

To: The University Senate

From: Educational Policy Committee

Subject: Modifications to Streamline and Clarify the Grade Appeals Process

Reference: [1] Purdue University Student Conduct Regulations: [Regulations Governing Student Conduct, Disciplinary Proceedings, and Appeals](#). F: Grade Appeals System

[2] Purdue University Academic Regulations: [Grades and Grade Reports](#)

Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: Purdue University's current grade appeal regulations need streamlining, updating, and clarification. Concerns have been expressed by Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education, students, advisors, and instructors regarding the lack of consistency, timeliness, and efficiency of the process. While the current process is perceived to be fair, it is extremely slow and inefficient. The regulation details are challenging to interpret regarding when to initiate an appeal, language (e.g., capricious, mechanical error), steps of the process, and timelines for both students and instructors.

The current process results in a distribution of responsibilities across multiple individuals (particularly at the college level) such that no one individual participates in enough appeals to develop experience and expertise.

The current process also lacks redundancy for individuals (particularly at the college level), such that the temporary absence of an individual can cause a breakdown in the process. The current process lacks a mechanism to operate and function during summer months, adding delays to appeals.

Appealing a grade is an academic issue rather than an issue of student conduct. However, the University Grade Appeal Committee reports to Faculty Affairs rather than the Educational Policy Committee, and the regulations regarding the current process are in the Student Conduct Regulations rather than the Academic Regulations.

Proposal: The University Senate modifies the Academic Regulations according to the table that follows in order to:

1. use more consistent and direct language regarding grade appeals;
2. streamline the grade appeal process in terms of action steps and timelines while making explicit timely and automated processes for record-keeping and communication with students;
3. formalize the role of the department head, while also removing the role of college-level administration;
4. delegate facilitation of the process to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) to enhance consistency and timeliness;
5. shift the reporting structure of the University Grade Appeal Committee from the Faculty Affairs Committee to the Educational Policy Committee; and
6. shift the placement of the regulations from Student Conduct Regulations to Academic Regulations.

Following other Senate documents, other related changes will be made by the Office of the Registrar, and reviewed for completeness by the Educational Policy Committee of the University Senate.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND LOCATION	MODIFIED LANGUAGE AND LOCATION
<p>Student Conduct Regulation</p> <p>Regulations Governing Student Conduct, Disciplinary Proceedings, and Appeals [1]</p> <p>F. Grade Appeals System</p>	<p>Academic Regulations</p> <p>Grades and Grade Reports [2]</p> <p>L. Grade Appeals Process</p>
<p>2. General</p> <p>a. In the academic community, grades are a measure of student achievement toward fulfillment of course objectives. The responsibility for assessing student achievement and assigning grades rests with the faculty, and, except for unusual circumstances, the course grade given is final.</p> <p>b. The grade appeals system affords recourse to a student who has evidence or believes that evidence exists to show that an inappropriate grade has been 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</p>	<p>2. General</p> <p>a. The responsibility for assessing student achievement and assigning grades rests with instructors, and, except for unusual circumstances, the course grade given is final.</p> <p>b. The grade appeals system affords recourse to a student who has evidence or believes that evidence exists to show a grade has been assigned contrary to what has been outlined in the syllabus, or due to error or arbitrariness, such as a grade inconsistent with those assigned other students. A student may challenge the reduction of a grade for alleged violation</p>

