



Academic Policies & Procedures Committee

GRADE APPEAL POLICY, approved by Faculty Council April 4, 2017

GRADE APPEAL CRITERIA

A student may appeal a final course grade only for one or more of the following criteria:

- A. The faculty member violated a specific University rule or policy pertaining to grading, including refusal to discuss a grade with the student;
- B. The faculty member did not provide stated grading criteria and a grading scale, did not follow the stated criteria or grading scale, or applied either of them inconsistently;
- C. A clerical or administrative error was made in the process of recording or reporting the grade, and the faculty member has not corrected it;
- D. The faculty member did not report any grade for the individual student;
- E. The grade reflects discriminatory, biased, abusive, exploitive, or otherwise improper conduct toward the individual student. These allegations will be referred to the appropriate office, as determined by legal counsel, for investigation. The scope of the investigation will be limited to the allegation(s), and will not address the grade appeal. Hence, the following appeal process may be placed on hold during the investigation of the alleged discrimination, but will not circumvent the grade appeal process. The Program Director and Department Chair (Second Level) will be informed of the determination of the investigation. Should the appeal involve the Program Director or the Chair as the instructor, his/her immediate supervisor will be informed. Due to the confidential nature of harassment, discrimination, and Title IX investigations the substance of the investigation will not be shared, only the outcome. In cases where a violation has been found, the Second Level reviewer will assess whether or not the violation impacted the appellant's grade. Determination of the final grade will be made through the formal grade appeal process.

APPEAL PROCESS

For the purpose of this procedure, "days" means academic/business days, not calendar days. Dates when classes are not in session will not count toward the timeline. "Term" means fall, spring, or summer academic terms.

First Level: Appeal to the Faculty Member

A student who wishes to appeal a grade for any of the criteria (A. through D., above) must first notify the instructor of record by email that he or she wishes to appeal, and discuss the reason(s) for questioning the final grade. If the grade appeal uses criterion E., then students may appeal directly to the Program Director or Department Chair (Second Level).

The deadline for a student to take the complaint to the faculty member is by 5pm CST on the 10th business day of the *semester following the final grade being appealed*.

A student having a verbal discussion of an appeal related to A. through D. above must follow up with an email to the instructor summarizing the basis of the appeal.

In most cases, the discussion between the student and the instructor should suffice to resolve the issue.

The instructor must respond in writing to the student, copying the Department Chair or Program Director, within 5 business days of the student's email concerning the disputed grade.

Second Level: Appeal to the Department Chair/Program Director

If the student's concerns remain unresolved after discussion with the instructor, or if the instructor does not respond within the allotted time of 5 business days, the student may submit a written Grade Appeal Form according to the following process. The Grade Appeal Form must be submitted within 10 business days of the response from the instructor. In the case of receiving no response from the instructor after 5 business days, students can submit the written Grade Appeal Form to the Program Director or Chair directly. This timeline may not apply in situations where criterion E. was designated as the basis of the appeal.

A. Completion of the Grade Appeal Form, to include:

- 1) the criterion for the appeal (see A. through E. of the Grade Appeal Criteria above),
- 2) the grounds for challenging the original grade,
- 3) a description of the remedy sought, and,
- 4) full documentation of the efforts to resolve the appeal of the grade taken to date.

B. Submission of the completed Grade Appeal Form to the:

- 1) Chair or Program Director responsible for the degree program;
- 2) Instructor of record.

C. Departmental Review (within 20 business days of Grade Appeal Form submission)

Upon receiving a Grade Appeal Form, the Department Chair or Program Director will review the appeal documents, including the instructor's response to the student, within the department or program.

The Chair or Program Director will determine the outcome of the appeal and communicate it to the student and the instructor. The departmental review process, terminating with notification from the Chair or Program Director, is to be completed within 20 business days of Grade Appeal Form submission.

Departmental review may be governed to an extent by accreditation requirements applicable to the program.

Third Level: Appeal to Academic Affairs Grade Appeal Committee (within 10 business days of departmental determination)

If the departmental review process does not result in resolution of the student's concerns, the student has 10 business days after receiving the determination to notify the Department Chair or Program Director that they wish to appeal the decision. The Department Chair or Program Director shall then direct the Grade Appeal Form and all associated communications to the Chair of the Faculty Council, who will refer this Appeal to the Grade Appeal Committee, an ad-hoc faculty committee that provides a higher level of appeal beyond the department. The ad-hoc faculty committee is to be established by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Council, as needed, and is to consist of no fewer than 3 faculty members with knowledge relevant to the basis of the appeal. Prior to making a decision, the Grade Appeal Committee shall consult with the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). The Grade Appeal Committee shall make a final decision within 20 business days of having received the Grade Appeal Form and supporting documentation. The final decision shall be made by the Grade Appeal Committee members only. After a final decision is made by the Grade Appeal Committee, the Committee will inform the VPAA, Chair of the Faculty Council, Department Chair, Program Director (if applicable), Instructor of Record, and the Student of that decision. The decision of the Grade Appeal Committee is final.

COMMONLY-CITED EXCEPTION

If the instructor of record is also serving as Chair or Program Director, the student, after an unsuccessful attempt at resolution with the faculty member, may direct the Grade Appeal Form to the immediate supervisor, who will serve as the second level reviewer. Should the student be not satisfied with the second level reviewer's decision, he/she will request an appeal to the Grade Appeal Committee by notifying the second level reviewer that they wish to appeal.

ADLER UNIVERSITY - GRADE APPEAL FORM

Please refer to the above Grade Appeal Policy before completing this form.

GRADE APPEAL CRITERIA

A student may appeal a final course grade only for one or more of the following reasons:

- A. The faculty member violated a specific University rule or policy pertaining to grading, including refusal to discuss a grade with the student;
- B. The faculty member did not provide stated grading criteria and a grading scale, did not follow the stated criteria or grading scale, or applied either of them inconsistently;
- C. A clerical or administrative error was made in the process of recording or reporting the grade, and the faculty member has not corrected it;
- D. The faculty member did not report any grade for the individual student;
- E. The grade reflects discriminatory, biased, abusive, exploitive, or otherwise improper conduct toward the individual student. These allegations will be referred to the appropriate office, as determined by legal counsel, for investigation. The scope of the investigation will be limited to the allegation(s), and will not address the grade appeal. Hence, the following appeal process may be placed on hold during the investigation of the alleged discrimination, but will not circumvent the grade appeal process. The Program Director and Department Chair (Second Level) will be informed of the determination of the investigation. Should the appeal involve the Program Director or the Chair as the instructor, his/her immediate supervisor will be informed. Due to the confidential nature of harassment, discrimination, and Title IX investigations the substance of the investigation will not be shared, only the outcome. In cases where a violation has been found, the Second Level reviewer will assess whether or not the violation impacted the appellant's grade. Determination of the final grade will be made through the formal grade appeal process.

1) Please identify the criterion for the appeal (see A. through E. of the Grade Appeal Criteria above): _____

2) Please explain the grounds for challenging the original grade:

3) Please provide a description of the remedy sought:

4) Please provide full documentation of the efforts to resolve the matter taken to date (note: This may not apply in situations where criterion E. was designated as the basis of the appeal):

Please submit the completed Grade Appeal Form to:

- 1) The Chair or Program Director responsible for the degree program, and
- 2) Instructor of record.