

ACADEMIC GRADING GRIEVANCE POLICY*

The ultimate responsibility for the integrity of the academic grading process belongs to the university as an institution. Individual faculty members routinely act as agents for the institution in evaluating the student's academic performance and in assigning final course grades. In the event of a student's challenge to a final course grade, the burden of proof lies with a student who claims a grievance. The faculty member has an obligation to award course grades on the basis of standards set at the beginning of the course. The following process will guide the university's response to allegations that a faculty member acted arbitrarily and capriciously in assigning

appropriateness of performance standards.

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de, which begins with notifying the department
below and in Attachment

II. Burden of Proof. The student challenging the course grade has the burden of supplying evidence.

III. Procedures for Challenging a Course Grade

To the greatest extent possible, grievances should be resolved at the level of authority closest to the classroom.

A. Meeting with faculty member

Students begin the process by scheduling a meeting with the faculty member teaching the course to discuss the course requirements and the student's performance in the course. If the challenge cannot be resolved at this level, then the student wishing to proceed further may request informal mediation; the student must do so within the deadlines set out in Section I above and Attachment A.

IV. Time Limits for Filing a Formal Grievance

If a student chooses to file a formal grievance, it must be done within five business days after receiving the mediator's recommendation.

V. Content of Formal Grievance

The formal grievance must be in writing and must set out the date, the student's name, the name of the course, the faculty member's name, and the student's signature. In addition, the student must describe in detail the grievance, the evidence that supports that grievance, and the remedy that the student proposes.

VI. Resolving the Grievance

Step 1: Notifying the faculty member that a formal grievance has been filed

After receiving the grievance, the dean's designee will send the faculty member a copy of the grievance and the faculty member will submit a written response within five business days. The dean's designee will also send the student a copy of the faculty member's response.

Step 2: Selection of Grievance Committee

In addition, after receiving the grievance, the dean's designee will give the student the option of having the grievance heard either (a) by a committee made up of three members of that school/college's faculty or (b) by a committee made up of two faculty members of that school/college plus one student from that school who is in good standing. The dean's designee will select both the faculty members and the student. The dean's designee will function as chair of the committee without a vote.

Step 3: Challenges for Bias

The dean's designee will send both the faculty member and the student a list of the proposed committee members by email. The faculty member and the student each may challenge members of the committee for bias within 2 business days. Such challenges must be in writing and must identify the reasons why they feel the proposed committee member cannot render an objective, unbiased decision. The dean's designee will rule on the challenges, and, if appropriate, appoint new members to the committee.

Step 4: Scheduling the Hearing

Once the committee has been selected, the dean's designee will schedule the hearing. As a general rule, the hearing should be scheduled so that both the student and the faculty member have at least five business days to prepare for the hearing, and so that the hearing is held within fifteen business days of the date that the grievance was filed. The dean's designee does, however, have the right to extend these time limits to accommodate the schedules of the student, the

faculty member, and the committee members who will hear the grievance. The dean's designee oversees the distribution of the written documentation to the committee in sufficient time to insure a careful advance review of the materials.

Neither the student nor the faculty member may bring legal representation to the hearing. However, both the student and the faculty member may elect to bring to the hearing a support person of their choice from within the university community. If the student and/or faculty person elects to invite a support person, that information should be provided to the dean's designee at least two business days in advance of the hearing.

Step 5: Conducting the Hearing

The dean's designee will preside over the hearing. As a general rule, the hearing will be conducted as follows:

- a) The dean's designee will open the hearing by introducing the student, the faculty member, and the committee members who will hear the grievance. Support persons, should they be present, are not permitted to speak, question or otherwise participate in the hearing process.
- b) The dean's designee will ask the student to present the evidence supporting the grievance.
- c) The dean's designee will ask the faculty member to respond to the student's evidence and to explain the evidence and the process leading to the decision.
- d) The dean's designee will provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the faculty member's statements and evidence.
- e) The dean's designee will give the committee members hearing the grievance an opportunity to ask both the student and faculty member questions.
- f) The dean's designee will end the hearing by asking if the student and faculty member have any final statements and by telling the student and faculty member that the panel members, but not the dean's designee, will meet in a closed session to decide the merits of the appeal. The student and faculty member are each allowed, but are not required to make a final statement summarizing their respective positions. They and the chair will then leave the hearing.
- g) The grievance committee will then meet (or set a meeting time) to conduct their deliberations.

Step 6: Deciding the Grievance

To change a grade, a simple majority of the committee members must agree to the change. If a simple majority of the committee members do not agree to the change, no change will be made. The committee's responsibility is limited to determining a change in grade. It is not empowered to make other decisions or recommendations.

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Attachment A

Timeline for Deadlines and Activities Associated with the Grading Grievance Policy

Deadline	Activity
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