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| **Policies of the University of North Texas** | Chapter 6 Faculty Affairs |
| 06.040 Grade Appeals |

**Policy Statement.** Students are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled as well as requirements for completion of their academic programs. Faculty members are responsible for establishing standards of academic performance and for evaluating student performance in an equitable manner. Faculty decisions in such matters are considered authoritative and can be overturned only when it has been determined that a grade was assigned in an inequitable, arbitrary, or erroneous manner. This policy outlines the grounds for a student grade appeal and the process by which it must be carried out.

**Application of Policy.** Students and Faculty

**Definitions.**

1. Course. “Course” means a unit of study that, upon completion, is recorded on the student’s transcript, or any other graded requirement for program completion (e.g., internship, comprehensive examination, thesis, dissertation).
2. Grade. “Grade” means the final grade issued at the end of a course. Grades assigned for parts of a course (e.g., reports, examinations) may not be appealed and are not subject to review except to the extent that they impact the appeal of the final course grade.
3. Student. “Student” means the individual who received the grade and who has initiated an appeal. Individuals may not initiate appeals on behalf of others.
4. Instructor. “Instructor” means the faculty member responsible for the course in question.
5. Department Chair. “Department Chair” means the individual holding administrative authority for instructors.
6. Committee. “Committee” means either a standing appeal committee comprised of and elected by the faculty of the unit or an ad hoc grade appeal committee constructed in accordance with the procedures in section C.
7. Dean. “Dean” means the administrative authority for the chair or academic unit in which the grade appeal is lodged.
8. Procedural Error. “Procedural error” means a mistake in the process such as failure to take required steps like initial consultation with the faculty member or failure to meet referral deadlines.

**Procedures and Responsibilities.**

1. **Appropriate Grounds for Appeal.**

Grades are subject to appeal only when the student believes that the grade was awarded in an inequitable, arbitrary, or erroneous manner. Appropriate grounds for appeal are only circumstances where the grade was assigned based on:

* 1. Inequitable treatment that is the result of departure from the instructor’s stated standards, and course policies;
  2. A decision based on an error in fact.

If the student believes that the grade was assigned inappropriately due to discrimination or sexual harassment, the case must first be resolved through procedures for such complaints (see UNT Resolution Procedures for Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation filed with the Office of Equal Opportunity). Changes in a grade due to violations of academic integrity cannot be appealed through this process.

**Responsible Party**: Students, Office of Equity and Diversity

1. **Time Limits for Appeal and Resolution.**

The formal grade appeal should be resolved within a maximum of 13 weeks after the semester in which the grade was officially posted. Under extraordinary circumstances, the chair may grant an extension of any time limits identified in this policy.

* 1. The student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible and no later than 10 calendar days after the start of the following academic term, inclusive of fall, spring, summer and intersession terms.
  2. The student must initiate a formal grade appeal in writing, based on at least one of the two appropriate grounds mentioned above, to the department chair within five weeks (35 calendar days) of the date the grade was officially posted in the university system. At receipt of the appeal, the department chair will provide the instructor with a copy of the written appeal within three (3) calendar days.
  3. If unresolved, the chair must forward the appeal to a faculty committee within seven (7) calendar days of its receipt.
  4. A grade appeal case should be resolved within five weeks (35 calendar days) of the chair’s receipt of the written appeal.
  5. An appeal to the Dean, described below and based solely upon procedural grounds, may extend the time limit on resolution of the grade appeal by no more than three weeks (21 calendar days).
  6. If any person, whether student, faculty or administrator, fails to respond to requests made as part of the grade appeal process within one week of the request, the requester may move forward without that response.
  7. The grade issued by the instructor remains in effect during the appeal process.

**Responsible Party**: Students, Instructors

1. **Procedures for the Appeal.**
2. Informal Consultation with Instructor

The student must first discuss the course grade with the instructor in an attempt to resolve the issue. This discussion should occur as soon as possible after receiving the grade and not more than 10 days after the start of the following academic term. If the instructor is unavailable or unresponsive, the student should immediately contact the department chair for guidance, as the 35-day time limit for formal appeal includes this faculty consultation period.

1. Formal Grade Appeal to Department Chair

If consultation with the instructor does not resolve the student’s concerns, the student may submit a formal appeal to the department chair within the time limit for initiating an appeal.

