

Grade Appeals Policy and Process

Grade Appeals Policy

The following is a complete copy of the Grade Appeals Policy as passed by the UAF Faculty Senate at its Meeting # 56 (March 20, 1995) and amended at Meeting #61 (February 5, 1996), Meeting #80 (May 4, 1998), Meeting #89 (September 27, 1999), Meeting #109 (May 6, 2002), Meeting #157 (March 2, 2009), Meeting #183 (May 7, 2012), Meeting #189 (March 4, 2013) and **Meeting #215 (May 2, 2016)**.

- Alignment with BOR Policy and UA Regulations, Chapter 09.03 - Student Dispute Resolution ([Meeting #215, May 2, 2016](#)).
- Clarification made to the time period within which grade appeals will be reviewed ([Meeting #189, March 4, 2013](#)).
- Policy at Section III, Procedures, subsection B, Item 4, was revised at [Meeting #183 \(May 7, 2012\)](#).
- Deadlines were revised at [Meeting #157 \(March 2, 2009\)](#).

I. Introduction

The University of Alaska is committed to the ideal of academic freedom and so recognizes that the assignment of grades is a faculty responsibility. Therefore, the University administration shall not influence or affect an assigned grade or the review of an assigned grade.

The following procedures are designed to provide a means for students to seek review of final course grades alleged to be arbitrary and capricious. Before taking formal action, a student must attempt to resolve the issue informally with the instructor of the course. A student who files a written request for review under the following procedures shall be expected to abide by the final disposition of the review, as provided below, and may not seek further review of the matter under any other procedure within the university.

II. Definitions

A. A "grade" refers to final letter grades A, B, C, D, F, and Pass or Fail. The I (incomplete) and DF (deferred) designate a temporary grade, not a final grade, so these are not subject to appeal until they becomes final.

B. For the purpose of this procedure, "arbitrary and capricious" grading means:

1. the assignment of a course grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the course, or
2. the assignment of a course grade to a student by resorting to standards different from those which were applied to other students in that course, or
3. the assignment of a course grade by a substantial, unreasonable and unannounced departure from the instructor's previously articulated standards.

- C. "Grading errors" denotes errors in the assignment of grades rather than errors in judgment.
- D. A class day is any day of scheduled instruction, excluding Saturday and Sunday, included on the academic calendar in effect at the time of a review, as defined in university regulations (R09.03.024). Final examination periods are counted as class days.
- E. "Department chair" for the purposes of this policy denotes the faculty member responsible for the academic unit offering the course.
- F. The "dean/director" is the administrative head of the college or school offering the course or program from which the academic decision or action arises. For students at extended campuses the director of the campus may substitute for the dean/director of the unit offering the course or program.
- G. The "final grade" is the grade assigned for a course upon its completion.
- H. The next regular semester is the fall or spring semester following that in which the disputed academic decision was made. For example, it would be the fall semester for a final grade issued for a course completed during the previous spring semester or summer session. The spring semester is the next regular semester for an academic decision made during the previous fall semester.

III. Procedures

A. Informal Procedures

Errors by an instructor in determining and recording a grade or by the university staff in transcribing the grade are sources of error that can be readily corrected through the student's prompt attention following the normal change of grade procedure.

1. Review the UAF Appeal of Grade form. [The form is available through the [Registrar's Office](#).]
2. It is a student's obligation to notify the instructor in writing with an explanation of the perceived grading error within 15 class days of the next regular semester (i.e., fall semester for grade issued at the end of the previous spring semester or summer session; spring semester for grade issued at the end of the previous fall semester). A copy of the request should also be provided to the department chair.
3. The instructor is responsible for notifying the student in writing of his or her final judgment concerning the grade in question within 5 class days of receipt of the request, and for promptly submitting the appropriate change of grade form to the Registrar's Office if an error occurred. If the decision was not to reconsider the grade, the instructor should notify the student, the department chair and the dean/director in writing by completing the informal portion on the Appeal of Grade form.
4. If the student does not receive a response from the instructor or the unit department chair by the required deadline, the student must seek the assistance of the dean of the college or school in which the course was offered to begin the formal appeal process.

5. If the instructor is no longer an employee of the university or is otherwise unavailable, the student must bring the matter to the attention of the unit department chair who will make every effort to contact the instructor by the 15th class day of the next regular semester.

a. If the instructor cannot be contacted but course records are available, the department chair will effect resolution within 5 class days of notification by the student. The department chair may correct a grading error through the regular change of grade process on behalf of the instructor.

b. If the instructor cannot be contacted and course records are either unavailable or indecisive, the student may request a formal review as described in section B. below.

6. There may be extenuating circumstances when the deadlines cannot be met due to illness or other situations over which the student may have no control. In such a case, upon request from the student, the dean/director, after review of supporting documentation provided by the student, may recommend to the grade appeals committee that the deadlines be adjusted accordingly. At the discretion of the dean/director, an extension of the deadline will be limited to one semester but every effort should be made to complete the appeal process within the current semester.

