

## LSA Grade Grievance Process

### Introduction

Instructors are expected to set fair and consistent grading procedures for their respective courses. The following policy provides students a means to contest a final course grade received in a credit-bearing course if a student believes fair and consistent grading procedures have not been followed. A final grade is only subject to review when 1) a procedural error has been discovered in the calculation or recording of a grade, or 2) there is a concern that the grade was not fairly given. Disagreeing with grading policies or an instructor's assessment of work is not a basis for a grade grievance.

Occasionally, the basis of a student's grade grievance is that the student was subjected to harassment or discrimination. It is not the function of the Grade Grievance process to evaluate claims of discrimination or harassment. Please contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#) (OIE), and the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies (ACUS) or Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) in the department in question will evaluate whether the grade grievance should be paused until the OIE matter is resolved.

### Step 1: Seek Resolution with the Instructor

As the first step in the grade grievance process, the student should inquire about the accuracy of their final grade to the lead instructor of the course. This initial inquiry should take place **within the first 15 university business days** of the beginning of the following winter term for courses taken during the fall semester, and **within the first 15 university business days** of the beginning of the following fall semester for courses taken during the winter, spring, or summer sessions. In the case of an incomplete or a grade that is submitted after the start of the next full term, the initial inquiry should take place within the first 15 university business days after the official posting of the grade.

If, after this inquiry, the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response, the student may choose to initiate a formal grade grievance. If the lead instructor has left the University, is on approved leave, or does not respond to the student after a reasonable effort (within 10 business days), the student may also proceed directly to Step 2 and initiate a formal grade grievance.

### Step 2: Submit a Formal Grade Grievance

To begin the formal grade grievance process the student must submit to the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies (ACUS) or Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) [refer to LSA Grade Grievance Department Contact list] a written statement that includes the following information:

- the basis for the allegation of arbitrary grading, including specific evidence (e.g. course syllabus, graded work) that supports the allegation
- a summary of the outcome of the initial inquiry to the course instructor, indicating what aspects are in dispute and any documentation to support the initial inquiry with the instructor
- the desired outcome for the grievance

This written statement must be submitted **within the first 30 university business days** of the beginning of the following winter term for courses taken during the fall semester, and **within the first 30 university business days** of the beginning of the following fall semester for courses taken during the winter, spring, or summer sessions. In the case of an incomplete or a grade that is submitted after the start of the next full term, the written statement must be submitted within the first 30 university business days after the official posting of the grade.

If any of the above deadlines are not met by the student, the grievance will be considered invalid and closed, unless, due to extenuating circumstances, the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Academic Affairs grants an extension of time. If you believe there was an extenuating circumstance (i.e. hospitalization, extended leave from health reasons) please contact the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Academic Affairs ([oad.lsa@umich.edu](mailto:oad.lsa@umich.edu)) for more information.

Upon receipt of the written complaint in Step 2, the ACUS/DUS will notify the Assistant Dean of Student Academic Affairs of the complaint within 5 business days of receipt of the complaint. The ACUS/DUS will then ask the instructor to provide a written summary explaining how the final grade was determined and responding to the specific claims made by the student. After receiving the response from the instructor, the ACUS/DUS will determine if sufficient evidence exists to convene the Department's Grade Grievance Committee. If the ACUS/DUS determines that there is insufficient evidence for the grade grievance, the matter is considered closed, and the original grade stands. The ACUS/DUS will communicate this in writing to the student **within 15 university business days** from receipt of the complaint. A copy of the response should also be sent to the Assistant Dean of Student Academic Affairs at the same time.

### **Step 3: Formal Grade Grievance Hearing**

If the ACUS/DUS determines that the grade grievance should proceed, an appropriate Departmental Grade Grievance Committee will be selected, and a date for a formal hearing with the Grade Grievance Committee will be set. The hearing should occur no more than 60 days after submission of the complaint. All parties (student, instructor, and committee) 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 their complaint; the instructor will then be asked to present their explanation for how grades were determined. Following an open period of questions to all parties, the formal hearing will be adjourned.

The Grade Grievance Committee will then have **ten university business days** to determine its recommendation and submit a written report to the ACUS/DUS.

- If the Grade Grievance Committee decides that a grade change is not warranted, the ACUS/DUS will convey this in writing to the student and the instructor. The original grade will stand and the matter is considered closed.
- If the committee recommends a grade change, the ACUS/DUS will communicate that decision directly to the instructor. The instructor will then be asked to respond in writing within five university business days to the ACUS/DUS indicating whether or not they will abide by the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation.
  - If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the ACUS/DUS will in writing inform the student of the instructor's decision and the student's final course grade will be changed. The matter is considered closed.
  - If an instructor does not accept the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation to change the final grade, the original grade will stand. A final course grade rests solely with the instructor and, as such, a course grade cannot be changed without the instructor's consent. When this occurs, the ACUS/DUS will convey in writing this decision to the student. The matter is considered closed.
- There is no appeal beyond the Department.

A report stating what procedures were followed and what decision was reached will be sent to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Academic Affairs by the ACUS/DUS **within 5 business days** after the conclusion of the review process.