

## **GRADE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **Department of Afroamerican and African Studies**

**(approved 4/7/2023)**

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 LSA 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 want to contest grades they are given by faculty 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.

The expectation is that instructors will evenly apply their grading rubrics to all students. Students may inquire about the accuracy of their final grade if they can provide evidence that the instructor has:

- 1) Deviated from previously stated grading standards,
- 2) Applied such standards inconsistently,
- 3) Failed to take into full consideration all graded components of a course, or
- 4) Assigned a grade based on criteria other than performance in the course.

A student's belief that an instructor's grading standards are stricter than those of other instructors does not constitute grounds for grievance.

In the DAAS, students who want to inquire about the accuracy of their final grade should pursue the following steps:

- 1. Consultation with Instructor:** As a first step, the student should consult with 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. After this initial inquiry, if the student continues to dispute the final grade, they may choose to initiate a formal grade grievance procedure.
- 2. Formal Complaint to Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS):** To initiate a formal grade grievance procedure, 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. The student must convey in writing the basis for the complaint. This written complaint should include:

- Specific evidence that the grade was given in error or was arbitrarily determined,
  - A summary of the student's initial consultation with the course instructor, and
  - A summary of the aspects of the case that remain in dispute.
3. **Upon receipt of the written complaint, the DUS will ask the instructor to provide a written summary explaining how the final grade was determined and respond to the specific claims made by the student.** After receiving this information from both the student and the instructor, the DUS will determine whether to convene a Grade Grievance Committee. If the DUS determines that there is no evidence to support a grade grievance, the matter will be considered closed and the original grade will stand.
4. **If the DUS determines that the grade grievance should proceed, they will set a date for a formal convening with a Grade Grievance Committee.** This committee will assess the student's written complaint and the instructor's written response to determine whether a grade grievance is warranted.

**Grade Grievance Committee:** For undergraduate students, the DAAS Grade Grievance Committee will consist of the Director of Undergraduate Studies and two faculty members of the Curriculum Committee. For graduate students, the DAAS Grade Grievance Committee will consist of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the Associate Chair of DAAS, and one faculty member of the Curriculum Committee. The instructor in question will not serve on the Grade Grievance Committee.

5. **Recommendation from Grade Grievance Committee:** The Grade Grievance Committee will have ten University business days to determine its recommendation.

If the committee decides that there is no basis for a grade change, the DUS will convey this fact 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 DUS will ask the instructor to respond in writing within five University business days indicating whether or not they will abide by the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation. If the instructor agrees to a grade change, the DUS will inform the student in writing, the student's final course grade will be changed, and the matter will be considered closed.

If an instructor does not accept the Grade Grievance Committee's recommendation to change the final grade, the original grade will stand. The DUS will inform the student in writing and the matter will be considered closed. By College policy, a final course grade rests solely with the instructor, and a course grade cannot be changed without the instructor's consent.

6. **Consultation with the Office of Student Academic Affairs:** Grade grievances end at the Department level. There is no appeal beyond the Department. The Office of the Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs is available for consultation and review of the process to ensure that all procedures have been followed.