

California State University, Stanislaus

Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures

To initiate a grade appeal, the student must complete the Grade Appeal Form and adhere to the procedures and timelines described below.

1. By order of the Chancellor's Office, the Senate of CSU Stanislaus is responsible for providing students a grade appeal procedure.
2. There is a presumption that grades assigned by faculty members are correct. Thus, the burden of proof rests with the student who is appealing.
3. Appeal procedures are available only for review of alleged capricious grading and not for review of an instructor's judgment in assessing the quality of a student's work. In the absence of capricious grading, the grade determined by the instructor of record is final.

Capricious grading, as used here, constitutes any of the following:

- a. Instructor's failure to notify students as to the basis of grade determination in a clear and timely manner.
- b. Grading that results from a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.
- c. Grading based on anything other than the student's performance in the course.
- d. Discrimination or prejudice.
- e. Error in calculating the grade.
- f. Arbitrary grade assignment (the lack of consistent and equitable standards for grade assignment).

The grade appeal shall be dismissed by the Grade Appeal Committee if:

- a. The allegations would not constitute capricious grading, or
 - b. The only disagreement is with the instructor's grading standards, or
 - c. The appeal was not timely, or
 - d. The student has not provided the instructor with written notification.
4. Students who can demonstrate a reasonable doubt about the correctness of an assigned grade deserve access to a due process hearing before an appropriate body and, when justified, deserve to receive a grade correction.
 5. If a student believes a grade assigned is incorrect, the student must file with the instructor a written statement of appeal and the Grade Appeal Procedures form within the first four weeks of the immediately following fall or spring semester. (The Grade Appeal Procedures form is available from the Office of the Vice Provost, MSR 360, or call 209/667-3082, or online at <http://studentaffairs.csustan.edu/>.) This appeal must detail and document the compelling reasons which form the basis for the student's contention that the assigned grade is incorrect. The instructor will respond in writing, within 15 working days on receipt of the appeal, indicating either approval or denial of the appeal. (If the appropriate College Dean or his/her designee judges that the instructor of record is inaccessible, the student may initiate the appeal with the department chair.)
 6. In the event the instructor denies the appeal or fails to respond in writing, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, the student shall submit the written appeal to the department chair with any further clarifications and/or contentions the student chooses to add to the original appeal. This action must be taken within 15 working days of the time the instructor informs the student of the denial. The department chair will, on receipt of the written appeal from the student, constitute a Grade Appeal Committee within 15 working days.

7. The Grade Appeal Committee shall be appointed by the chair in consultation with the student and instructor and consist of one faculty member from the involved department, one faculty member from outside the involved department, and the President of the Associated Students or his/her designee. The department chair shall, in consultation with the instructor and student, appoint the chair of the Grade Appeal Committee. In those cases in which a Grade Appeal Committee is constituted to hear multiple appeals of capricious grading from students in the same class, the Committee Members must take actions to ensure confidentiality/privacy of each student and render an independent decision for each case.
8. The duties of the Grade Appeal Committee shall be completed within 20 working days from the date constituted. This committee shall be provided all prior written correspondence from the student and instructor related to the grade appeal.
9. The Committee will review the written documents and take one of the following actions:
 - a. Judge that the appeal has no merit and so inform the student and instructor in writing, in which case the matter is ended, or
 - b. Judge that there is a reasonable doubt regarding the correctness of the grade and, in this event, initiate a hearing.
10. In the event a hearing is initiated, the Committee shall investigate and discuss the matter with the involved student and instructor. Both shall be entitled to be present throughout the hearing and to present evidence, including testimony by other persons. The student and instructor may be accompanied by a person from the University faculty or student body to assist them in presenting evidence. The hearing shall not be open to the public. At the close of the hearing, the Committee shall deliberate privately. The chair shall assure that the following procedures are employed in the conduct of the hearing:
 - a. Efforts may be made to resolve the matter by extra-procedural settlement at any time.
 - b. The student shall first make an opening statement by presenting evidence which the student believes constitutes legitimate grounds for the grade appeal.
 - c. After the student has presented his/her evidence, the Committee may agree to terminate the hearing, if the evidence presented does not constitute legitimate grounds for the grade appeal.
 - d. After the student presents evidence in support of the grade appeal, the instructor may present rebuttal evidence.
 - e. Following the private deliberations of the Committee, the chair shall, in writing, inform the student, instructor, and department chair of its findings. If the Committee finds that there is a compelling reason to approve the grade appeal, the instructor is expected to change the grade to the grade recommended by the Committee.
 - f. In the event the instructor chooses not to change the grade, the department chair shall be vested with the authority and required to inform the Enrollment Services Office in writing to change the original grade to the grade recommended by the Committee. The transcript shall reflect that the grade was changed as a result of administrative action.
11. If the department chair is the instructor of record, or serves in lieu of the instructor, the appropriate College Dean or his/her designee shall assume the responsibilities normally discharged by the chair.
12. In the event the student or instructor alleges that improper grade appeal procedures were employed, the appropriate College Dean or his/her designee shall investigate and take corrective action, if improprieties have occurred.

13. The Committee is not authorized to reprimand or otherwise take disciplinary action against the instructor. Evidence put before the Committee shall be admissible in any disciplinary proceedings which may thereafter be undertaken against the instructor, but the disciplinary body shall make an independent determination of whether that evidence and any other information before that body constitutes sufficient proof of the conduct charged.
14. None of the established procedures available to the instructor to raise grievances before the Faculty Affairs Committee or through CSU grievance procedures shall be abridged or affected by the actions of the Committee.
15. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee shall annually provide a written summary of grade appeals to the CSU Stanislaus Academic Senate and President.

Specific questions regarding Grade Appeal Procedures should be addressed to the Vice Provost, whose office is located in the Mary Stuart Rogers Building, Suite 360. Students may also call (209) 667-3082.

Detailed grade appeal procedures are also included in the Faculty Handbook and the Student Handbook.

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