University of Nebraska and College of Arts and Sciences Grade Appeal Policies

The College of Arts and Sciences establishes the following policies for review of grade appeal cases. Either the student or instructor may appeal the decision of a departmental grade appeal committee to the Educational Policy Committee. Appeals should be directed to the Chair of the EPC. A separate procedure is provided for cases involving questions of academic integrity.

I. Mandate

From Chapter 5, Section 5.3 of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Bylaws:

**Academic Evaluation.** Students shall be informed of the requirements, standards, objectives, and evaluation procedures at the beginning of each individual course. Each student shall be given a performance evaluation during the progress of the course if requested. Each College or school shall provide for a faculty-student appeals committee for students who believe that evaluation of their academic progress has been prejudiced or capricious. Such procedure shall provide for changing a student's evaluation upon the committee's finding that an academic evaluation by a member of a faculty has been improper.

II. Departmental Procedures

A. All departments must have and publish a grade appeal procedure in keeping with the requirements of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Bylaws and Policies. Students are expected to exhaust all remedies for appeal at the department level before appealing a grade decision to the EPC.

B. Under normal circumstances, students must initiate a grade appeal within the first 60 calendar days after the final grade is issued in a course, excluding summer semesters. Departments must communicate a decision to both the student and the instructor within 30 calendar days after a grade appeal is initiated by a student through consultation with either the instructor or department chair, excluding summer semesters.

C. All departments must submit a report on any departmental grade appeal committee hearing to the CAS Dean’s office within 15 calendar days of the committee’s decision. Such reports are to include:

1. a copy of the department’s grade appeal policy;
2. a list of all grade appeal committee members;
3. copies of any documents consulted in developing the committee’s decision; and
4. a written statement from the department chair or grade appeal committee chair including:
   a. an explanation of how the department’s procedures were followed;
   b. a timeline of the appeals process;
   c. a rationale for the committee decision; and
   d. when applicable, an explanation of how the final course grade was calculated.

III. EPC Appeal Procedures

A. Under normal circumstances, any student or instructor wishing to file an appeal of a departmental grade appeal committee decision must submit a written appeal to the Chair of the EPC within 30 calendar days (excluding summer semesters) after the department grade appeal
committee delivers its decision. Such appeals must include the following:

1. an account of the facts surrounding the awarding of the disputed grade;
2. a complete account of steps taken at the department level to resolve the dispute;
3. copies of all documents presented to the department committee, including a copy of the course syllabus; and
4. an explanation of how the relevant grades were calculated.

B. Upon receiving the written appeal, the chair of the EPC will schedule a committee meeting for consideration of the appeal and will forward the relevant documents to all committee members. Committee members for grade appeals must include at least one student representative. The department chair and committee, instructor, and student will be notified of the appeal and informed of the right to examine a copy of the appeal.

C. In ruling on grade appeals, the EPC will not attempt to resolve disputes about a student’s knowledge of a particular subject matter. The EPC’s responsibilities extend to determinations about whether evaluation of a student has been prejudiced or capricious, and whether departmental grade appeal procedures have been followed so as to have extended a fair and proper hearing at the department level to all principle parties in the dispute.

D. Upon examination of the written appeal, one of the following courses of action may be taken:

1) The EPC may determine that it requires additional information to resolve the case. If so, it will request such information and then reconvene at a later time.

2) The EPC may determine that remedies at the department level have not been exhausted, and may decline to consider the case until further action is taken at the department level.

3) The EPC may determine that it concurs with the judgment of the departmental committee, agrees that a fair and proper hearing has been accorded at the department level, and will adopt the department’s recommendation on the matter as its own.

4) The EPC may decide to open a grade appeal hearing, only if at least four members of the EPC grade appeal committee vote to open such a hearing. The ground for opening a hearing is a finding of some credible evidence, based on the written appeal, that either the grading decision was improper due to prejudice or caprice, or that a fair and proper hearing was not accorded at the department level, or both. Prejudice generally means that bias or other inappropriate factors have improperly influenced a decision. Capricious generally means that the decision was irrational, whimsical, or failed to properly follow procedures.

IV. Grade Appeal Hearing Procedures

When a grade appeal hearing is opened by the EPC, both the instructor and the student will be invited to present their cases. The EPC also may choose to invite testimony from other members of the department or other parties whose testimony is relevant to the case. Grade appeal hearing procedures will be sent to both the instructor and student.

The EPC grade appeal committee will so conduct itself that:

1) its members are fully cognizant of its procedures before their deliberations begin;
2) no one is kept waiting more than 30 minutes to appear; and
3) confidentiality is maintained.
All principal parties to the dispute who appear before the committee will be entitled to hear whatever any person invited before the committee has to say, and an opportunity for rebuttal will be extended to all speakers. All those who speak before the committee will confine themselves to answering the committee’s questions or to rebuttal; they will not be allowed to speak otherwise and should be informed of this provision beforehand. Following the hearing, any person providing testimony will be dismissed so that the committee may deliberate.

All written materials relevant to a case must be made available to committee members and principal parties to the dispute at least 48 hours prior to any meeting in which the case will be considered. After that time, additional written material will not be accepted unless the EPC requests it and makes it available to all parties to the dispute.

A final decision will be determined by majority vote of the EPC grade appeal committee. The committee will determine whether evaluation of the student’s academic progress has been prejudiced or capricious. If the committee finds that an academic evaluation by an instructor has been improper, it will determine how the student's evaluation should be changed accordingly. The CAS Dean will be requested to submit any such changes to the Registrar.

The EPC grade appeal committee’s decision will be communicated in a written letter to the CAS Dean, with copies provided to all principal parties in the dispute and the department. The letter will provide a justification for and explanation of the decision, and will be submitted within 15 calendar days after the decision is made, exclusive of summer semesters.

V. Summary Timetable

Under normal circumstances, the following timetable is to be followed in the appeals process. All dates are exclusive of summer semesters:

Students must initiate grade appeals within the first 60 calendar days of the semester following the semester in which the course was taken.

Departmental grade appeal committees must communicate a decision to both the student and instructor within 30 calendar days after the student appeal was initiated through consultation with the instructor or department chair.

A student or instructor who wishes to appeal a departmental grade appeal committee decision must submit a written appeal to the Chair of the EPC within 30 calendar days after the department grade appeal committee delivers its decision.

If the EPC grade appeal committee chooses to open a grade appeal hearing, the committee will communicate its decision in a letter to the CAS Dean within 15 calendar days after the decision is made. All written materials relevant to a case must be made available to committee members and principal parties to the dispute at least 48 hours prior to any meeting in which the case will be considered.

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