



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.XXX

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Grade Change and Grade Appeal

DATE: February 1, 2012

REVISED:

Authorized by:

I. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Grade Appeal Policy is to provide the student with a safeguard against receiving an **unfair** final grade, while simultaneously respecting the academic responsibility and freedom of the instructor. This policy recognizes that students have a right to an evaluation of their performance that is neither arbitrary nor capricious, and that instructors have the right to assign grades based on any method that is professionally acceptable, submitted in writing to all students, and applied equally. A student has a right to expect thoughtful and clearly defined approaches to course and project grading, but it must be recognized that varied standards and individual approaches to grading are valid.

This policy does not cover instances where students have been assigned grades based on academic dishonesty or academic misconduct. Also excluded from this policy are grade appeals alleging discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of WKU's Sexual Harassment Policy.

II. Policy

A. A grade appeal shall be confined to charges of **unfair** action toward an individual student and may not involve a challenge of an instructor's grading standard. The grade appeal considers whether a grade was determined in a fair and appropriate manner; it does not attempt to grade or re-grade individual assignments or projects.

B. A grade appeal applies only to the final course grade.

Comment [KLM1]: Is this what we want?

C. Only the following grounds will be considered legitimate for an appeal:

1. Arbitrary or capricious evaluation: The grade represents a substantial departure from accepted academic norms.
2. Error: Examples include arithmetic or clerical errors or failure to grade material submitted in accordance with the course syllabus.
3. Substantial failure on the part of an instructor to follow the course syllabus or other announced grading policies
4. Violation of a specific University rule or policy (for example, unauthorized rescheduling of a final exam)

Comment [KLM2]: Should we include all of these, or do we want to make a distinction (suggested by the Provost) between complaints, appeals, and grievances. And if so, which ones belong here? And which ones should be retained within student complaint procedure (described in the catalog)?

D. It is the student's responsibility to substantiate the claim that his or her final grade is improper based on one of the criteria listed in II.C.

III. Procedure

A. The student should first discuss the grade with the faculty member involved.

1. If the faculty member is no longer employed by the University, the student should go directly to the department head.
2. The student must take the appeal to the faculty member within the first two weeks of the first regular semester (fall; spring) following the assignment of the grade.

B. If the student and the faculty member are unable to resolve the appeal, the student may take the appeal to the faculty member's department head.

1. Written notification of the appeal must be given to the department head within two weeks after the meeting with the faculty member.
2. Written notification must fully document the grounds for the appeal.
3. The department head will arrange for a conference at which the student, faculty member and the department head will be present for discussion. Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the conference.
4. The department head shall keep a written record of the proceedings, including the recommended solution. The department head's recommended solution is to be considered by both the faculty member and the student as a recommendation and not as a decision that is binding.
5. If the department head was the instructor who assigned the grade in question, the dean of the college will serve in the role of the department head.

C. Should the student be unable to receive the satisfaction desired at the departmental level, the appeal may be taken to the college level.

1. Written notification of the appeal must be submitted to the college dean or his designated representative within two weeks after the conference with the department head.
2. Upon receipt of the notification, the college dean or his/her representative shall provide the student a copy of the procedural guidelines to be followed by the College Complaint Committee. The procedural guidelines shall provide for a conference with both the student and the faculty member present for joint discussion of the complaint with the committee.

3. The College Complaint Committee will be responsible for scheduling the conference within two weeks following the submission of a written complaint to the chairman of the College Complaint Committee. The written complaint should clearly the grounds for the appeal. Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the conference.
4. The College Complaint Committee shall hear both sides of the complaint and render a decision. The decision shall be sent in writing to the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, with a copy being sent as a matter of record to the student, faculty member, faculty member's department head and the faculty member's college dean.
5. The Office of the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall be responsible for enforcing the decision of the college committee. The Office of the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall not enforce the decision until two weeks after the decision is made by the college committee. The purpose of the two week delay is to provide either the student or the faculty member an opportunity to submit a formal written notice of appeal to the University Complaint Committee.

D. The student or the faculty member may choose to appeal the decision of the College Complaint Committee to the University Complaint Committee.

1. A formal written notice, fully documenting the grounds for the appeal, may be submitted to the University Complaint Committee chair, with a copy to the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, within two weeks of the decision of the College Complaint Committee.
2. The chair of the University Complaint Committee will provide the student and the faculty member involved with a copy of the University Complaint Committee's Procedural Guidelines.
3. The University Complaint Committee will secure copies of the written proceedings from the department head and the College Complaint Committee. The University Complaint Committee will schedule a conference where the faculty member and the student jointly discuss the issue. Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the conference.
4. The committee's decision will be sent to the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, with a copy being sent as a matter of record to the student, faculty member, faculty member's department head and the faculty member's college dean. The Office of the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs will see that decisions of the University Complaint Committee are carried out. The University Complaint Committee's decision is final

IV. Related Policies

See also:

[list any related policies or manuals]

V. Reason for Revision

[if applicable]

Appendices

[if applicable]