

Policy: Grade Appeals Policy and Procedure

Approver:	Board of Trustees
Related policies:	Equal Opportunity, Non-discrimination, Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment, Student Grievance Policy
Additional references:	Faculty Handbook
Responsible office(s):	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Update cycle:	Annual
Next Update:	June 2018

Student Procedures for Resolving Student Complaints about Academic Activities

In the event that an undergraduate or graduate student received a final course grade that is believed to be inaccurately and/or unfairly awarded, the following process for appeal shall be followed: *This policy protects your rights to perform academic research despite political, theological or ideological differences you may have with faculty.*

- i. The student must meet with instructor within three weeks after receiving the final course grade in dispute to present substantial proof, where possible, to justify the appeal. If the instructor does not agree to the student's request, the student may forward the appeal, as presented to the instructor, to the chair of the department or graduate program director (for graduate students) through which the course is offered. The student shall inform the instructor of the appeal to the chair or the graduate program director and of the basis of which it has been taken. The instructor may inform the student and the chair or the graduate program director of the instructor's position.
- ii. The department chair or graduate program director shall convene a review committee consisting of at least two tenured department faculty members other than the instructor to whom the original appeal was directed. In the event that the department chair or graduate program director is the object of the original appeal, the chair or graduate program director will ask a tenured department colleague, where possible, to convene the committee.
In cases where there are an insufficient number of department faculty members eligible to review the appeal, faculty members from associated disciplines within the same school may be appointed to the committee. The faculty committee should complete its review of the appeal within thirty (30) days of the original request to the course instructor. The task of the appeal review committee is to consider the basis of the appeal, whether it pertains to:
 - a. the intellectual content and requirements of the course,
 - b. procedural aspects of the course as described in the course syllabus, other general instructions provided by the instructor to all students in the course, and their conformity to university policy, or
 - c. evidence of bias against the appellant. If the committee finds that the student's appeal is without substantial merit, the chair will inform the appellant in writing. No further action will be taken on the appeal.

The review committee may not overrule the decision of the instructor to whom the original appeal was directed. After appropriate consultation with both instructor and appellant, it may suggest reconsideration of the instructor's decision on the appeal.

If the instructor is unwilling to change a decision that is in substantial conflict with the committee's findings, the committee may:

- a. Refer the appeal to the dean of the school with a recommendation to change the grade in accordance with its findings, or
- b. Refer the appeal to the dean of the school as an unresolved matter with no recommendation.

iii. The dean may not ordinarily change a grade decision that is based on the intellectual content of the course, unless the departmental committee has first recommended a change on that basis. The dean may grant relief in cases involving a procedural error in the conduct of the course, flagrant violation of the student appeal process, or evidence of bias against the student.

The dean's decision is final, and should be rendered within thirty (30) working days of the date of the original notice of appeal to the course instructor. The dean shall inform the student in writing of the decision.

In the School of Law, a separate code governing academic appeals has been enacted, and is applicable to law students.