1. The department chair may attempt to resolve the issue through consultation with the instructor and the student. If both instructor and student agree to a resolution, the appeal ends at this level. The resolution must be described in writing by the department chair and acknowledged as received by the student and instructor.
2. If the chair does not engage in a consultation, or if the consultation does not resolve the issue, the chair refers the appeal to a faculty committee within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the formal appeal.
3. Faculty Committee Review and Resolution

The committee that reviews the grade appeal may be a standing appeal committee comprised of and elected by faculty. If no such committee exists, an ad hoc grade appeal committee of three faculty members shall be constructed as follows: one is appointed by the student, one appointed by the instructor. The two appointees then agree upon and appoint a third committee member who chairs the committee. Committee members may include any person holding a faculty appointment in the department, college or university. The department chair is responsible for distributing this policy to the committee members.

1. The committee requests a written statement from the student and determines whether the appeal meets criteria (a) and/or (b). The committee shall reject ineligible appeals. If the appeal is admitted, then the committee notifies the chair and asks the instructor for a written response. The committee may request additional information and will meet with the student, the instructor, and/or others, as it sees fit.
2. After reviewing the instructor’s response, the committee issues one of the following recommendations to the instructor:
   1. The grade should remain unchanged, as it was not assigned in an inequitable manner or by error.
   2. The grade should be changed. In this case, the committee must provide a written explanation of this finding to the instructor.
   3. If the committee recommends a grade change, and the instructor agrees, the instructor must initiate the grade change process. I
   4. If the committee recommends a grade change and the instructor disagrees, the instructor must provide a written explanation of their disagreement to the committee.

The committee makes a final decision, taking into consideration the instructor’s response. If the committee concurs with the instructor’s assessment the grade must remain unchanged. However, if the committee upholds its previous recommendation that the grade should be changed, the committee should communicate this to the chair in writing and the chair must initiate the grade change.

1. Upon the conclusion of the exchange with the instructor regarding its recommendations, contained in steps C-ii and C-iii, above, the committee submits its final recommendation in writing to the department chair.
2. The department chair notifies both student and instructor of the final resolution to change or not change the grade as the committee has recommended. The resolution must be described in writing by the department chair and acknowledged as received by the student and instructor. Only if the committee recommends a grade change, then the department chair changes the grade, as recommended by the committee, otherwise the grade shall stand as issued. The grade appeal ends at this level and, except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., the closure of the university due to weather, students’ hospitalization, administrative mandate), shall be completed within 35 calendar days of the chair’s receipt of the written appeal. The only further basis for appeal is on procedural grounds.

Dean’s Procedural Review

If either student or instructor believes there was a procedural error in the grade appeal process at the departmental level, that party may request reconsideration on procedural grounds by filing a written request for review to the dean within 7 (seven) calendar days of having received notice of the resolution. This request must specifically state the procedural grounds for requesting the reconsideration. The dean shall provide notice of the appeal to the student, the instructor, and the department chair. If the dean determines that the procedures were followed, the dean responds in writing that the faculty committee’s determination has been upheld. The decision of the dean is final. If the instructor believes that procedural errors and violations of academic freedom have occurred then the instructor may pursue the matter using appropriate channels.

1. If the dean determines that there were procedural errors, the appeal will be considered anew, and the dean will appoint a new ad hoc grade appeal committee, comprised of individuals holding a full-time faculty appointment within the University. That committee reviews the grade appeal as described in steps C-ii and C-iii, above.
2. Upon the conclusion of the exchange with the instructor regarding its recommendations, contained in C-ii and C-iii, above, the committee submits its final recommendation in writing to the dean.
3. The dean shall provide notice of the final resolution to the student, instructor and department chair. The resolution must be described in writing The Dean changes the grade, as appropriate, per the recommendation of the ad hoc appeal faculty committee.
4. This process shall extend the timeline by no more than 21 calendar days, except under extraordinary circumstances. The action of the dean may not be appealed further. If the instructor believes that procedural errors or violations of academic freedom have occurred, then he or she may pursue the matter using appropriate channels.

**Responsible Party**: Chair, Faculty Review Committee, Dean

1. **Records Retention.**

Documentation of all formal grade appeals, including procedural appeals, , must be maintained by the department for a period of time designated in the university records retention policy.

**References and Cross-references.**

UNT Policy Resolution Procedures for Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation filed with the Office of Equal Opportunity

Approved: 8/89

Effective:

Revised: 7/02, 5/15/2015