

## Grade Appeals – ISQA Graduate Courses

(Approved by ISQA Graduate Faculty March 5, 2010)

### **Charge**

The Student Grade Appeal Committee will hear grade appeals from graduate students. Students may initiate a grade appeal when they believe their evaluation in a course has been arbitrary or capricious. An “arbitrary or capricious action” is an action taken without regard for the facts or circumstances of the appeal, without some basis which would lead a reasonable, informed, and honest person to the same conclusion. The Student Grade Appeal Committee will adopt the UNO Graduate Council’s criteria for determining whether a course grade has been assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner (*Grade Appeals in Graduate Level Courses: Guidelines for Graduate Programs/Departments, UNO Graduate Council, 12-14-2009, section II*)

### **Composition**

The Student Grade Appeal Committee (“the Committee”) shall consist of the faculty members of the Graduate Programming Committee (GPC) plus the student representative on the GPC. Any faculty member who has a conflict of interest in the appeal shall recuse him or herself. If the GPC chair has a conflict of interest, the most senior faculty member by rank on the GPC shall chair the Committee. The Committee shall have at least three faculty members. If fewer than three eligible faculty GPC members are available, then the Committee chair may invite as many other members of the ISQA graduate faculty as necessary to reach the minimum number of faculty required.

All members of the committee shall have one vote.

### **General Procedures**

The student must first attempt to resolve the matter with the course instructor.

If the resolution with the instructor is unsatisfactory, the student may initiate an appeal by filing a simple, clear written statement of the reasons for his/her appeal. The statement should address why the student feels the grade was awarded in an arbitrary and capricious manner. This statement shall be filed with the GPC chair. The chair shall then determine whether any GPC members have a conflict of interest and exclude these from the Committee. The chair shall then call for a meeting to consider the appeal.

The initiation of an appeal must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days following receipt of the grade from the Office of the Registrar.

The Committee shall act as expeditiously as possible and in no case delay its decision for more than thirty (30) days from the date of the filing of the appeal except where it can be shown that the student appellant has caused the delays or has, for good cause, given prior permission to extend the inquiry for a period beyond the thirty (30) calendar day limit.

The Committee shall have the power to order a change of the grade of the appealing student for a course within the jurisdiction of the ISQA department, upon finding that the original evaluation was arbitrarily and capriciously awarded.

The Committee shall inform the faculty member and student involved of its decision. If the decision is to recommend that the grade be changed, the faculty member will have seven (7) working days to file the appropriate form. If this does not occur the Committee chair will file the appropriate form to make the change effective.

Any principal may file an appeal of the Committee decision in writing to the Graduate College per Graduate College guidelines.

### **Procedures during the hearing**

Except as forbidden by University and other policies and laws on confidentiality, all written material pertinent to a case must be submitted to the chair at least three (3) working days prior to any meeting in which the case will be considered. After that time, additional written material will not be accepted. A sub-group of the Committee, as part of the pre-appeal process, will evaluate the relevancy of submitted material prior to the appeal hearing. The sub-group will consist of the GPC chair, a faculty member of the Committee, and the student member of the Committee. The chair shall make the relevant material available to committee members and principals to the dispute at least two (2) working days prior to any meeting in which the case will be considered.

The hearing is a closed meeting. If any person is invited to appear before the Committee and speak, then all principals to the dispute will be invited to attend, although they need not do so.

The Committee will so conduct itself that:

1. Its members and the principals to the dispute are fully cognizant of its procedures before their deliberations begin;
2. The rules and precedents of academic due process are fulfilled at all times, especially those concerning confidentiality.

Principals appearing before the Committee will be entitled to hear whatever any person invited before the Committee has to say, and the right of rebuttal will be extended to all speakers. All people speaking 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.

The following information must be presented:

- The formal syllabus for the course from which the student is appealing the evaluation and the course syllabus given to the student.
- If available, the materials that were used to ascertain the grade of the student, tests, papers and any other graded materials.

The following information may be presented:

- The oral testimony or written statements of student members of the instructor's classes past and present.
- Standardized student evaluation forms from past or present classes.
- The oral testimony or written statements of faculty and administrative employees.
- The testimony or written statements of any other person the chairperson shall give leave to inject information.
- The grades of all class members. Such grades shall include each individual item considered in awarding a grade and the final totals awarded to all students in the class. In no circumstances shall the identity of any other class member be disclosed.

The following information may not be presented:

- Evidence of cheating unless notice is given to the student at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of the hearing that this claim will be voiced.
- Extraneous, immaterial or irrelevant material dealing with the instructor or student.
- The grade book or evaluation sheet used by the instructor to record the grades for that or any other semester, as it may contain confidential information not relevant to the appeal.

## **Voting**

Upon completion of the hearing, the committee shall excuse all but the members of the Committee. The members shall then vote on the validity of the claim and any change that they feel proper. This and all other votes of the committee shall be by secret ballot. As soon as the votes have been counted, the ballots shall be destroyed. In no case shall the number of votes cast on either side of the controversy be disclosed to anyone.