

East Central University Grade Appeal Policy

The University believes students should be given the opportunity to meet with instructors and department chairman to resolve issues concerning assigned grades. Student grade appeals are not intended to interfere with the instructor's right to determine the evaluation process and to perform that evaluation.

Evaluation of student academic performance is the professional responsibility of instructors. However, in rare situations, students may believe that the final course grade awarded was inconsistent with stated evaluation expectations. The grade change process must be initiated no later than the first day of September for spring and summer courses, and no later than the first day of February for fall courses. A student appealing a grade must provide written justification that includes clear and convincing evidence that one or more of the following conditions occurred:

- ☐ An error was made in calculating the grade;
- ☐ Standards used to determine the grade were not consistent with university policies; or
- ☐ The instructor departed substantially from his or her own written standards without notifying students of the change.

A final course grade appeal should be initiated only after the student has discussed the disputed grade with the instructor of the course. Students may contact instructors any time after grades have been submitted to attempt to resolve the issue. Because instructors may not be available outside semester (fall/spring) class days, the formal appeal process will begin after the start of the following semester (fall/spring). If the instructor is available and the student and instructor reach an agreement that includes a grade change, the instructor will complete the grade change form and submit it to the Records Office.

If an agreement cannot be reached, the student may proceed with the contested grade appeal procedure. The suggested timeline can be found at the end of this policy. If the contested grade prevents enrollment, the student may request the appeal process be expedited by contacting the department chair. If the chair and instructor are available and in agreement, the department chair may make an exception to the listed deadlines and agree to begin the appeal process before the start of the following semester. Although the process may be completed in fewer days, the sequence and time-frame for each step will be adhered to if needed.

Additional Notes Regarding the Appeal Process

- All communications will be via University email.
- If the student does not respond to their University email from an ECU administrator by the deadline or attend a scheduled meeting, the appeal process is concluded and the grade remains unchanged.
- The student must submit the grade appeal form (obtain online on Registrar's forms page).
- If the instructor is no longer employed by the University, the student should contact the department chair to resolve the issue.
- If the department chair is also the course instructor, the dean of the College/School assumes the responsibilities of the department chair.
- The student may bring a support person to any meeting(s)/hearing(s) regarding the grade appeal, but the support person may not participate.
- As this is an institutional appeal, no legal counsel may be present.
- For undergraduate grade appeals, the appropriate office is Academic Affairs. For graduate appeals, the appropriate office is the Graduate School.
- For undergraduate grade appeals the appropriate official who reviews the appeal information is the Provost. For graduate grade appeals the

appropriate official who reviews the appeal information is the Graduate Dean.

Appeal Procedure: The student must first contact and attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. If an error was made in calculating the grade, for example, this may be resolved without the need for a formal appeal. The student may contact the instructor in person or via phone, but must follow-up via University email no later than the first day of September for spring and summer courses, and no later than the first day of February for fall courses. The student must give the instructor 10 days to respond. If the student cannot resolve the disputed grade with the instructor, the student must submit the following to the department chair:

- ☐ Contested Grade Appeal Form (obtain online on Registrar's forms page).
- ☐ A detailed, written justification for the grade appeal that identifies which of the three conditions listed above occurred, and
- ☐ a copy of the email to the instructor of the course.

The department chair must determine if the student has provided evidence that one or more of the three conditions warranting an appeal may have occurred.

- If necessary, the chair may send the appeal back to the student stating that such evidence is not provided, and thus, cannot proceed as is. It is incumbent upon the student to provide evidence that one or more of the three conditions has occurred in order for the appeal to proceed.
NOTE: If the second submission does not include sufficient evidence, the appeals process concludes and the grade remains unchanged.
- Upon receipt of the form and acceptable written justification, the department chair forwards a copy to the instructor and schedules a

meeting with the student and the instructor. The instructor may file a written rebuttal with the department chair prior to the formal meeting with the student, department chair and instructor.

The department chair's role in this meeting is to actively pursue a resolution.

- If the issue is resolved, the student, instructor and department chair sign off on the appeal form, and the chair submits the appeal form to the appropriate office. If the resolution includes a grade change, the instructor completes the uncontested grade change form and submits it to the Records Office. The appeals process is concluded.
- If no resolution can be reached, the department chair writes a letter that summarizes the details of the meeting, clearly states their position, and sends the letter, the grade appeal form, the student's written justification to the college dean.

The dean will review all documents relating to the appeal and schedule a meeting with the student, the instructor, and the department chair.

- If the issue is resolved, the student, instructor, department chair, and dean sign off on the appeal form, and the dean submits the form to the appropriate office. If the resolution includes a grade change, the instructor completes the uncontested grade change form and submits it to the Records Office. The appeals process is
- If the appeal cannot be resolved, the dean will forward the appeal and all supporting documents, including a summary of the meeting as well as their position on the appeal to the administrator of the Grade Appeal Committee if it is an undergraduate issue and to the graduate dean if it is a graduate issue.

For Undergraduate Courses

The administrator on the Grade Appeal Committee will be responsible for distributing the grade appeal materials to the committee members and will call for a volunteer to chair the committee.

For Graduate Courses

The graduate dean will establish a Grade Appeal Subcommittee consisting of five (5) members of the standing Graduate Committee, select a Grade Appeal Subcommittee Chair, and distribute the grade appeal materials to the committee members. The Grade Appeal Committee chair will schedule the grade appeal hearing(s), conduct the hearing(s), and will submit the committee's decision to the appropriate office within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt of the appeal documents. For the student to prevail, the student's evidence weighed against the instructor's evidence must demonstrate that the instructor failed to meet one or more of the three conditions above in a clear and convincing manner. Upon receipt of the committee's decision, the appropriate official will notify the student, instructor, department chair and dean of the committee's decision within five (5) class days from the receipt of the appeal decision from the committee.

