

## **Grade Grievance Procedures for the Physics Department**

(Revised 1979)

(Reaffirmed 1992)

(Revised 2012)

Instructors in the Physics Department are expected to set fair and consistent grading procedures for their respective courses. By College of LSA policy, assignment of final course grades rests solely with the instructor of record. As such, a course grade cannot be changed without the instructor's consent.

If a student believes that his/her academic performance has been unfairly or improperly graded, the following appeal procedures may be followed.

### **Step 1. Consultation with the Instructor**

A discussion between the student and instructor of the course regarding the accuracy of the final grade should take place, preferably no later than fifteen (15) days after the grade is posted.

### **Step 2. Formal grievance to Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies**

If there is no resolution after this consultation, the student may choose to initiate a formal grade grievance. The student should contact the Associate Chair for the Undergraduate Program (hereafter, AC) in Physics regarding the grade in question before the end of the fifth (5th) week of classes in the next full term in which the student is active following the term/course in question.

To initiate the formal grade grievance process, the student must convey in writing the basis for the complaint, with specific evidence in support of the argument that the grade either was given in error or was unfairly determined. This formal complaint also should summarize the outcome of the initial inquiry to the course instructor, indicating what aspects are in dispute.

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the AC will ask the instructor to provide a written statement that responds to the specific claims made by the student.

After receiving this information from both the student and the instructor, the AC will determine if sufficient evidence exists to convene a departmental Grade Grievance Committee. If the AC determines that there is insufficient evidence for the grade grievance, the matter is considered closed and the original grade stands.

### **Step 3. Grade Grievance Hearing**

Once it has been determined that a formal hearing will be held, the AC will set a hearing date and empanel an ad hoc departmental Grade Grievance Committee consisting of two other recent instructors of the course in question. Both the student filing the grade grievance and the respective instructor will be provided with copies of the written student complaint and the instructor's summary in advance of the formal hearing. During the formal hearing, the student will be asked to first present the basis of his

or her complaint; the instructor will then be asked to present his or her explanation for how grades were determined for the class in general and this student in particular. Following an open period of discussion among all parties, i.e., the student, instructor and the Grade Grievance committee members, the formal hearing will be adjourned.

#### **Step 4. Grade Grievance Committee's Recommendation**

The Grade Grievance Committee will then have ten (10) University business days to determine its recommendation and submit a written report to the AC.

If the Grade Grievance Committee decides that a grade change is not warranted, the AC will convey this in writing to the student and the instructor. The original grade will stand and the matter will be considered closed.

If the committee recommends a grade change, the AC will communicate that decision directly to the instructor. The instructor will then be asked to respond in writing within five (5) University business days to AC indicating whether or not he/she will abide by the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation. If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the instructor will enact this change and the matter will be considered closed.

If the instructor does not accept the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation to change the final grade, the original grade will stand and the matter will be considered closed.

In either outcome, the AC will convey in writing the decision to the student.