

History Department Grievance Procedure

Instructors in the History Department are expected to set fair and consistent grading procedures for their courses. If the instructor uses the grading rubric consistently for each student, then the Department assumes that the final grade is the correct grade. However, students can inquire about a grade and subsequently initiate a grade grievance when they think that the grade was unfairly given.

To appeal any grade (or other course-related matter), students must follow these steps:

I. Consultation with the Instructor. The first step in inquiring about the accuracy of a final grade or any other course-related matter should be directed to the lead instructor of the course. This initial inquiry should take place within the first fifteen University business days of the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued. In general, the student should communicate the concerns to the instructor in writing and then schedule an appointment if necessary. Many instructors spell out specific procedures for grade appeals in their syllabi, which should be followed as long as they do not conflict with this Departmental policy.

II. Filing a Grievance. If, after this inquiry, the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response, the student may choose to initiate a formal grade grievance. To start this process, the student should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies (if an undergraduate) or the Director of Graduate Studies (if a doctoral student) before the end of the fifth week of classes in the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued.

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 DUGS/DGS 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.

After receiving this information from both the student and the instructor, the DUGS/DGS will then determine if sufficient evidence exists to convene the Department's Grade Grievance Board. The DUGS/DGS should also consult with the Associate Chair about the case.

If the DUGS/DGS determine that there is insufficient evidence for the grade grievance, the matter is considered closed, and the original grade stands. If the DUGS/DGS determines that the grade grievance should proceed, a date for a formal hearing with the grievance board will be set. The DUGS/DGS should communicate this decision in writing to the student, the instructor, and the Associate Chair.

III. Grievance Board Hearing. In the event of a formal hearing, the DUGS/DGS will appoint a 4-person grievance board from among the members of the relevant committee. In a case involving an undergraduate student, the grievance board will consist of two faculty members and the two undergraduate members of the Undergraduate Committee. In a case involving a graduate student, the grievance board will consist of two faculty members of the Graduate Committee and two graduate students executives from GOSH (Graduate Organization of Students in History). The grievance board will not include the DUGS, DGS, Associate Chair, or anyone else with a potential conflict of interest in the case.

The grievance board will receive the written student complaint and the instructor's summary in advance of the formal hearing, and both the student and the instructor will also receive these records as well. 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.

IV. Grievance Board Recommendation. The grievance board will then have ten University business days to determine its recommendation and submit a written report to the DUGS/DGS.

If the grievance board decides that a grade change is not warranted, the DUGS/DGS will convey this in writing to the student and the instructor. The original grade will stand and the matter is considered closed.

If the grievance board recommends a grade change, the DUGS/DGS 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 DUGS/DGS indicating whether or not he/she will abide by the grievance board's recommendation. If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the DUGS/DGS will inform the student in writing 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 grievance board'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 DUGS/DGS will convey this decision in writing to the student. The matter is considered closed.

There is no grade appeal beyond the Department. If, however, the student or the DUGS/DGS has concerns about the unfolding of the process itself, rather than the specific grade, these should be communicated to the Associate Chair as the representative of the Executive Committee.

Note: Revisions to this policy require approval by the Assistant Dean in LSA Student Academic Affairs.