

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the General Counsel

POLICY SUMMARY FORM

Policy Name: Academic Appeals by Students

Policy Number: 6.3

Is this policy new, being reviewed/revised, or deleted? Review/Revise

Date of last revision, if applicable: 7/1/2017

Unit(s) Responsible for Policy Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Purpose of Policy (what does it do): Provide a procedure for students to appeal their final grades

Reason for the addition, revision, or deletion (check all that apply):

Scheduled Review Change in law Response to audit finding

Internal Review Other, please explain: Responding to comments by the general counsel

Please complete the appropriate section:

Specific rationale for new policy:

Specific rationale for each substantive revision: The earlier policy revision in July resulted in two comments by the general counsel. In reviewing the comments, the committee recognized that the problems related to grammar rather than substance. Thus, the committee cleaned up grammar that, in turn, addressed the comments of the general counsel.

Specific rationale for deletion of policy:

Additional Comments:

The policy, as previously revised in July, made a substantial change in allowing the provost to alter an instructor's final grade for "extraordinary circumstances," such as the death of the instructor. The original policy allowed only the instructor to enter a final grade no matter the recommendations of the appeal process. The Faculty Senate and Chairs Forum expressed no opposition to the revision. This language was retained in the current revision.

Reviewers:

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the General Counsel

Academic Policy Committee
Steve Bullard, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Damon Derrick, General Counsel

Academic Final Course Grade Appeals by Students

Original Implementation: August 31, 1981

Last Revision: ~~July 25, 2017~~ January 30, 2018

Faculty members are responsible for the evaluation of student course work conducted in their class and, under normal circumstances, only the instructor may change a grade. However, this policy provides a formal process for students to appeal final grades and determinations of academic dishonesty. ~~All relevant written documentation under consideration at each step will be forwarded to the appropriate parties at the next procedural level.~~ Any further appeal must be made within ten (10) business days from the conclusion of each step. Recommendations ~~or~~ decisions at each level are generally made within four (4) weeks of receiving the appeal. The burden of proof rests with the student throughout the process.

A student may appeal a final *course* grade if it can be demonstrated that the instructor did not adhere to stated procedures or grading standards, or if other compelling reasons exist to change the grade. A student may not appeal due to general dissatisfaction with a final grade or disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment regarding the quality of the student's work.

~~It is important to distinguish grounds for grade appeal from questions about quality of instruction. Successful grade appeals must be based on evidence that the student performed at a level sufficient to warrant a different grade. It is important for students to bring to the instructor's and the department's attention perceived deficiencies in instruction, but these by themselves do not normally warrant a change in grade.~~

These steps are ~~to be~~ followed when making an academic appeal:

- ~~1.~~ Students must first appeal in writing to the faculty member with whom they have an ~~academic~~ *final grade* dispute. ~~In the case of a final grade dispute,~~ Students must appeal to the instructor within thirty (30) calendar days after the first class day of the next long semester. Given extenuating circumstances, exceptions to this deadline may be granted by the academic unit head.
- ~~2.~~ ~~1.~~ If the dispute is not resolved, the student may appeal to the academic unit head. The academic unit head then requests a written statement from the faculty member and the student involved in the dispute. The academic unit head provides both parties a written recommendation.
- ~~3.~~ ~~2.~~ If the dispute remains unresolved after ~~appeal~~ *a recommendation by* the academic unit head, ~~either individual involved in the dispute,~~ the student may appeal in writing to the academic dean. *The dean notifies both parties of the continuation of the appeal. The faculty members may submit an additional response.* The academic unit head will forward all documentation involved in the dispute to the dean. ~~The dean notifies both parties of the continuation of the appeal and provides a written recommendation.~~

Prior to making a recommendation, the dean may refer the appeal to the *relevant* college

council. If the college council has no student members, the dean asks the president of the Student Government Association to recommend no more than two students from that college to be appointed as voting members. The college council reviews all documentation and submits its recommendation to the dean. *The dean provides both parties a written recommendation.*

~~4. If the dispute remains unresolved a~~After a recommendation is made by the dean, either party the student may appeal in writing to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. *The provost and vice president for academic affairs notifies both parties of the continuation of the appeal. The faculty member may submit an additional response. The dean will forward all documentation involved in the dispute to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The dean's written recommendation in addition to all documentation is submitted to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The college council may serve as an advisory body to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The provost and vice president for academic affairs evaluates all documentation and any other information deemed relevant.*

5.3. The provost and vice president for academic affairs will inform the student and all persons involved in the appeal process of the recommendation.

~~Faculty members are responsible for the evaluation of student course work conducted in their class and, under normal circumstances, only the instructor may change a grade. However, u~~Under extraordinary circumstances (such as e.g., the instructor being is deceased, is no longer being at the institution with no way of being contacted, disregard for the instructor's grading policies or procedures, or having been found or is in violation of any relevant university, college, or department policy or procedure), a grade may be changed by the provost and vice president for academic affairs after consultation with the dean and academic unit head. ~~The authority to change a grade would be with the provost and vice president for academic affairs, after consultation and recommendation from the dean and academic unit head. If possible, t~~The provost and vice president for academic affairs will inform the student and all persons involved in the appeal process of the final decision.

Cross Reference: Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook and Activities Calendar; Student Academic Dishonesty (4.1); Sexual Misconduct (2.13); Faculty Code of Conduct (7.11); Discrimination Complaints (2.11)

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms: None

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs