

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 members 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. The burden of proof shall be on the student. Disagreement or dissatisfaction with a faculty member's professional evaluation of coursework is not the basis for a grade appeal.

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.¹ 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

¹ 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 chairperson of the department, division, area, school, or discipline housing the course in question.

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)²

1. If the student has not already done so, he or she discusses the contested grade fully with the instructor. The student should prepare for this meeting by taking all relevant written work (tests, reports, etc.) with him/her. If the issue is not resolved, and the student wishes to pursue the appeal, a written appeal should be submitted to the chairperson or director of the department,³ division,⁴ area,⁵ school, or discipline housing the course in question. (For grade appeals in the Honors College, College of Nursing, College of Optometry, and the UMSL/Washington University Joint Engineering Program, written appeal should be submitted to the appropriate dean.)

Appeals must be presented in writing and contain the following information:

- (a) A clear concise statement which includes the name of the instructor, the course and semester taken, and a statement describing the specific supporting evidence of capricious grading;
- (b) A brief summary of the prior attempts to resolve the matter and the results of those previous discussions;
- (c) A specific statement of the remedial action or relief sought.

The chairperson or director will discuss the appeal with the course instructor within 10 days of receipt of the written appeal, and will inform the student of the result of this discussion. The result of the meeting may be the instructor's agreement to change the grade or her or his refusal to change the grade.

2. If the matter remains unresolved, the student may, within 10 working days of being notified of the result of the discussion between the chairperson or director and the instructor, may request that the case be forwarded to the dean of the college for a review of the matter.

3. The dean (or designee) will refer the case to a committee composed of at least three faculty members. This committee is charged with determining whether the grade in question was awarded capriciously. The committee will investigate the matter, meeting if it deems 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

² 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 grade change.

³ College of Arts & Sciences, College of Fine Arts & Communication

⁴ College of Education

⁵ College of Business Administration

findings in writing with its recommendations and reasons for those recommendations directly to the course instructor, with a copy to the chairperson or director, and the dean.

4. If the faculty committee recommends that the grade be changed, the dean will ask the instructor to implement the recommendation. If the instructor declines, the dean will change the grade, notifying the instructor, the chairperson or director, and the student of this action. Only the dean, upon written recommendation of the faculty committee, will make a change in grade over the objection of the instructor who assigned the original grade.

5. If the student is dissatisfied with the result of the college level review, s/he may appeal to the Provost within 10 working days of receipt of the committee's recommendation. The Provost will review the appeal process and rule on whether the procedures were followed appropriately. If the Provost concludes that there were procedural errors that denied the student due process, the case will be referred back to the dean to reconvene a new committee of faculty to review the case.

6. The Provost may NOT change a grade given by any instructor.