

Departmental Grade Grievance Template  
LSA Student Academic Affairs

I. Preamble

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. Nevertheless, students can inquire about a grade and subsequently initiate a grade grievance when they think that the grade was unfairly given.

II. Consultation with Instructor

The first step in inquiring about the accuracy of a final grade 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. 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 initiate a formal grade grievance, the student should contact the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies (ACUS) or the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) of the home department of the course in question before the end of the fifth week of classes in the first full term following the term in which the disputed grade was issued.

III. Formal complaint to Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies (ACUS) or 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 ACUS/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.

After receiving this information from both the student and the instructor, the ACUS/DUS will then determine if sufficient evidence exists to convene the Department's Grade Grievance Committee. If the ACUS/DUS determines that there is insufficient evidence for the grade grievance, the matter is considered closed, and the original grade stands.

If the ACUS/DUS determines that the grade grievance should proceed, a date for a formal hearing with the Grade Grievance Committee will be set.

IV. Grade Grievance Hearing

Once it has been determined that a formal hearing will be held, the ACUS/DUS will empanel the appropriate Departmental Grade Grievance Committee. 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.

#### 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 ACUS/DUS.

If the Grade Grievance Committee decides that a grade change is not warranted, the ACUS/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 ACUS/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 ACUS/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 ACUS/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.

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 ACUS/DUS will convey in writing this decision to the student. The matter is considered closed. There is no appeal beyond the Department.