



Policy Name: Grade Appeals

Marian University Grade Appeals

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Policy Statement:

Preventing Grade Appeals: Faculty members can greatly reduce the necessity for grade appeals by carefully planning and communicating to student's clear criteria for the evaluation of student work and the assigning of grades. Some of the areas that seem especially crucial are the following:

1. Class attendance policy,
2. Number of written assignments,
3. Criteria for evaluating written assignments,
4. Number or type(s) of examinations,
5. Clear time-lines for assignments and exams,
6. Relative importance of each area being evaluated (e.g., papers, participation, exams)
7. Frequent and open communication with students regarding their grade status at various points of the course,
8. Accurate records.

Appealing Grades on Assignments and Exams

If, during a grading period, a student believes he/she is being evaluated unfairly, the student first consults the instructor of the course to explain his/her objection and to understand better the instructor's evaluation. If no resolution is achieved, the student may consult the chairperson or dean of the instructor's academic school. When a difference centers on (a) specific grade(s) given to paper(s), exam(s), or other records of the student's work, a second opinion from a competent colleague of the instructor may be sought.

Appealing Final Grades

If a student believes that the final grade received in a course is unjust, he/she follows the formal policy and procedure for Grade Appeals as follows:



Grades submitted to and recorded by the Registrar, with the exception of “I” or Incomplete, are considered final. Only in extraordinary situations may recorded grades be changed. Extraordinary circumstances are confined either to

1. Clerical error on the part of the instructor in submitting the grade; or
2. Clear or apparent major inconsistency or injustice due to “arbitrary and capricious” grading on the part of the instructor in assigning the grade.

Based on this, the student is limited to specific grounds for appeal. If a student simply disagrees with the faculty member’s judgment about the academic quality of the student’s work, this does not constitute valid grounds for appeal.

Valid grounds for a charge of major inconsistency or injustice include the following:

1. The terminal grade was based on something other than performance in the course;
2. The instructor applied standards that were more exacting or demanding than those applied to other students in that course
3. The terminal grade was a result of significant, unannounced, and unreasonable departures from those articulated in the course syllabus distributed at the beginning of the course.

Procedures for Formal Grade Appeal

Prior to filing a formal grade appeal, the student must discuss the terminal grade with the instructor and seek resolution. If no resolution is achieved, the student must contact the chairperson or dean of the instructor's school within 8 weeks after the official grade was issued. If this does not take place within the specified time, the case is closed and the grade shall stand.

If the chairperson or dean cannot achieve a resolution between the instructor and the student, the student may file a formal grade appeal with the Chief Academic Officer for undergraduate programs, or the Dean of Graduate Studies for graduate programs.

A formal grade appeal must be filed within 12 weeks after the end of the semester in which the grade was given. Students may lose the right to appeal if they fail to adhere to the timelines delineated in this policy. The University officials, noted above, may extend the timelines under extraordinary circumstances. When clerical error is claimed, evidence may be requested. If evidence shows that clerical error was made, the appropriate university official, as noted above, directs the Registrar, in writing, to correct the recorded grade.

The formal grade appeal procedure should be utilized only for terminal grades; it is not to be used to challenge grades on individual assignments. Upon receipt of a Grade Appeal request charging major inconsistency or injustice, the appropriate University official, as noted above, shall convene an academic appeals committee to consider the request if it is determined that the appeal meets the criteria, involves a palpable issue, and is supported by evidence capable of sustaining rational argument. In appealing a grade, the burden of proof rests with the student.



Upon receipt of the written request, the hearing will be held within one month, or as designated by the Chief Academic Officer. The Academic Appeals Committee notifies the student and the instructor of the time and place of the hearing. The hearing will be closed and all parties will maintain confidentiality.

The committee reviews the student's written request and any other evidence the student presents. Committee members may ask for clarification and for other information. They consult the instructor to ascertain his/her view of the situation. The hearings are recorded and minutes kept.

When the committee has all the evidence necessary or available, it writes a report with its recommendations. The report states and summarizes the issues involved, the sources of data received,

factors involved that were weighted and analyzed and its recommendations. On the basis of its evidence, the Committee may recommend either:

1. that the grade be re-determined, or
2. that the grade stand.

If the committee recommends that the grade be re-determined, it may further recommend how a more just grade is to be determined. The committee may request the opinion of other competent evaluations if records of student work are available. The committee forwards its recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer, who notifies the student and the instructor of the committee findings within seven days of the completion of the written report.

The student or instructor may appeal the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee to the Chief Academic Officer within one week of notification. This request must provide specific grounds for a subsequent appeal, which are

1. Due process was not followed; and/or
2. Policy was incorrectly applied; and/or
3. Important evidence was missing.

Decisions of the Chief Academic Officer are final.

Note: All involved in the grade appeal process must be apprised of the following:

1. A grade, even when a major injustice or inconsistency is determined, may nonetheless be the grade earned.
2. A reevaluation of an inconsistently or unjustly determined grade could result in a raised grade, the same grade, or a lowered grade.
3. The faculty member involved is usually the only person capable of fairly evaluating the student's actual performance or work since only he/she has observed the student throughout the grading period.