

Within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, instructors are expected to set fair and consistent grading procedures for their respective courses. The key to implementing fair grading procedures in courses across the College is that individual instructors adhere to grading rubrics that are applied evenly and consistently to all students within a respective course. If the grading rubric is used consistently for each student, then the final grade is assumed to be the correct grade. By College policy, a final course grade rests solely with the instructor and, as such, a course grade cannot be changed without the instructor's consent. Nevertheless, students can inquire about a final grade and subsequently initiate a grade grievance when they think that the grade was unfairly given.

Students who have received a final grade they consider unjust from teachers in the Department should follow the steps below in seeking a review of the grade. These steps are designed to bring an understanding of the course standards and the grade, not to dispute the ultimate right of an instructor to make such evaluations.

Step 1: Consultation with the Instructor

Any student who believes a final grade is in error may ask to have it reviewed. This initial inquiry should take place no later than within the first ten University business days of the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued. Grades are only changed in case of clerical error or if it can be demonstrated that the posted grading rubric was not followed. In courses with GSIs, students should meet with the GSI first to discuss the grade. If the GSI and student cannot come to an agreement the student should then meet with the faculty supervisor of the course. In courses without GSIs, the student should contact the faculty member to discuss the grade. It is hoped that any dispute may be resolved at this meeting.

Step 2: Written Appeal to Department Chair

If the meeting between the student and instructor is not productive in resolving differences, the student should indicate the nature of the complaint in writing to the Department Chair. This document should include evidence supporting the student's claim, 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. Except for clerical errors or mistakes in following the posted grading rubric, the Chair is not authorized to change grades given by faculty members. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the chair will ask the instructor to provide a written summary restating how the final grade was determined and to respond to the specific claims made by the student. If the Chair determines the complaint is justified, s/he will refer the complaint to the department's Grade Grievance Committee. On the other hand, if it is concluded that the complaint is not justified, the student will be so informed, the matter is considered closed, and the original grade stands.

Step 3: Grade Grievance Hearing

If the Chair determines that the grade grievance should proceed, a date for a formal hearing with the Grade Grievance Committee will be set. 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. Following an open period of questions to all parties, i.e., the student, the 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 University business days to determine its recommendation and submit a written report to the Chair. If the Grade Grievance Committee decides that a grade change is not warranted, the Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair indicating whether or not he/she will abide by the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation. If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the Chair 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. By College policy, 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 Chair will convey in writing this decision to the student. The matter is considered closed. There is no appeal beyond the Department.