of the written appeal from the College Dean. If the twenty (20) business day time period falls during the summer semester when instructors may not be available, the grade hearing must be scheduled within ten (10) business days of the first day of class of the fall semester.

3.2.1.4 The chair of the Grade Appeal Committee will serve as the facilitator of the hearing. The committee will provide a written recommendation to the College Dean within 24 hours of the conclusion of the hearing.

3.2.2 After the College Dean has reviewed the student's written appeal, the instructor's written statement, and the recommendation of the Grade Appeal Committee, he/she will make a decision.

3.2.2.1 The College Dean will provide a written statement documenting his/her decision to the student, the chair of

Committee, and to the instructor. The College Dean shall articulate in his/her statement the factual basis for reaching his/her decision.

3.2.2.2 The College Dean's decision must be made within five (5) business days of his/her receiving the committee's written recommendation. This decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[System Policy 13.02 *Student Rights and Obligations*](#)
[Student Code of Conduct](#)

Appendix

[Grade Appeal Petition Form](#)

Contact Office

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
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