<p>may challenge the reduction of a grade for alleged scholastic dishonesty.</p> <p>c. The only University authorities empowered to change grades are the instructor or, in the case of teaching assistants, the faculty member in charge of the course in question and the chairman/chairwoman of the University Grade Appeals Committee acting in behalf of the school and University grade appeals committees.</p> <p>d. Informal attempts must be made to resolve grade grievances and appeals at the lowest possible level - through the course instructor, through the department head, or through other informal procedures outlined by the college/school and/or department in which the course was taught.</p> <p>e. Graduate students who wish to appeal grades received in regular coursework may do so through the grade appeals system. Cases involving the decisions of graduate examination committees, the acceptance of graduate theses, and the application of professional standards relating to the retention of graduate students shall be handled by procedures authorized by the Graduate Council rather than the grade appeals system.</p> <p>f. When a student initiates a formal grade appeal, he/she should be prepared to state in what way his/her grade assignment was arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise improper. At that time, he/she may seek the assistance of the dean of students, the chairperson of one of the grade appeals committees, or his/her academic advisor.</p> <p>g. In appealing a grade, the burden of proof is on the student, except in the case of alleged academic dishonesty, where the instructor must support the allegation.</p>	<p>of course policies related to academic integrity.</p> <p>c. The only University authorities empowered to change grades are the instructor, or in the case of teaching assistants, the faculty member in charge of the course in question, and the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee. In addition, the department head and the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee can change grades as a part of the grade appeal process.</p> <p>d. Informal attempts must be made to resolve grade grievances and appeals at the lowest possible level - through the course instructor.</p> <p>e. Graduate students who wish to appeal grades received in regular coursework may do so through the grade appeals system. Cases involving the decisions of graduate examination committees, the acceptance of graduate theses, and the application of professional standards relating to the retention of graduate students shall be handled by procedures authorized by the Graduate Council rather than the grade appeals system.</p> <p>f. When a student initiates a formal grade appeal, they should be prepared to state in what way their grade was inconsistent with the syllabus, arbitrary, in error, or assigned incorrectly due to alleged violation of course policies associated with academic integrity. At that time, they may seek assistance from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR), their academic advisor, or another professional staff member.</p> <p>g. In appealing a grade, the burden of proof is on the student, except in the case of alleged violation of course policies associated with academic integrity, where</p>
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	the instructor must support the allegation.
<p>3. College/School Grade Appeals Committee</p> <p>a. Each of the colleges/schools of Purdue University at the West Lafayette Campus will establish a Grade Appeals Committee to hear grade grievances and appeals that are not resolved informally at a lower level. Each committee will consist of two students (undergraduate or graduate corresponding to the status of the appellant), three members of the instructional faculty, and a non-voting chairperson. The chairperson of the committee will be an assistant or associate dean of the college/school appointed by the dean. The chairperson will be responsible for assuring adherence to established procedures, convening members for an appeal, and maintaining records. The chairperson has the authority to grant warranted time extension in the appeals process described below.</p> <p>b. Voting members of the committee will be selected from a pool of at least eight students and eight instructional faculty. The pool of members of the committee will be selected according to school/college procedures in the spring (not later than May 1) to commence serving on the first day of the following fall semester. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the pool.</p>	<p>3. Department Head Formal Appeal</p> <p>Department Heads (or their designee) will hear formal grade appeals that are not resolved informally between the student and the instructor. The Head (or their designee) has the authority to grant warranted time extension in the appeals process described subsequently.</p>
<p>4. University Grade Appeals Committee</p> <p>a. A University Grade Appeals Committee, with the authority to hear appeals of school committee decisions, shall be established for the West Lafayette Campus.</p> <p>The University committee shall be responsible to and report to the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate.</p> <p>In all appeal cases, the committee shall</p>	<p>4. University Grade Appeals Committee</p> <p>a. A University Grade Appeals Committee, with the authority to hear appeals from decisions made by Department Heads (or their designee), shall be established for the West Lafayette Campus.</p> <p>The University Grade Appeals Committee shall be a Faculty Committee responsible to and reporting to the Educational Policy Committee of the University Senate.</p> <p>In all appeal cases, the committee shall</p>

