GRADE APPEALS
(www.bsu.edu/associateprovost/gradeappeal)
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For questions, contact Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, AD 326, (765) 285-3716

I. Introduction

A. This process includes any appeal of a final grade (pass-fail or letter grade) for a course, field experience, clinical, student teaching, practicum, internship, or externship. *Appeal of an involuntary removal from a course in the middle of a term would be subject to departmental or program procedures, not the grade appeal process, unless a failing grade was issued.* Students who are considering an appeal of a final grade are encouraged to meet informally with their instructor before submitting a written appeal.

B. Grades issued for examinations, individual papers, quizzes, portfolios and other grades that are not final course grades are not eligible for consideration for the University Grade Appeal process.

C. This appeal procedure is not to be used for review of instructor assessments on the quality of a student's work or to complain of an instructor's performance.

D. Time deadlines in the following procedures are intended to provide a framework for the grade appeal process and may be extended, as circumstances warrant, by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Vice Provost) or designee.

E. This policy will be reviewed, and updated as necessary, by the Ball State Grade Appeals Committee at its meeting each academic year.

F. The Office of the Dean of Students, or designated alternate office, will provide an annual notice by email of the grade appeal policy to students and faculty and will provide a paper copy of the policy to those persons who request one.

G. Faculty members are encouraged to note the grade appeal policy and provide the link www.bsu.edu/associateprovost/gradeappeal in their syllabi.

II. Department Grade Appeal Process

A. A student who wishes to appeal a final grade must send, to the instructor, a request for reconsideration of the grade with a rationale for reconsideration. The request shall be in writing (email preferred) and sent to the instructor within five (5) school days (including summer terms) after the final grade is posted by the Registrar's office. In accordance with the *BSU Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* section 4.4, "School day means Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. It does not include Saturday or Sunday, nor does it include any day on which there are no scheduled university classes."

1. If the appeal is for a fall semester grade, appeals should be submitted within five (5) school days following the December grade submission. If the appeal is for a spring semester grade, appeals should be submitted within five (5) school days following the May grade submission. If the appeal is for a first summer session (Summer I) grade, appeals should be submitted within five (5) school days following the June grade submission. If the appeal is for a second summer session (Summer II) or Full

Summer grade, appeals should be submitted within (5) school days following the July grade submission.

B. The instructor shall respond in writing (email preferred) with a decision regarding the student's grade within five (5) school days after receiving the request.

C. If the instructor does not respond within the five (5) school day period, the student may choose to send the appeal request to the unit head (e.g., department chair or program director) of the department or program that offers the class for a response.

D. If the instructor responds within the five (5) school day period with a decision with which the student does not agree and the student wishes to proceed with an appeal, the student shall send a written request (email preferred) for review of the grade to the unit head within five (5) school days of receiving the response from the instructor. The written communication to the unit head should provide detailed information regarding the disputed grade including the written exchanges with the instructor.

E. The unit head shall respond in writing (email preferred) to the student within five (5) school days of receiving the student's request for a review of the grade. The unit head's response should outline the details of the resolution. If the unit head cannot resolve the dispute, communication to the student should refer the student to the University Grade Appeal process (e.g., the link to the Grade Appeal policy is www.bsu.edu/associateprovost/gradeappeal on the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs website.)

F. The student may then choose to proceed with a university-level grade appeal as described below.

III. University Grade Appeal Process

A. *Formal appeal*. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the unit level, the student may request consideration through the university grade appeal process. The university grade appeal process consists of the following steps:

1. The student must submit a formal appeal of the grade in writing (email preferred) to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs within five (5) school days after notification from the unit head. A formal written grade appeal is limited to 25 pages of documentation and must include:

   a. Request for Consideration of Grade Appeal by the University Grade Appeal Committee form (found at www.bsu.edu/associateprovost/gradeappeal) inclusive of:

      i. The student's full name, email address, telephone number and local mailing address;

      ii. The class name, number, and section number of the class in which the grade was received (e.g., SRCS 100, section 002, Introduction to Grade Appeals);

      iii. The instructor's name;

      iv. The semester in which the class was taken;

      v. The grade received;

vi. The grade expected to have been received.

b. The formal appeal submitted shall clearly include the criterion or criteria on which the appeal is based and a supporting argument for each criterion cited in the appeal with evidence that supports that argument. The University Grade Appeal Committee will only address those appeals for which a procedural or fairness issue is in question. The criteria for a grade appeal are:

   i. An obvious error in the calculation of the grade.

   ii. The assignment of a grade to a particular student by application of more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the course.

   iii. The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course.

   iv. The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.

c. The formal appeal submitted shall also include all written exchanges with the instructor and/or unit head regarding the grade appeal. The written exchanges must include the original date stamps. Direct forwards of emails to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs office are acceptable and preferred.

d. If more than 25 pages of materials are available, the student should include only the most relevant information and provide details on any additional materials that can be provided if needed. Formal appeals submitted to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs should not exceed the 25 page limit.