B. Formal Procedures

If not resolved in the informal process, the remaining option is by review for alleged arbitrary and capricious grading, or for instances where the course instructor is unavailable and resolution is not forthcoming from the appropriate department chair.

1. This review is initiated by the student through a signed, written request to the department chair with a copy to the dean of the college or school in which the course was offered.

a. The student's request for review may be submitted using university forms specifically designed for this purpose and available at the Registrar's Office.

b. The student completes the grade appeal checklist and submits the Grade Appeal form, acknowledging the completion of the informal process.

c. The request for a review must be received by the dean/director of the college or school in which the course was offered within 5 class days of completion of the informal grade appeal process.

d. The request must detail the basis for the allegation that a grade was the result of arbitrary and capricious grading and must present the relevant evidence.

2. The dean formally notifies both the instructor who issued the grade and the department chair of the unit that a formal grade appeal has been filed.

3. If the instructor of the course is also the Dean of the College, the Provost will designate another Dean within the University to act as the college's monitor of all proceedings.

4. A review committee will be appointed as follows:

- a. The dean shall appoint one non-voting faculty member holding academic rank, who is represented through the current applicable collective bargaining agreements, from the academic unit in which the course was offered (other than the instructor of the course). This individual shall serve in an advisory role.
- b. Three faculty members holding academic rank, who are represented through the current applicable collective bargaining agreements, from the Faculty Senate ad hoc Student Appeals Committee (SAC) shall be appointed by the SAC chair. One voting member shall serve as chair of the student appeal committee.
- c. The fifth member to be appointed by the Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (ASUAF) will be a non-voting student representative.
- d. A facilitator appointed by administration shall serve as a non-voting member for formal grade appeals hearings. This individual shall serve in an advisory role to help preserve consistent hearing protocol and records.
- e. In the case of a grade appeal from a graduate student, a representative of the Graduate School may serve on the committee in a non-voting capacity.

5. The committee must schedule, within 10 class days from receipt of the student's request, a mutually agreeable date, time and location for the appeal hearing. If the request for appeal is received any time other than during a regular semester, then the hearing must be scheduled on or before the 10th class day of the next regular semester.

- a. During this and subsequent meetings, all parties involved shall protect the confidentiality of the matter according to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable federal, state or university policies.
- b. Throughout the proceedings, the committee will encourage a mutually agreeable resolution.
- c. The mandatory first item of business at this meeting is for the committee to rule on the validity of the student's request. Grounds for dismissal of the request for review are:
 - 1) A properly prepared formal appeal of the particular grade has already been denied.
 - 2) The alleged actions of the instructor do not constitute arbitrary and capricious grading, as defined herein.
 - 3) The request was not made within the policy deadlines.
 - 4) The student has not completed the informal procedures to resolve the grade conflict with the instructor. In the event that the committee votes to dismiss the request, a written notice of dismissal must be forwarded to the student, instructor,

department chair and dean within five class days of the decision, and will state clearly the reasoning for the dismissal of the request.

6. Acceptance for consideration of the student's request will result in the following:

- a. A request for and receipt of a formal response from the instructor to the student's allegation.
- b. A second meeting scheduled to meet within 10 class days of the decision to review the request.
 - 1) The student and instructor will be invited to attend the meeting.
 - 2) The meeting will be closed to outside participation, and both the student and the instructor may be accompanied by an advocate or representative. Other matters of format will be announced in advance.
 - 3) The proceedings will be recorded and the recordings will be stored with the campus conduct office.
 - 4) The meeting must be informal, non- confrontational and fact-finding, where both the student and instructor may provide additional relevant and useful information and can provide clarification of facts for materials previously submitted.

7. The final decision of the committee will be made in private by a majority vote.

a. Actions which the committee can take if it accepts the student's allegation of arbitrary and capricious grading must be directed towards a fair and just resolution, and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) direct the instructor to grade again the student's work under the supervision of the department chair,
- 2) direct the instructor to administer a new final examination and/or paper in the course,
- 3) direct a change of the student's registration status (i.e., withdrawn, audit, dropped) in the course.

b. The academic decision review committee proceedings will result in the preparation of written findings and conclusions. Conclusions will result in one of the following:

- 1) the request for a grade change is denied.
- 2) the request for a grade change is upheld; the review committee requests the course instructor to change the grade; and the course instructor changes the grade in accordance with the University of Alaska Fairbanks rules and procedures.

3) the request for a grade change is upheld; the course instructor is either unavailable to change the grade or refuses to, and the review committee directs the dean/director to initiate the process specified by the University of Alaska Fairbanks rules and procedures to change the grade to that specified by the review committee.

c. A formal, written report of the decision must be forwarded to the student, instructor, department chair, dean and registrar within five class days of the meeting.

d. The decision of the committee is final.

Faculty Senate Policy stated above cited from the following:

<https://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty-senate/policies-procedures/grade-appeals/>