<p>consist of two students (undergraduate or graduate to correspond to the status of the appealing student) and four members of the instructional faculty.</p> <p>They shall be selected in the following manner: four undergraduate students nominated by the student body president and confirmed by the Student Senate; four graduate students appointed by the Committee on Student Affairs of the University Senate; and eight faculty members selected by the University Senate. The student members shall be appointed annually. Two of the faculty members of the committee shall be elected annually for a three-year term.</p> <p>b. The members shall be selected in the spring (not later than May 1) to start serving on the first day of the following fall semester. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. If any appointing authority fails to make the initial appointments to the University Grade Appeals Committee within the specified time, or to fill any vacancy on the panel of members within five days after being notified to do so by the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee, or if at any time the University Grade Appeals Committee cannot function because of refusal of any member to serve, the chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee may make appointments, fill vacancies, or take such other actions as he/she deems necessary to constitute a University Grade Appeals Committee.</p> <p>c. Annually, at the last University Grade Appeals Committee meeting of the academic year, the members for the coming year plus all retiring committee members shall elect (by majority vote) one of the eight regular faculty members to act as the new non-voting chairperson of the committee.</p>	<p>consist of a total of 5 members: two students (undergraduate or graduate to correspond to the status of the appealing student) and two members of the instructional faculty, and the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee. The OSRR will serve as a facilitator of the appeal process to ensure consistency and adherence to process.</p> <p>The two student and two instructional faculty members will be selected from pools of possible participants. The pools (N = 10 or more) are established using the undergraduate and graduate student governments, and the University Senate, respectively. Pools will include at least one representative from each of the disciplinary colleges. Students will serve one-year terms and the instructional faculty will serve three-year terms.</p> <p>b. The members shall be selected in the spring (not later than May 1) to start serving on the last day of the spring semester. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. If any appointing authority fails to make the initial appointments to the University Grade Appeals Committee within the specified time, or to fill any vacancy on the panel of members within five days after being notified to do so by the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee, or if at any time the University Grade Appeals Committee cannot function because of refusal of any member to serve, the chair of the Educational Policy Committee may make appointments, fill vacancies, or take such other actions as they deem necessary to constitute a University Grade Appeals Committee.</p> <p>c. Annually, at the last University Grade Appeals Committee final meeting of the academic year (April), members of the committee will (by majority vote) select one of the eight regular faculty members to act as the new chair.</p>
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<p>d. The University Grade Appeals Committee shall adopt its own hearing proceedings, and establish uniform procedures to be followed by the college/school committees. The chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall be responsible for insuring that all school grade appeals committees are properly constituted and functional.</p>	<p>d. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities shall facilitate the hearing proceedings of the University Grade Appeals process and establish uniform procedures. The chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that University Grade Appeals committees are properly constituted and functional.</p>
<p>5. Initiating a Grade Appeal</p> <p>a. Prior to initiating a grade appeal, the student is strongly encouraged to resolve the situation with the instructor, department head, or head's designee. The department head is strongly encouraged to facilitate an informal resolution process between the parties.</p> <p>b. Appeal Process</p> <p>i. A student who wishes to initiate a grade appeal must file a written statement of allegations, facts, and circumstances concerning the grade assigned with the chairperson of the Grade Appeals Committee of the college/school in which the course was taken. This must be done within 30 calendar days after the start of the regular semester following the one in which the questioned grade was given.</p> <p>ii. After receipt of the student's written statement, the chairperson will promptly furnish a copy of the statement to the involved instructor who has seven days to make a written response. The chairperson will submit the statement of appeal and any responses to each of the members of the college/school grade appeals committee. Committee members will review the written documents within seven calendar days from the date they are received. If one voting member of the committee rules that the allegations warrant a hearing or are best addressed through a hearing, a hearing will be held; otherwise, the appeal will be denied. With reasonable cause, the chairperson may override</p>	<p>5. Initiating a Grade Appeal</p> <p>a. Prior to initiating a grade appeal, the student is required to attempt to resolve the situation with the instructor.</p> <p>b. Appeal Process</p> <p>i. If informal resolution with the instructor is not successful, a student who wishes to initiate a grade appeal must file a written statement of allegations, facts, and circumstances concerning the grade assigned with the Department Head (or their designee) in which the relevant course is taught. This must be done within 30 university business days after the posting of the grade for the course.</p> <p>ii. After receipt of the student's written statement, the Department Head (or their designee) will furnish a copy of the statement within 5 university business days to the instructor. The instructor will provide a written response within 5 university business days. (Instructors not currently in a period of employment will respond within 5 university business days following the beginning of their next period of employment.) The Department Head (or their designee) will then schedule a review meeting with both the instructor and the student to attempt to gather additional details and to attempt resolve the situation. This review meeting shall occur within 5 university business days</p>

