

# Updated Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy for the College of Information Science & Technology

## **Rationale for the policy update**

The College of Information Science & Technology was notified by Academic Affairs that its Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy did not align with the current Board of Regents policy RP-5.1.2 – The Student in the Academic Community. The proposed update to this policy aims to secure compliance with this Board of Regents policy.

## **Draft Language of the Revised Policy**

The Nebraska Regents By-Laws and the College of Information Science & Technology Policies and Procedures require a process that allows a student to appeal a final course grade. This process allows a student to initiate a grade appeal when the student believes a course grade was awarded prejudicially or capriciously.

Capricious means that the instructor acted with a sudden change of mind without notifying students about criteria and/or requirements which ultimately affected the student's grade. That is, the instructor acted impulsively and unpredictably.

Prejudicial means the instructor treated the student differently, apart from the norm, thereby detrimentally affecting the student's grade.

The student **MUST** provide specific information regarding how the instructor behaved in a capricious or prejudicial manner in awarding the student's grade.

Individuals who believe that their grade in a particular course does not properly reflect their course performance should first contact the instructor to determine the rationale for the grade or if there was an error in reporting. Consultation with the instructor should take place before taking any formal action in regard to a grade appeal. The student must document in writing all conversations with (or attempts to contact) the instructor about the student's grade.

After the instructor has provided the rationale for the grade in question and has indicated that no error in reporting was made, the individual may then wish to petition the department or school for reconsideration. In such instances, the student should contact the department chair or school director to forward the grade appeal to the appropriate Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC), which will evaluate the grade appeal. If the

instructor whose grade is being appealed is a member of the Undergraduate Program Committee, then they will recuse themselves from the grade appeal deliberation. The Undergraduate Program Committee will schedule a Student Grade Appeal Hearing within thirty (30) calendar days following the receipt of the individual's grade appeal. If the appeal hearing must be held after more than thirty (30) calendar days since the filing, the Dean or their designee must approve of the delay and the Dean or their designee shall provide a written explanation to the student and instructor, as to the reason(s) for the delay.

At the hearing the student may present: the syllabus for the course, materials which were used to ascertain grades in the course (exams, papers, and so on), oral or written statements from students of the instructor's classes--past and/or present, the oral testimony or written statements of faculty and administrative employees, the testimony or written statement of any other person who the UPC Chair allows to provide information. Extraneous, immaterial or irrelevant materials, as determined by the UPC Chair, may NOT be presented.

At the hearing the instructor may present: the syllabus for the course, materials that were used to determine grades in the course, a spreadsheet containing all recorded grades for all class members (student names and ID #s MUST be removed), oral or written statements from students members of the instructor's classes--past and/or present, the oral testimony or written statements of faculty and administrative employees, the testimony or written statement of any other person who the UPC Chair allows to provide information. Extraneous or irrelevant materials, as determined by the UPC Chair, may NOT be presented.

Upon completion of the hearing, all present are excused except the members of the Undergraduate Program Committee. Further discussion may follow. A vote to support or deny the grade appeal is made by secret ballot. The UPC Chair counts the votes in view of the committee and votes only if necessary to break a tie. The majority prevails. The ballots are destroyed immediately, and the vote count may be revealed ONLY to the IS&T Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

The Undergraduate Program Committee has the authority to change the grade awarded to the student. If the grade is changed, there will be no permanent record of the original grade. The IS&T Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs shall contact the UNO Registrar to officially request the grade change.

The student and instructor will be informed in writing by the UPC Chair of the decision made by the Committee.

If an individual believes that the department or school action did not comply with the due process procedures or did not provide legitimate relief, he or she may petition the Academic Committee in the College of Information Science & Technology. The Academic Committee is the appellate body for grade appeals after a student has received a decision at the department or school level. Students wishing to appeal a grade to the IS&T Academic Committee should contact the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs in the IS&T Dean's Office, who will forward the grade appeal to the Committee. If the instructor whose grade is being appealed is a member of the IS&T Academic Committee, then he or she will recuse themselves from the grade appeal deliberation. The process followed for this appeal mirrors that followed by the Undergraduate Program Committee.

**Relevant contact information:**

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**Policy Update Implementation Plan**

It is expected that this updated Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy will take effect immediately following its approval by the IS&T Academic Committee, following established Academic Approval Procedures in the IS&T College. This is expected to take place in the Spring 2025 semester.

This updated policy will apply to all undergraduate courses in the College of Information Science & Technology.