

Wayne State University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Grade Appeal Procedures

Revised May, 2014

How Do I appeal a grade?

Basic criteria and grounds for appeal

1. Formal grade appeals can only be made in regard to final grades in a course. For appealing a grade in an exam or assignment, please talk to your instructor.
2. Formal grade appeals can only be made within 30 calendar days of the official notification of your grade in a course.
3. Formal grade appeals can only be made on the following grounds: (1) the application of non-academic criteria in the grading process, as listed in the university's non-discrimination and affirmative action statute: race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability; (2) sexual harassment; or (3) evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of performance relative to course requirements.

The appeal process

1. First talk to your instructor about your concerns. This is called an “informal” grade appeal.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response, prepare a “formal” grade appeal to your instructor, i.e. a grade appeal in writing. This can be done on paper or by email. You should give clear and detailed reasons, and, if needed, provide additional documentation. Your instructor has 10 business days to respond.
3. If you are not satisfied with the instructor's response, or the instructor has failed to respond within 10 business days, you can formally appeal to the chair or program director in writing (paper or email). You can also request to informally talk to chairperson or director, but that does not replace the formal process.
4. The chair or director has 30 calendar days to respond to your written appeal. If you are not satisfied with the response, you can formally appeal to the Dean of the College in writing (paper or email). With this appeal, please provide the formal appeal you had sent to the chairperson or program director, as well as his/her response. You can also request an informal meeting with a designee of the Dean, but, again, this does not replace the formal process.
5. The dean or his/her designee (usually an associate dean) will notify you of his/her decision within 30 calendar days.
6. If you are not satisfied with the Dean's response you can further appeal to the Provost or his/her designee.
7. At any time, you can contact the Ombudsperson of the university for advice.

FORMAL POLICY:

1.0 Basic Principles

1.1 Instructors are expected to evaluate student work according to sound academic standards. Course expectations should be clearly specified and grades should be assigned without departing substantially from announced procedures.

It is the instructor's prerogative to assign grades in accordance with his/her academic/professional judgment, and the student assumes the burden of proof in the appeals process.

1.2 Grounds for appeals are: (1) the application of non-academic criteria in the grading process, as listed in the university's non-discrimination and affirmative action statute: race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or handicap; (2) sexual harassment; or (3) evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of performance relative to course requirements.

1.3 These policy guidelines do not apply to allegations of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty matters should be addressed under the Student Code of Conduct.

2.0 Appeal of Grades

2.1 Whenever a final grade is in dispute, a student should first appeal to his/her instructor for an informal review. In practice, this means that the student makes an appointment to talk with the instructor to express his or her concerns about the assigned grade. Should resolution fail, the student may request a formal review.

2.2 Students should raise formal grade appeals within 30 calendar days following official notification of grades for the term in which the disputed grade was awarded, whenever informal review fails to resolve a dispute. The student's first formal appeal should be directed to the instructor. Formal appeals must be in writing and contain detailed reasons for the appeal, as well as optional supporting documentary evidence. Formal appeals may be done in hardcopy or by email. Formal appeals are limited to the grounds stated in 1.2 above.

2.3 Instructors shall respond in writing to a formal written appeal within ten business days of receiving the appeal. If the issue is unresolved, the student may within ten business days lodge an appeal in writing with the department chairperson or program director.

2.4 Students shall be notified in writing of the department's/program's decision regarding the appeal within thirty calendar days of its receipt. The student may also request an informal meeting with the program director or chairperson, but this does not replace the formal appeal.

Within this time period, the chairperson or director may seek the advice of a grade appeals committee, if so established. Departments or programs that conduct a committee review must specify the authority of the committee in their grade appeals policy. The instructor in charge shall be invited by the department chairperson or program director to reply in writing to the objections of the student.

2.5 Students who are dissatisfied with the department/program decision as stated in writing may lodge a formal written appeal with the Dean of the College or the designated associate dean within ten business days of having received the department/program decision, with a copy to the department chairperson or program director. The student shall submit a copy of the written statement initially submitted to the department chairperson, his/her response, as well as a statement explaining his/her dissatisfaction with the departmental or program solution(s) proposed. Additionally, the student may submit any other documentary evidence he or she believes is relevant to the appeal. The formal appeal may be in hardcopy or by email.

2.6 Students shall be notified in writing of the College's decision regarding the appeal within 30 calendar days of its receipt.

2.7 Any meetings held in relation to the appeal shall provide parties the opportunity to present additional information orally or in writing. No additional persons should be permitted at such meetings without advance approval by the chair or dean, as appropriate.

2.8 Students/faculty may contact the Ombudsperson at any time for assistance with any problem associated with a grade decision or grade appeal.

3.0 University Level Academic Appeals Procedure

When the appeal procedures within the College have been exhausted, the student may request the Provost or his/her designee to review the decision on the record. Procedures for requesting a provost level review are published in the University Bulletin.