2. Once the formal appeal has been received, the Vice Provost or designee shall review the appeal to determine if the student has complied with grade appeal procedures, met the required deadlines, and provided the information above.

   a. If the student's appeal does not comply with grade appeal procedures, meet required deadlines, and provide information noted above, the student will be informed and the grade appeal process will be terminated.

   b. If the appeal meets the requirements, the Vice Provost or designee shall forward the student's appeal to the instructor by email (with copy to unit head) and solicit the following:

      i. A written response from the instructor;

      ii. A copy of the syllabus for the appropriate class; and

      iii. Any other materials relevant to the grade appeal (e.g., rubric, class grades, etc.).

3. The instructor is expected to provide the requested materials within five (5) school days. Upon receipt of the materials from the instructor, the Vice Provost or designee will convene a Screening Committee to review the appeal. The Screening Committee will include the Vice Provost or designee, the Dean of Students or designee, and the Vice President of the Student Government Association or designee. The Screening Committee will review the student's compliance with grade appeal procedures, the

written request for appeal, and the criteria cited within the written appeal. Based on these criteria, the Screening Committee will determine whether or not to refer the appeal to the University Grade Appeal Committee for a hearing.

a. If the decision is not to forward the appeal to a hearing, the appeal will be rejected. The Vice Provost shall inform the parties in writing of the decision and the matter is concluded.

b. If the appeal is approved for further review, the Vice Provost shall inform the parties in writing and convene a University Grade Appeal hearing as described below.

IV. University Grade Appeal Committee

A. *Membership*. The University Grade Appeal Committee is composed of one (1) undergraduate student, one (1) graduate student, and one (1) faculty member from each college.

1. *Student Membership.* The student membership will include one undergraduate and graduate student appointed by each of the college deans for a one-year appointment to assume their committee responsibility at the start of the fall semester and serving for a twelve-month term. A student member may serve an unlimited number of terms.

2. *Faculty Membership.* The faculty members, one from each of the colleges, shall be elected by the faculty of each individual college, assuming responsibility at the start of the fall semester and serving for a twelve-month term. A faculty member may serve an unlimited number of terms.

3. *Vacancies.* Should a faculty member or student vacancy occur, the appropriate dean shall appoint a member to the committee for the remainder of the twelve-month term.

B. *Duties.* Members of the University Grade Appeal Committee will populate Grade Appeal Hearing Panels as needed for review of individual cases. Additionally, the University Grade Appeal Committee will review the university grade appeal policies and procedures annually and update as necessary.

V. Hearing Procedures

A. *Quorum.* To conduct a hearing for a grade appeal, a hearing panel (Panel) composed of five (5) members of the University Grade Appeal Committee, of whom at least two (2) must be students (drawn from either the undergraduate pool or the graduate pool depending on the status of the student appellant) and two must be faculty. The Vice Provost or designee shall assemble the Panel. A hearing may proceed with a minimum of four (4) members present.

1. Members of the Panel will represent a minimum of two different colleges and include members from the college where the relevant course is housed.

2. All parties of the hearing will be made aware of Panel participants at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.
3. Panel members shall disqualify themselves if there is a personal bias or a conflict of interest with a grade appeal case or individual.
4. The student or instructor may challenge a Grade Appeal Hearing Panel member on the grounds of conflict of interest or personal bias. Challenges should be made in writing to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. The decision regarding disqualifying a challenged member shall be made by a majority vote of the remaining members present.
    a. If a challenge is upheld, the Vice Provost or designee has the discretion to either appoint another person to fill the vacancy or direct that the vacancy not be filled.

B. *Hearing Moderator.* The hearing shall be moderated by the Vice Provost or designee. The Dean of Students or designee will be present at all hearings as a non-voting procedural consultant to the Panel and will make a record of the proceedings.

C. *Additional Hearing Participants.* Both the student appellant and the instructor who assigned the grade shall each have the right to have one witness and one advisor participate in hearing activities. That person must be a student, faculty or staff person of the university or (in the case of the student) a parent/guardian. Any witnesses and advisors selected for the student and faculty member must be identified a minimum of 48 hours prior to the hearing by submitting individual's name, title (as appropriate), and role (witness or advisor) to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs in writing (email preferred).
    1. Witnesses may provide additional testimony relevant to the grade appeal and will participate in the hearing only during their testimony.
    2. Advisors are only present to consult with and support the student or faculty member involved. Any audio or visual distractions made by advisors may lead to their dismissal during the hearing at the discretion of the Vice Provost or designee following a minimum of one verbal warning. Advisors can be present for the duration of the hearing but are not permitted to participate in hearing activities.

D. *Notice of Hearing.* If a hearing is to be held, the student and the faculty member who assigned the grade being appealed will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing at least five (5) school days in advance. In case of an absent instructor, the unit head, shall either represent the instructor or appoint a faculty member from the department to represent the instructor at the hearing. The Panel may delay judgment if neither the faculty member nor a representative is available for the hearing, if such a presence, in the opinion of the Panel, is necessary to the decision.

