

### What happens next?

After your written appeal is received, the chairperson will provide a copy to the instructor. The instructor then has seven days to make a written response. The chairperson will provide your appeal documents, as well as any response from the instructor, to each member of the Grade Appeal Committee. They will review the documents within seven days of receipt. If one member of the committee votes that the allegations warrant a hearing, a hearing will be held. If no member of the committee votes to hold a hearing, then one will not be held. However, the chairperson may override the decision to not hear a case.

### What can I expect at the hearing?

Your hearing will be scheduled not more than 14 days after notice has been provided to you and the instructor. Hearings will be closed, unless all parties agree in writing that it may be open. Both you and the instructor may choose to have an advisor accompany you to the hearing, but the advisor may not be an attorney because the hearing is administrative in nature. If you choose to not attend your hearing, the case will be dismissed and not subject to further appeal. If the instructor chooses to not attend the hearing, the case will proceed with the assumption that the instructor has no desire to challenge the appeal. All hearings will be audio taped for record keeping purposes. These confidential tapes will only be used in the event that the appeal proceeds to the University Grade Appeal Committee. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee may recommend the original grade be changed. A written report of the decision will be sent to you and the instructor no later than three days after the conclusion of the hearing.

### Do I have any further appeals?

Either you or the instructor may file a written intent to pursue further grade appeal with the University Grade Appeal Committee within six class days upon receipt of the college/school decision. More information about the process can be found in the University Regulations, Part 5, Section III, E, 7.

### What if I still have questions?

You can make an appointment with a staff member in the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Schleman Hall, Room B-50, by calling 494-1250. They are available to answer questions as well as review your documentation.

<sup>1</sup> *University Regulations*, Part 5, Section III, E, 1, b

Published by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities  
Schleman Hall of Student Services, Room B-50 • 494-1250  
Authored by Heather K. Webb, Ph.D., Student Affairs Specialist, 2006



# A Student's Guide to the Grade Appeal Process

### Am I eligible to appeal my grade?

The grade appeal system is one that can require much time from the student, so the decision to appeal a grade should be made thoughtfully. Any student at Purdue University may utilize the grade appeal system if he or she can demonstrate that “an inappropriate grade was assigned as a result of prejudice, caprice, or other improper conditions such as mechanical error, or assignment of a grade inconsistent with those assigned other students. Additionally, a student may challenge the reduction of a grade for alleged scholastic dishonesty.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to remember that the burden of proof is on the student, except in cases of academic dishonesty, where the burden of proof is on the instructor.

The grade appeal process is not appropriate for students who believe that the course was poorly designed or the student received poor instruction. These may be legitimate concerns, but they are more appropriately addressed by the department head. A claim that the instructor graded too severely is also not reason to appeal a grade, provided that all students in the class were graded in the same fashion.

Appeals regarding the decision of a graduate examination committee, acceptance of graduate theses, or the application of professional standards relating to graduate student retention should be directed to the Graduate Council (Young Hall, Room 170).

### Did you try to resolve your grade informally?

Students are strongly encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns at the lowest level possible. This should first be through the course instructor or course coordinator, then through the department head. It is suggested that you keep a record of these attempts to resolve your grade.

### Who is on the Grade Appeal Committee?

Each college/school establishes a committee consisting of two students (undergraduate or graduate depending on the classification of the student submitting the appeal), three faculty members, and a non-voting chairperson. The chairperson of the committee is appointed by the dean of the college/school, and is an assistant or associate dean in the college/school. This chairperson has the authority to grant time extensions at any point during the appeal process, should the chairperson determine that it is warranted. Voting members of the committee will be selected from a pool of at least eight students and eight instructional faculty. The pool is selected according to college/school procedures, and no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

### Is there a deadline for appealing a grade?

A written statement containing allegations, facts, and circumstances regarding the grade appeal must be filed with the chairperson of the Grade Appeal Committee in the college/school where the course was taken within **30 calendar days** after the start of the regular semester following the one in which the grade was given. The chairperson of the Grade Appeal Committee may grant an extension to this deadline if they feel that circumstances warrant such an exception.

### How do I prepare my written appeal?

It is critical that you give ample time and attention to your written appeal. Your success in this process may be determined by your ability to present thorough and accurate information. ***The decision to grant an appeal hearing will be made based only on the written documentation reviewed by the committee.***

Many students find it helpful to write their appeal in the form of a letter addressed to the members of the Grade Appeal Committee. Your opening paragraph should clearly state the basis for your appeal. It is advisable that you quote your reason directly from the University Regulations. (Example: I am appealing my grade of ‘C’ in MA 200 because I have evidence that indicates there was a mechanical error in the calculation of my homework grades.) It is very important that the members of the committee clearly understand the basis of your appeal.

You should then state any evidence that supports your grade appeal. It is very important that your evidence is presented clearly. You should present only facts. If you have negative comments about the instructor or the class, this is not the appropriate place to share those thoughts. Likewise, exaggerated claims that cannot be verified will only hurt your case. Remember that a request for a grade appeal is a professional document.

Attach copies of any documentation that you have, which may include, but is not limited to, personal grade records, copies of graded work, email communication with the instructor, comparisons to the work of other students, and statements of support from other students. Not all of these items will apply to you depending on the basis of your appeal. Additionally, you may not be in possession of these documents if they are part of the instructor's class records. If that is the case, the committee will request this documentation from the instructor.

Finally, you should have another person review your appeal documentation. This individual should critique it not only for spelling and grammar, but also for ease of understanding. Staff members in the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, academic advisors, and professors are appropriate for this task.