

Department of Classical Studies Grade Grievance Policy

I. Preamble

Course instructors have the responsibility for awarding to students the grades that are most fit, both for the course itself and for all work in the course. The Department expects its instructors to exercise good judgment in grading, and in general presumes that they have done so. For this reason, the Department will not examine a grade unless a student files a grade grievance that raises reasonable doubt about the fairness of the grade. In all cases of reasonable doubt, the Department tries to consider and deal with such grievances in a fair and open-minded manner, so that the rights of the aggrieved students and instructors are both respected.

II. Consultation with Instructor

The first step in inquiring about the accuracy of a final grade should be directed to the instructor of the course. If a GSI has had the responsibility for grading, the student should first discuss the problem with the GSI. If the issue cannot be settled between the student and the GSI, the student should discuss it with the faculty member in charge 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. If, after this inquiry, the student is not satisfied with the response of the instructor, GSI, or faculty member in charge of the course, the student may choose to initiate a formal grade grievance. To initiate a formal grade grievance, the student should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) before the end of the fifth week of classes in the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued. In cases in which the DUS is not a Full Professor and the instructor is a Full Professor, the Chair of the Department may choose to appoint a Full Professor to serve in place of the DUS.

III. Formal complaint to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS)

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 DUS 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 complaint is against the DUS, the Chair will appoint a replacement.

After receiving this information from both the student and the instructor, the DUS will then determine if sufficient evidence exists to convene an *ad hoc* Grievance Committee to hear the complaint. If the DUS determines that there is insufficient evidence for the grade grievance, the matter is considered closed, and the original grade stands. If the DUS determines that there is sufficient evidence to move forward with the grade grievance process, she/he will appoint a Grade Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee will consist of two faculty members of at least equal rank with the instructor against whom the grievance has been lodged, and either an undergraduate or a graduate student (depending on the complainant's status). The student member of the committee will be selected by the DUS. The role of the student member of the committee is to provide a student perspective on the case, and although the committee does not take a formal vote, it is expected that the view of the student member of the committee be weighted equally with those of the faculty members on the committee in determining the committee's recommendation.

If the DUS determines that the grade grievance should proceed, a date for a formal hearing with the *ad hoc* Grievance Committee will be set.

IV. Grade Grievance Hearing

Before the formal hearing is held, the Chair of the Grade Grievance Committee will instruct the student member of the committee on confidentiality issues. In addition, in advance of the formal hearing, 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. 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. A GSI against whom a grievance has been made may ask that the faculty supervisor attend the hearing. If the GSI is no longer at the university, the faculty supervisor may represent him or her. No other representatives may be present. 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.

V. 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 DUS.

If the Grade Grievance Committee decides that a grade change is not warranted, the 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 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 DUS indicating whether or not he/she will abide by the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation. If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the 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.

In the very rare cases in which an instructor refuses to change a grade in accordance with a panel's recommendation, the grade will stand, but the student should confer with the chair or chair's representative. The department may, for example, provide the student with a letter explaining the circumstances.

Adopted Feb. 10, 2016