

Appeal of Grades for Graduate Degrees In the School of Interdisciplinary Informatics

Background

The Graduate College leaves it to the academic units to determine the grade appeal process for a student within the particular discipline. Specifically:

“Appeal of grades in graduate-level courses shall be made through the graduate student grade appeal procedures for the campus through which the grade was awarded. Students who believe their evaluation in a course has been prejudiced or capricious must first attempt to resolve the matter with the course instructor and then the department through which the course was offered. The initiation of the appeal in writing by the student must be filed within six weeks following receipt of the grade from the Office of the Registrar.”

This document details the procedures for grade appeals within the department, after which the student could continue the appeal process to the Graduate College within the six-week time limit.

Procedure

The student should first make every attempt to resolve the dispute with the class instructor.

If the student feels that the resolution with the instructor is unsatisfactory, the student may initiate an appeal by filing a simple, clearly written statement of the reasons for his/her appeal. This statement shall be filed with the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) chair. The statement should address why the student feels the grade was awarded in an arbitrary and capricious manner. The GPC utilizes the UNO Graduate Council’s criteria for determining whether a course grade has been assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

The GPC chair will determine whether any GPC members have a conflict of interest and exclude these from the consideration of the appeal. If the GPC chair has a conflict of interest, the most senior faculty member by rank on the GPC shall take over as chair for the grade appeal. The appeal shall be handled by at least three faculty members. If fewer than three eligible faculty GPC members are available, then the chair may invite as many other members of the graduate faculty as necessary to reach the minimum of three. The chair will additionally ask a student to serve as a representative during the grade appeal process. The chair shall then call for a meeting to consider the appeal.

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. The chair shall make the 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 following information may be presented:

- The course outline presented to the student.
- 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.

The student can invite others to provide additional information. 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 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 its members and the principals to the dispute are fully cognizant of its procedures before their deliberations begin. The rules and precedents of academic due process are fulfilled at all times, especially those concerning confidentiality.

The Committee will meet, hear both sides of the dispute, examine all materials presented, and vote on whether to file a grade change and if so what grade is appropriate. All members of the committee have one vote, and in the case of an even number of committee members a tie vote is considered a vote in favor of the student filing the appeal. The vote is by secret ballot. As soon as the ballots are counted the ballots are destroyed. In no case shall the number of votes cast on either side be disclosed.

The Committee shall act as expeditiously as possible and in no case delay its decision for more than thirty calendar 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 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 Si2, 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 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.

See Also

Grade Appeals in Graduate Level Courses: Guidelines for Graduate Programs/Departments, UNO Graduate Council, 12-14-2009, section II