

# **College of Education Grade Appeal Procedure**

**I. Overview:** The College of Education Grade Appeal Procedure was designed to protect students from biased or inaccurate evaluation procedures without unfairly impinging on the academic freedoms of the faculty. Consistent with this, it is recognized that:

- a. Students have the right for their work to be evaluated fairly and accurately using a method consistent with professional academic standards.
- b. Faculty members have the right to evaluate students' work using any method that is professionally acceptable, submitted in writing to all students, and applied consistently to all students.
- c. It is assumed that A&M-Central Texas faculty members appropriately evaluate students' work, so the burden of proof for a grade appeal lies with the student.

**II. Academic Dishonesty:** The process for appealing a professor's determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty is separate from the process for determining if a grade was determined fairly/accurately. If a student wishes to appeal a grade that was influenced by the faculty member's belief that the student violated the university's code of academic honesty *and* the student denies these allegations, the student must complete the university appeal process for accusations of violating the code of academic honesty prior to initiating a grade appeal.

**III. Justification for an Appeal:** Grade appeals may only be initiated if the grade was influenced by one of the following:

- a. **Error:** A clerical/computational error was made in calculating/reporting the grade.
- b. **Prejudice:** The faculty member's evaluation of the student's work was influenced by the faculty member's negative attitude toward the student.
- c. **Arbitrary method:** The grading procedure departed substantially from accepted academic norms in a manner that indicated a failure to exercise professional judgment (e.g., no explanation given regarding the basis for assigning point values to assignments; grading procedure deviated substantially from what was stated in the syllabus without notifying students in advance of this change).
- d. **Inconsistent application:** The student's grade was not determined using the same process applied to other students in the course.
- e. **Unsubstantiated charge of dishonesty:** The grade was based on a charge of academic dishonesty by the student which has been determined by the university to be unsubstantiated by the evidence presented.

**Insufficient reasons upon which to base an appeal include:**

- a. Disagreement with course policies that are clearly communicated in writing to all students.
- b. Differences in policies among sections of the same course or across faculty members.
- c. Potential negative impact on the student (e.g., loss of financial aid).
- d. Dissatisfaction with instructional style and/or methods (**Note:** Students who have complaints regarding the instruction they receive should address these directly with their instructor or that faculty member's supervisor).

**IV. Appeal Process:**

- a. A student who wishes to appeal a decision of a faculty member must request a review by that person within 30 calendar days of the originating event using the *Grade Appeal Form* (located on the website for the College of Education).
  - i. The faculty member is required to give the student a written response within 15 calendar days.
  - ii. The response by the faculty member (or his or her immediate supervisor) should be made using the *Appeal Response Form* (located on the website for the College of Education).
  - iii. For an appeal of a course grade the originating event shall be considered to be the posting of the grade to the university record. For an appeal of an assignment/exam grade, the originating event shall be considered to be the posting of the grade by the faculty member.
- b. If the faculty member is not available, a response is not made within the specified timeframe, or if the student is dissatisfied with the response, the student should submit a written appeal to the Department Chair (or his or her designated proxy; the Chair must designate a proxy if he or she is the faculty member who assigned the grade to be appealed) within 60 calendar days of the originating event.
  - i. This submission should include a copy of the original *Grade Appeal Form*, a copy of the *Appeal Response Form* from the faculty member, and a written explanation from the student addressing why he or she believes the faculty member's response was inadequate/unsatisfactory.
  - ii. The Chair (or proxy) then has 15 calendar days to respond to the written appeal.
- c. If the student is unsatisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal in writing to the College's Academic Appeals Committee within 15 calendar days of notification of the decision from the Department Chair. The Committee will review the student's appeal and after hearing both sides of the incident, the committee may decide that no

further review is justified or may render a recommendation to the College Dean within 30 calendar days of receiving the student's appeal.

- i. The Committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty members appointed by the College Dean and two student representatives.
  1. The student representatives will be the president of the university's Psychology and Counseling honor society (Psi Chi) and the president of the university's student chapter of the Association of Texas Professional Educators. If these students are not available to participate they may appoint a replacement from within their respective organizations.
- ii. The Committee may request additional information from the parties involved (e.g., course syllabus, work samples, testimony).
- iii. The Committee will notify the student and faculty member that the appeal is under committee review.
- iv. If the student or faculty member wishes to provide the Committee with additional materials explaining their position, this should be done within 7 calendar days of the time the committee is asked to review the appeal.
- v. The student and faculty member both have the right to present evidence in person to the committee, but the committee may deliberate in private.
- d. The decision of the College Dean is final and will be communicated to the student in writing.

*Last revised 10-3-14*