

## **Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy (Revised)**

**Date Proposed:** February 25, 2016  
**Date Recommended by CAPC:** February 25, 2016  
**Date Approved by Provost:** April 6, 2016

### **Grade Appeals**

#### **Scope of the Policy**

The Grade Appeals Policy applies only to questions of student evaluation. Since appeals involve questions of judgment, the Grade Appeals Board will not recommend that a grade be revised in the student's favor unless there is clear evidence that the final grade awarded for the class was based on prejudiced or capricious judgment, or was inconsistent with official University policy. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for cases where the grade appeal involves a grade given for academic dishonesty. Grades are awarded by the faculty member of record and can only be changed by said faculty member unless the Provost directs otherwise following the procedure outlined below.

#### **Grade Appeals Procedure**

1. (a) A student must initiate an appeal in writing within 20 class days of the subsequent regular (fall or spring) semester in which the decision or action in question was made. In case of an appeal of a final grade, the appeal must be filed no later than the first 20 class days of the term following the one in which the grade was received. This written appeal should be sent to the instructor who awarded the grade in question. The appeal shall be reviewed by the student and the faculty member. They shall mutually attempt to resolve the appeal within five class days from the receipt.  
(b) If the appeal is based on an interpretation of departmental or University policy, the student's academic adviser also may be present during the review process. In such case, there shall also be a limit of five class days in which to resolve the appeal.
2. An appeal not resolved at Step 1 shall be referred in writing by the student within five class days after the completion of Step 1 to the chairperson of the department offering the course. If there is a departmental appeals committee, the problem shall be referred directly to it. The department chairperson or the departmental appeals committee shall normally submit a written response to the student within 10 class days following receipt of the written statement of the problem. A copy of this response also shall be provided to the instructor.
3. If no decision, satisfactory to all parties (faculty member, student, and department chair or department committee) is reached at Step 2, the student may submit a written appeal to the dean of the college or school in which the problem originated. Such an appeal shall be made within five class days following the receipt of the written response of the department chairperson or the departmental appeals committee. The dean shall investigate the problem as presented in the written documentation, review the recommendation and provide, in writing, a proposal for the solution of the problem within 10 class days following its referral.

4. If a mutually acceptable resolution to the problem is not achieved at Step 3, the student may file an appeal with the Grade Appeals Board within five class days of the receipt of the written proposal from the dean. The request for an appeal must be submitted to the vice provost or, if appropriate, to the dean of graduate studies who will convene the Grade Appeals Board as soon as possible, but no later than 15 class days after the receipt of the written request.

### **Grade Appeals Board**

#### **Membership on the board will include the following:**

1. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies (or his/her designee) who serves as the nonvoting chairperson.
2. A faculty dean not involved in the appeals process.
3. Two faculty members. At the beginning of each academic year, the Office of the Vice Provost shall accept volunteers from each academic department in order to constitute the pool. Two faculty members from different departments will be selected from this pool for each Appeals Board.
4. Two undergraduate students who are selected from a list of names provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs and Student assistance, or who are tutors of the LARC, or who are enrolled in the Honors College, or who are members of a WCU Honors Society. The director of the LARC, director of the Honors College, or the appropriate society adviser will provide the Office of Academic Affairs with a list of students who are willing to serve. Such students will be appropriately trained in procedures relating to this policy and the need for confidentiality in all aspects of the case. It is presumed that the selected students have no academic or social connections with student making the appeal.

### **Attendance**

1. Both parties (faculty member and student) shall have the right to be assisted by advisers, who may be attorneys, and who may be present at hearings. The board chair must be notified in advance of the hearing who the advisers will be. The advisers may only consult and interact privately with their advisees, and may not address the board. Advisers who are disruptive to the process will be asked to leave the proceedings, and the matter will go forward absent their involvement.
2. Witnesses may be called on behalf of either the faculty member or the student.
3. Resource persons or expert witnesses may also called at the request of the board. In the event that the decision to be rendered by the board involves knowledge of a particular discipline, the board shall be required to utilize at least one resource person from that discipline to serve as an expert adviser(s) to aid them in making an informed recommendation.

### **Procedure**

1. Preparation for the Hearing - All parties must be informed of the complaint in writing by the chairperson of the Grade Appeals Board (hereafter referred to as "chairperson"), normally within five class days after the receipt of the complaint. Copies of documents

and correspondence filed with respect to the complaint shall be provided to the interested parties through the chairperson. Thereafter, neither new evidence nor new charges shall be introduced before the board. The chairperson shall notify in writing the interested parties of the exact time and place of the hearing and shall provide existing University and/or Commonwealth policies relevant to the appeal at least five class days before the beginning of the proceedings. Throughout these proceedings, the burden of proof rests upon the person bringing the appeal.

2. Hearing Procedure - During the hearing, both the faculty member and the student shall be accorded ample time for statements, testimony of witnesses, and presentation of documents.
3. Recommendation of the Appeals Board
  - a. The Grade Appeals Board shall deliberate in executive session and render a recommendation by majority vote within three days of the close of the hearing. The chairperson may participate in these deliberations but not vote.
  - b. The chairperson of the Appeals Board shall notify, in writing, the student, the faculty member, and the chair of the department offering the course of the recommendation within three class days of the board's final action. The notification shall include the basis upon which the recommendation was based.
  - c. The chairperson of the Appeals Board shall also transmit the decision, in writing, to the provost or his/her designee. If the board recommends that a grade be changed, thus supporting the student's appeal, it will forward that recommendation to the Provost and Academic Vice President, who makes the final decision to accept or reject the recommendation of the Appeals Board. *Only* the Provost and Academic Vice President has the authority to direct the registrar to change an existing grade.

#### **Other**

1. A written statement of the decision and relevant materials shall be placed in the student's academic file.
2. A written statement of the decision and relevant materials shall be placed in the faculty member's file subject to the provisions of official Commonwealth policy governing personnel files.

#### **Notes**

1. Both the faculty member and student are entitled to the "right of challenge for cause" of any member of the Appeals Board or student adviser with the sole exception being the chairperson of the Appeals Board. In the case of a challenge at the Appeals Board level, the chairperson of the board will adjudicate the challenge. One challenge at each level is permitted.
2. A "class day" is defined as any day when classes are officially in session, in fall or spring, at West Chester University.
3. If the course in which the grade dispute occurred is offered under the auspices of a unit of the University other than an academic department, the program director/coordinator, head of that unit, and/or the department chairperson will function

in Step 2 of the procedure. In Step 3, the appeal should then be made to the vice provost rather than the dean of the college.

4. If the professor is not on contract or in residence on the campus, he or she shall have the right to appoint a faculty proxy.