As a final level of appeal, the student or the instructor may submit a written request for a procedural review to the appropriate office. The official's review will relate to procedural matters only. The request must be submitted within five (5) class days of notification of the decision. The official has ten (10) days to review and respond to the student and/or instructor. The decision of the official is final.

Responsibilities of Involved Parties: For each person/position involved in the appeal process, the following responsibilities apply.

Student Responsibilities

1. Contact the instructor via University email. The student may also contact the instructor by phone or in person, but for the purposes of the grade appeal process, the email date will be used to determine if the student met the stated deadline.
2. If there is no resolution, send the Grade Appeal form, the written justification, a copy of the contact email, and any other supporting documentation to the instructor's department chair.
3. Submit additional evidence for the appeal if requested by the chair or Grade Appeal Committee.
4. Respond to all University emails from ECU administrators.
5. Attend all requested meetings (with instructor/chair; instructor/chair/dean; Grade Appeal Committee) deemed necessary.
6. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy.

Course Instructor Responsibilities

1. Respond to the student when contacted.
2. If any interaction with the student results in a grade change, submit the Uncontested Grade Change form to the Office of Admissions and Records.
3. Respond to the grade appeal with a rebuttal if desired.
4. Respond to request for information from the chair, dean, and/or Grade Appeal Committee.
5. Attend all requested meetings (with student/chair; student/chair/dean; Grade Appeal Committee) deemed necessary.

Department Chair Responsibilities

1. Determine if the appeal includes sufficient evidence that one or more of the three conditions may have occurred.
 - a. If not, return to the student for additional information. If second submission is not acceptable, notify the student that the appeals process has concluded.
 - b. If so, forward the documents to the instructor and schedule a meeting with the student and the instructor.
2. Meet with the student and instructor to actively pursue a resolution.
 - a. If resolved, have all parties sign the grade appeal form and submit to the appropriate office.
 - b. If no resolution can be reached, write a letter which summarizes the meeting and forward all documents to the dean of the contested course.
3. Meet with the student, instructor, and dean deemed necessary.

Dean Responsibilities

1. Schedule a meeting with the student, the instructor and the department chair.
2. Actively seek a resolution
3. If resolved, have all parties sign the grade appeal form and submit to the appropriate office.
4. If no resolution can be reached, write a letter which summarizes the outcome of the meeting and forward all documents to the graduate dean.

Grade Appeal Administrator Responsibilities

1. Distribute the grade appeal materials to the committee members.

2. Call for a volunteer to chair the committee.
3. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy

Graduate Dean Responsibilities

1. Select a Grade Appeal Subcommittee and assign a chair
2. Distribute all appeal documents to the subcommittee chair.
3. Notify the student of the Subcommittee's decision. A copy of the letter should be sent to the instructor, chair, and dean.
4. If the student or instructor appeals on procedural grounds, review and notify the student or instructor of the graduate dean's decision.
5. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy.

Grade Appeal Committee Chair Responsibilities

1. Schedule a Grade Appeal Committee meeting after all members have had an opportunity to review the materials. Identify questions that need to be addressed. Request any additional material (s) that may be needed.
2. Set the hearing date(s), reserve a room, contact and invite the student, the instructor, and any relevant witnesses.
3. The course instructor is not required to attend the hearing(s), and they cannot be present while the student is presenting their case to the Grade Appeal Committee. However, the instructor is welcome to present their position regarding the matter (if they choose)
 - a. If no resolution can be reached, the department chair writes a letter that summarizes the details of the meeting, clearly states their position, and sends the letter, the Grade Appeal form, the student's written justification for appeal, after the student has presented their case to the Grade Appeal Committee.

4. Record all testimony (but not the deliberations).
5. Write a summary letter with committee recommendation to the appropriate official. Include an attachment that lists all evidence that was examined as well as the official Grade Appeal. For the student to prevail, the student's evidence weighed against the instructor's evidence must demonstrate that the instructor failed to meet one or more of the three conditions above in a clear and convincing manner.
6. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy.

Grade Appeal Committee Member Responsibility

1. Review all documentation of the grade appeal.
2. Attend all meetings and hearings.
3. After reviewing all of the evidence, deliberate and decide regarding the appeal. For the student to prevail, the student's evidence weighed against the instructor's evidence must demonstrate that the instructor failed to meet one or more of the three conditions above in a clear and convincing manner.
4. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy.

Provost Responsibilities

1. Notify the student of the committee's decision. A copy of the letter should be sent to the instructor, chair, and dean.
2. If the student or instructor appeals on procedural grounds, review and notify the student or instructor of the provost's decision.
3. Meet all deadlines listed in the policy.

Suggested Deadlines for Fall/Spring Semesters:

To allow sufficient time for the grade appeal process, the following deadlines will be enforced.

- September 1/February 1: Student contacts instructor about the grade in question.
- September 15/February 15: If a resolution is not reached, a Contested Grade Change form must be submitted by the student.
- End of September/February: Student has met with both instructor and department chair.
- Mid October/March: Dean reviews all materials and then meets with all parties.
- Mid November/April: Appeals committee has all materials and sets hearing date.
- Mid December/May: All materials have been sent to the appropriate official and notification will be sent to the student by the end of the month.