

Grade Grievance Procedures

Preamble

The Program upholds the principle that the instructor in a course is always in the best position to determine the quality of students' work. The Program in Judaic Studies also has confidence in the qualifications and good judgment of its faculty. The key to implementing fair grading procedures in courses across the Program is that individual instructors adhere to grading rubrics that are applied evenly and consistently to all students within a particular course. Where it can be proven that a clerical error, a procedural fault, or a capricious or biased appraisal has resulted in the awarding of an unfair grade, the Program will do everything in its power to correct the error. It must be understood, however, that only the instructor of a course can determine the substantive value of a student's performance in that course and only the instructor can change the grade.

Furthermore, while the Program wishes to see demonstrably unfair grades rectified, it will not automatically invoke the full procedure described below for every grievance. For example, a grievance based on the argument that one instructor's grading standards are stricter than those of others will normally not be pursued. Nor will minor imprecision in grading, such as between a B- and B, normally be considered an appropriate grievance.

Grievance Procedure

1. A student who feels that he or she has been unfairly graded should first consult with the instructor of the course, in an effort to resolve the disagreement. 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.
2. If the student is not satisfied by the explanation(s) offered by the instructor of the course, the student may submit to the Director of the Program a written appeal, citing the factors which bear explicitly upon the specific grievance. This written appeal should be submitted to jsgrade grievance@umich.edu. The grievance takes the form of a written statement, accompanied by relevant graded materials. The statement should detail the disagreements that remain after the discussion between the student and the instructor required above. These materials and the appeal should be submitted before the end of the fifth week of classes in the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued. Exceptions to this rule will be allowed only in extraordinary circumstances

3. Upon receipt of these materials, the Director of the Program will appoint an ad hoc committee to review the appeal and will name its Chair. This committee will consist of the undergraduate or graduate advisor (depending upon the status of the student), one additional faculty member and one student chosen from the suitable peer group (undergraduate majors or graduate students).
4. The Director of the Program will ask the instructor involved to respond to the appeal in writing no later than three weeks after the filing of the appeal with the Director. This response, together with the appeal and all relevant materials will be put into the hands of the committee.
5. The committee will meet no later than one week after receiving all the aforementioned materials. 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.
6. During the formal hearing, the student will be asked to first present the basis of his or her complaint; if the instructor chooses to attend he or she will 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.

Committee's Recommendation

1. The committee will then have ten University business days for deliberation. If it is the consensus of the committee that the grade awarded was unfair, the committee will inform the instructor of this opinion and suggest that the grade be changed. It will be possible to suggest a lower grade as well as a higher one. If the consensus is that the grade should not be changed, the committee will convey this in writing to the student and the instructor. The appeal procedure will terminate at this point.
2. If the instructor involved is asked by the committee to change the grade and declines to do so, the grade will stand. However, in this case the Director of the Program or a representative will place a letter recording the decision of the grievance committee and the refusal of the faculty member to change the grade in the student's permanent academic record, unless the student requests this not be done.
3. In the event that the instructor is no longer at the University of Michigan, a student may present a grievance to the Director of the program without first discussing the conflict with the instructor. The Director and the committee will make every effort to contact the instructor to elicit a response before arriving at a recommendation.
4. If the Program declines to appoint a hearing committee, or if the instructor refuses to follow the Committee's decision, the Director of the program will prepare a letter of recommendation, which the student could then opt to have retained by the LSA Office of Student Academic affairs.