

Academic Affairs

January 20, 1999; Revised, September 2006 and February 2007

## **University of Missouri-St. Louis Grade Appeal Procedures**

On each campus of the University of Missouri it is the Chancellor who is ultimately responsible to the President and the Board of Curators for all campus programs, policies and activities. On the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus, the Chancellor has delegated responsibility for overseeing the grade appeal process to the Provost. The Provost is therefore responsible for assuring that grade appeals are handled in a fair and timely manner. More specifically, that officer is responsible for seeing that the procedures outlined below are appropriately followed.

### **Application of This Policy**

Students are responsible for meeting the standards established for each course they take. Faculty are responsible for establishing the criteria for grades and evaluating students' academic performance.

The grade appeal procedure is to allow only the review of allegedly capricious grading. It is not intended as a review of the instructor's evaluation of the student's academic performance.

*Capricious Grading* is defined as any of the following:

- a) The student's grade was assigned on the basis of other factors rather than the performance on the assignment or in the course;
- b) The student's work was graded with more demanding standards than were applied to equivalent students in the course; (Note: Different grading criteria are expected of graduate students enrolled in 4000-level courses.)
- c) The instructor assigned a grade using standards that were substantially different from those previously announced or stated in the syllabus.

### **Informal Procedures**

At any time after the awarding of a grade, for a course or an assignment in a course, a student may discuss the grade with her or his instructor and request that the instructor review the grade. If the instructor does review the grade he or she is, of course, free to change the grade or not as is appropriate.

### **Formal Procedures**

The following procedures apply if the above informal procedure does not resolve a dispute concerning a grade to the student's satisfaction and if the process is initiated within thirty working days of the start of the first regular semester (fall or spring) following the semester for which the grade was given, or thirty days after the assignment of the grade (whichever is later).

1. If the student has not already done so, he or she discusses the contested grade fully with the instructor<sup>1</sup>. The student should prepare for this meeting by taking all relevant written work (test, reports, etc.) with him/her. If the issue is not resolved, and the student wishes to pursue the appeal, she or he should consult the administrative officer of the department or discipline housing the course in question. (This officer will normally be someone below the level of the Dean.) The administrative officer will discuss the appeal with the course instructor, and will inform the student of the result of this discussion. (That result may be the instructor's agreement to change the grade, her or his refusal to change the grade, or her or his agreement to discuss the case further with the student.) The administrative officer may require that the student put the appeal in written form before the administrative officer discusses it with the instructor.

2. If the matter remains unresolved, the student may, within 10 working days of being notified of the result of the discussion between the administrative officer and the instructor, or within 10 working days of her or his last discussion with the instructor, submit a detailed written statement of the complaint to the administrative officer. The administrative officer will refer it to a faculty committee composed of at least three faculty members in the department or unit offering the course or if such are not available, in closely allied fields. This committee is charged with determining whether the grade in question was awarded capriciously. Members will investigate the matter, meeting if they deem necessary with the student, the instructor, and possibly others. Following its inquiries and deliberations but prior to making its final recommendations, the faculty committee will submit a copy of its findings to the course instructor. If the course instructor elects to comment on the findings to the committee, this must be done within seven working days. After further consideration, but within 30 working days after receiving the student's statement, the faculty committee will submit its findings with its recommendations and reasons for those recommendations directly to the course instructor, with a copy to the administrative officer.

3. If the faculty committee recommends that the grade be changed, the administrative officer will ask the instructor to implement the recommendation. If the instructor declines, the administrative officer will change the grade, notifying the instructor and the student of this action. Only the administrative officer, upon written recommendation of the faculty committee, will effect the change in grade over the objection of the instructor who assigned the original grade<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> If the instructor is deceased, cannot be located, or is otherwise unable or unwilling to reconsider the grade, the student should consult directly with the administrative officer of the department or discipline housing the course in question. The remaining procedures here specified will be followed except that the administrative officer and the faculty committee will not consult with the instructor if he or she is unavailable.

<sup>2</sup> Under current campus policy, transcript notation of "DL" automatically becomes an "F" after one regular semester. This change, which the Registrar is mandated to make, is not considered a grade change and is consistent with this grade appeal policy. Students may appeal this change provided the appeal is initiated within 30 working days of the notification of the change.

4. If the faculty committee recommends that the grade not be changed, the administrative officer will notify the student of this action. The student may then appeal to the Dean of the School or College within which the course in question is housed, who will determine whether the above procedures have been properly observed. If the Dean determines that the procedures have not been appropriately followed, and that their not being followed may have substantially affected the outcome, the case will be returned to the faculty unit for review by the same, or, if the Dean so determines, by a different committee.

5. If the Dean denies the procedural appeal then the student may ask the Provost, acting as the Chancellor's designee, to conduct a procedural review. The Provost is not obligated to conduct such a review and will normally do so only where there is compelling evidence of procedural irregularities. If the Provost finds the procedures have not been appropriately followed, and that their not being followed may have substantially affected the outcome, the case will be returned to a lower level for re-review. As the Provost is acting as the designee of the Chancellor, there is no appeal beyond this level.