E. *Conduct of Hearing.* The hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner and without reference to rules applicable to a court of law concerning the examination of witnesses and admissibility of evidence, but with a view toward providing the Panel with a complete understanding of the facts involved. Irrelevant, immaterial, and unduly repetitious evidence may be excluded. The hearing shall be closed to the public. The deliberations of the Panel shall be limited to Panel members only.

F. *Materials for Consideration.* Materials submitted for the Formal Grade Appeal (Section III.A.1 above) will be reviewed by the Grade Appeal Hearing Committee. No additional materials will be accepted for consideration.

G. *Presentation of Case.* The presentation of the case is the responsibility of the student. The instructor shall be provided an opportunity to respond to the student's claim and to present evidence in support of the original grade decision. Each presentation is not to exceed 15 minutes in length and will be followed by Panel members' questions. Following presentation by the student and instructor (in that order), both sides will also have an opportunity to call a witness for testimony (not to exceed 10 minutes in length). Witness testimony may take only one of two forms: 1) oral description of relevant information by the witness; or 2) written description provided by the witness read to the Panel by the Vice Provost or designee. If the witness is present and provides an oral testimony, testimony will be followed by Panel member questions. Parties are not required to provide witness testimony. Following the student and instructor presentations and any witness testimony, the student and instructor will be allotted 5 minutes for any closing comments they may have. After all presentations and questions, the student and instructor, as well as their advisors, will be excused for private committee deliberations.

H. *Access to Information.* The Panel will have access to all pertinent information in the case at least 48 hours prior to the hearing and may request additional information from either party or call additional witnesses as needed to render a decision.

I. *Multiple Appeals.* If two (2) or more members of a class appeal their grades, the Panel may elect to hear the appeals individually or collectively.

J. *Continuances.* The Panel, by majority vote, may continue the hearing to a later time or times.

K. *Additional Rules.* Procedural rules not inconsistent with these procedures may be established by the Panel from time to time to ensure that the hearing is conducted in a fair and orderly manner.

L. *Privacy of Appeal Hearing.* With the exception of the Dean of Students or designee for the purposes of maintaining the case record, Panel members shall not retain in their possession any personal files, materials received during the appeal procedure, or notes taken during the meetings of the University Grade Appeal Committee. No electronic files pertaining to the appeal should be printed or retained to hard drives at any time. No party, Panel member, or other participant or observer in the appeal procedure shall reveal any facts, documents, or testimony gained through participating in or observing the hearing to any other person, unless required by a court of law to do so or upon the advice of the university's legal counsel.

M. *Hearings during Summer Session and Breaks.* To ensure the functioning of the University Grade Appeal Committee during Summer Session and at other times when regular classes are not in session, the Vice Provost or designee may convene a hearing with a minimum of three persons chosen from the pool of the committee membership who are available. Should a minimum of three be unavailable from the pool, the Vice Provost or designee may select additional faculty members or students to participate in the hearing process.

VI. Findings

A. Decisions of the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel shall be made by majority vote conducted by written ballot. Upon completion of the hearing, the Vice Provost will communicate the Panel's decision via letter to the student, the instructor, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the instructor's department chairperson within three (3) school days of completion of the hearing.

B. *Findings of the Panel*. The Panel may render one of two decisions:

1. That a grade which has been appealed remains the same.
2. That a grade which has been appealed be changed with specific designation of the new grade.
    a. If the panel decides to change the grade, the instructor shall have five (5) school days in which to file a grade change with the Office of the Registrar or request a review by the Provost. In the event the instructor takes no action, the Provost shall process a change of grade form.

C. *Provost's Determination.* If either party believes that there were procedural errors that substantially affected the decision or that they did not receive a fair hearing, they may request a review by the Provost that shall be limited to an examination of the process and procedures followed. The Provost shall communicate the final decision to all parties in writing. The review may be resolved in one of the following ways:

1. The Provost will determine that there were no procedural errors that had a substantial effect, in which case the original decision is upheld. If that original decision was to change the grade, the Provost shall notify the faculty member that a change of grade form is to be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The instructor shall have five (5) school days in which to file a grade change with the Office of the Registrar or inform the Provost of intent not to do so. In the event the instructor takes no action or chooses not to change a grade, the Provost shall process a change of grade form.
2. The Provost will determine that there were procedural errors that had a substantial effect, in which case the grade appeal may be remanded back to the original Panel for further consideration.
3. *Transcript notation*. If a grade has been changed by the Provost, the appeal case record shall reflect the following: Original grade of ___ was overruled by the Provost upon recommendation of the University Grade Appeal Panel.
4. *Record*. A record of the case including all materials submitted during the appeal process, written exchanges to and from the student regarding the appeal, the record of the proceedings of the University Grade Appeal Committee hearing (if applicable) and communication to and from the Provost (if applicable) shall be retained on file in the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs for a period of one year after the decision. After that year, unless precluded by a pending legal matter, all materials will be destroyed with the exception of final decisions made by the screening committee, the University Grade Appeal Committee, and the Provost as applicable. These documents may be maintained in digital form.