

EDINBORO UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

STUDENT APPEAL OF ASSIGNED GRADE

Policy No. A057

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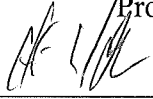
Recommended for Approval By:



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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approved By:



on 12-1-16

H. Fred Walker, Ph.D., President

Review Date: As Required

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INTENT

This policy provides for due process in the rare instance when a student believes that a final grade assigned in a course reflects unsubstantiated academic evaluation or calculation error by the course instructor. It also provides a remedy in cases where the hearing process sustains the student's claim. The process is not a disciplinary proceeding for any of the involved parties, although the findings may lead to disciplinary investigation or action under a different University policy.

POLICY

Each academic department of the University shall have an Academic Appeals Committee. Membership on the Committee shall consist of at least three faculty members of the department and at least two students who are majors in the department's programs, all of whom shall be elected by the department faculty. Students wishing to appeal a final grade must initiate the appeal within fifteen (15) calendar days after the beginning of the semester following the issuance of the grade. Summer school shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the appeal period for grades issued in the spring semester; winter session shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the appeal period for grades issued in the fall semester. The departments shall maintain records of all grade appeals. With the exception of the grade change, no part of this procedure will become a part of any individual's university record or file.

Since the grading process involves the instructor's judgment of the student's academic performance, the only issue under consideration for final grade appeal is whether the student can provide clear evidence that the assignment of the grade was a result of a calculation error or was assigned based on unsubstantiated academic evaluation by the instructor. Examples of reasons for appeal include the following:

- The instructor did not calculate the student's grade consistent with the instructor's policy for calculating grades as outlined in the instructor's syllabus, written instructions, and/or communicated grading rubric for the relevant assignments. In this instance, the instructor may be found to have made significant and unwarranted deviations from grading procedures or course outlines set at the beginning of the course.
- The course grade was assigned in an arbitrary, capricious or inequitable manner against the student. This condition does not include disagreement between the student and instructor on the subjective professional evaluation of the instructor.
- There is an error in the computation of the grade.

## APPEALS PROCEDURE

1. The student should initiate the procedure by consulting on an informal basis with the FACULTY member who assigned the final grade within fifteen (15) calendar days of the start of the subsequent semester. Summer school shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the appeal period for grades issued in the spring semester; winter session shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the appeal period for grades issued in the fall semester. If no satisfactory results are achieved, then the student may continue the appeals procedure. (In the instance where the instructor is on leave or no longer employed by the University, the student should appeal directly to the department chairperson, who shall make a reasonable attempt to contact the instructor for resolution or response to the appeal. In the event that the instructor cannot be contacted, the student may proceed through the appeal process with the department chairperson serving to represent the instructor in the appeal to the best of his/her ability. The department chairperson may also appoint an alternate faculty member (preferably from the same discipline as the original instructor) to represent the interests of the instructor in the appeal process.)
2. A written grade appeal shall be made by the student directly to the FACULTY member who gave the grade within twenty-five (25) calendar days after the beginning of the semester following the issuance of the grade. A copy of the appeal must be sent to the chairperson of the department in which the appeal is made. Summer school shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the calendar day term in the previous sentence for grades issued in the spring semester; winter session shall not constitute a semester for purposes of calculating the appeal period for grades issued in the fall semester. If the department chairperson is the FACULTY member subject to grade appeal, then the chair of the department Academic Appeals Committee shall substitute for the department chairperson in this process.

Should the FACULTY member find in favor of the student, the grade change form, initialed by the department chairperson, shall be sent within ten (10) calendar days to the Registrar, who will notify the student of the grade change. Should the FACULTY member find in favor of the grade as given, the student shall be notified, in writing, within ten (10) calendar days by the FACULTY member, with copy to the department chairperson.

3. Should the student desire, he/she may appeal a negative decision by the FACULTY member to the Academic Appeals Committee of the department in which he/she received the grade within ten (10) calendar days after being notified by the FACULTY member. The appeal shall be made, in writing, to the chairperson of the departmental Academic Appeals Committee, with a copy provided to the department chairperson. The Committee shall hold a hearing within ten (10) calendar days following the student appeal. Both the FACULTY member and the student involved shall be invited to attend. The appeal shall be heard under the following conditions:
  - a) While it is ideal that the entire Academic Appeals Committee hear the appeal, a minimum of a majority of faculty on the Academic Appeals Committee and at least one student member shall hear the appeal. Only members who attend the hearing shall have the right to vote on the appeal.
  - b) The Academic Appeals Committee shall only consider facts and circumstances surrounding the assignment of the grade to determine if the grade was a result of a calculation error or was assigned based on unsubstantiated academic evaluation by the instructor. In no event shall impact of the decision on the student's academic standing or other circumstance outside the standard of review above be considered in the appeal.
  - c) The Committee shall have the power by simple majority vote of those members who attended the appeal hearing to decide cases involving grades erroneously calculated or assigned based on this policy. A tie vote of the Committee upholds the FACULTY

member's decision.

- d) No student or FACULTY member shall sit in judgment if he/she is involved in the case, is a family member of either party, or resides in the same residence of either party.

The Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee shall inform the student in writing regarding the outcome of the appeal. Should the committee find in favor of the student, a recommendation of a grade change shall be sent to the Dean of the appropriate College or School. The Dean shall thereafter submit the grade change form to the Registrar within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the committee recommendation.

4. The student may appeal the ruling of the departmental Academic Appeals Committee to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs only in either of the following circumstances: (1) there was an error in procedure or interpretation of this policy that was so substantial as to effectively deny the student a fair hearing; or (2) new and significant evidence, which could not have been presented by diligent preparation at the initial hearing, has become available. The student shall present this appeal in writing to the Office of the Provost/VPAA within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the ruling from the departmental Academic Appeals Committee. The appeal must include evidence indicating the occurrence of one of the two above cited circumstances. The Provost/VPAA may hold a hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of this appeal, if the Provost determines the appeal appears warranted based on (1) and/or (2), above; otherwise the student will be informed that the appeal has been denied. If a hearing is scheduled, the participants will include the Provost/VPAA (or his/her designee), the FACULTY member, the chairperson of the Academic Appeals Committee, and the student involved under the following conditions.
  - a) The student and FACULTY member will receive a written decision regarding the grade appeal from the Provost/VPAA, copied to the department's Academic Appeals Committee and department chairperson.
  - b) The Provost/VPAA shall only consider facts and circumstances surrounding the assignment of the grade to determine if the grade was a result of a calculation error or was assigned based on unsubstantiated academic evaluation by the instructor.
  - c) The Provost/VPAA shall not sit in judgment if he/she is involved in the case, is a family member of either party, or resides in the same residence of either party. In this case, the appeal, or determination of the same shall be heard by the President.
  - d) The decision of the Provost/VPAA regarding the grade appeal will be final. If the Provost/VPAA finds for the student, the Provost/VPAA will direct the department chairperson to work with the FACULTY member and/or other faculty in that discipline to determine the appropriate grade.

## REVISION

This policy is a revision of the April 27, 1983 Policy on Student Grade Appeals. The provisions of this policy can be changed or deleted only by mutual agreement of Edinboro University APSCUF and Edinboro University Management at Meet and Discuss, or by a change in the Collective Bargaining Agreement at the state level.

Revised 10/04/2001

Revised October, 2013

Revised November, 2016