

3.40 Grade Appeal and Change Policy

3.40.1 Grade Appeal

Students are responsible for fulfilling the academic requirements for a course, as established by the instructor in the course syllabus. The instructor is responsible for evaluation of student performance and for determining a student's course grade. The following procedures are designed to provide a means for students to seek review of final course grades alleged to be arbitrary and capricious, or based on clerical error. In a grade appeal, only arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error will be considered as legitimate grounds for an appeal.

Arbitrariness: The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise professional judgment.

Prejudice: The grade awarded was motivated by ill will and is not indicative of the student's academic performance.

Error: The instructor made a mistake in fact.

3.40.1.1 Definitions

Arbitrary and capricious grading means the assignment of a course grade that:

1. Was not based on that student's performance in the course, or
2. Was based on standards different from those which were applied to other students in that course, or
3. Was made after a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced departure from the instructor's previously articulated standards outlined in the course syllabus.

A clerical error is an error in the calculation of grades or an inaccurate recording of the final grade.

3.40.2 Grade Appeal Procedure

The burden of proof in challenging a grade rest on the student. The initial step of the student grade appeal procedure is for the student to seek resolution or redress through discussions with the course instructor within two weeks after the start of the following semester. Due to typical academic calendars and faculty workload expectations, the appeal process will be conducted only during the fall and spring academic semesters. In rare circumstances, and with the permission of the Dean (or designee) of the academic unit where the appeal resides, a grade appeal may be initiated in a summer term.

If the faculty member determines that the grade was based on clerical error, a grade change report will be issued by the faculty member to the Office of the Registrar. The changed grade can be verified on *Netclassroom* as soon as it is made available.

If the student feels that a satisfactory solution or relief has not been obtained the student should discuss the grade appeal with the college dean. The college dean will investigate the allegation by speaking to the student and the involved faculty member. If the college dean finds in favor of the faculty member, the grade is upheld, and the process ends. If the College Dean finds that the instructor may have graded in an arbitrary or capricious manner, the case will be referred to an Ad Hoc Grade Appeal Committee within the college.

This committee is comprised of three ranked faculty members selected by the appropriate college dean. Whenever possible, at least one individual will be selected with teaching experience or professional expertise in the subject or discipline which is the source of the appeal; the other two committee members may be selected from other areas within the University.

Upon convening, the committee selects a chair from the group and will review the facts of the case, interview the involved faculty, student, and dean, and gather pertinent data. The committee will communicate their decision to the student, the faculty member, and the college dean.

The decision of the Ad Hoc Grade Appeal Committee is final and submitted to Student Affairs Dean and Vice Dean within 5 working days of the final decision.

3.40.3 Grade Change

Student evaluations and assignments of final course grades are the responsibility of the faculty. The faculty member is accountable for any grades assigned to students; therefore, each faculty member shall maintain records to support student evaluations and grades. Students who have reasons which can be substantiated to request grade changes must:

1. Write a formal letter to the Instructor (or to the Dean of the College if the instructor is no longer on campus) requesting a re-evaluation of their performance in the course.
2. Provide the following information in the letter: name and student ID, course number, title, and section; semester and year taken; name of the Instructor and a clear statement of the grade change request and reasons which justify the request.

3.40.3.1 Procedure

1. Faculty members, upon receiving student's request for a grade change, will review their records. If it is determined that a student's request is justified, the faculty member will prepare a Grade Change Authorization Form, with appropriate documentation and submit it to the Dean for authorization. The grade change is forwarded to the Office of the Registrar. A faculty member may not change an F grade to a W grade in those cases in which the student did not follow the proper procedures for withdrawing from the course.
2. The Grade Change Authorization Form should be sent to in a confidential way to the registrar office.