<p>the decision not to hear the case.</p> <p>iii. If the appeal is to be heard, the chairperson will promptly give notice of the time, date, and place of the hearing to the parties involved. The hearing will be scheduled not more than 14 calendar days after notice to the student and instructor.</p> <p>iv. The instructor will promptly make all pertinent grading records available to the college/school committee's chairperson. In advance of the hearing, the chairperson may at his/her discretion make available to the student those records (or portions thereof) that he/she judges to be relevant in light of the student's allegations.</p>	<p>of receipt of the instructor's written response.</p> <p>iii. The instructor will make all pertinent grading records available to the Department Head (or their designee) within 2 university business days of the review meeting. The Department Head (or their designee) may at their discretion make available to the student those records (or portions thereof) that they judge to be relevant in light of the student's allegations.</p> <p>iv. The Department Head (or their designee) will submit a decision regarding the appeal within 5 university business days after the review meeting. If a grade change is part of the decision, the Department Head (or their designee) will engage with the Office of the Registrar to initiate the grade change.</p>
<p>6. Conduct of College/School Grade Appeals Committee Hearing, General</p> <p>a. The hearing shall be closed, unless both parties agree in writing that it be open. The chairperson's determination of the hearing location and the number of individuals that can be conveniently accommodated shall be final. The student and the instructor are both entitled to be accompanied at the hearing by advisors of their choice. Because the hearings are administrative and not judicial in nature, the advisors may not be lawyers. Both parties have the right to present evidence and witnesses in their behalf and to confront and question opposing witnesses.</p> <p>b. Under normal circumstances, if the duly notified student complainant does not appear for the hearing the complaint shall be dismissed, the case closed, and these actions not subject to further hearing or appeal. If, however, a duly notified faculty member does not appear, the hearing will continue on the presumption that there is</p>	<p>[This section is deleted.]</p>

<p>no desire to challenge evidence or witnesses presented by the student.</p> <p>c. An official audio recording shall be made of each hearing and filed by the chairperson of the respective college/school committee for at least one year. The recording will be confidential and used only if further appeal is granted by the University Grade Appeals Committee or under legal compulsion.</p> <p>d. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee may (by a majority vote of the committee membership) recommend changing the original grade. A written report of the committee's decision shall be sent to both parties and the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee no later than three days after the conclusion of the hearing. Either party may, within six class days of receipt of the decision, file a written notice of intent to request further appeal with the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee. If no such notice is received by the chairperson within the six-day period, the decision shall not be subject to further hearing appeal. If, at that time, the instructor who originally gave the grade is not willing to initiate a recommended change, the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall file the directed change with the registrar who shall record the new grade.</p> <p>e. The chairperson of each college/school committee will maintain a written record of all grade appeals heard in the college/school and provide an annual overview of the grade appeals process to the Provost.</p>	
<p>7. Appeal of a College/School Committee Decision</p> <p>a. Under certain specific circumstances (Sec III-E-7-b) either the student or the instructor may file a request for an appeal of the college/school grade appeals</p>	<p>6. Appeal of Department Head Decision</p> <p>Either the student or the instructor may file a request for an appeal of the Department Head (or their designee) decision.</p>

<p>committee decision. If the appeal request is granted, the case will be heard by the University Grade Appeals Committee.</p> <p>The process may be initiated by filing a personally signed notice of appeal with the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee within the six-day limit (Section III-E-6-d).</p> <p>The notice shall be accompanied by a written statement of the alleged procedural irregularities or new evidence, or a substantial enumeration of why the appellant believes the college/school committee decision is erroneous or unfair.</p> <p>Upon request, the respective college/school committee chairperson immediately will transmit the audio recording of the college/school hearing and any other items of evidence presented at the college/school hearing to the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee.</p> <p>The decision of the University Grade Appeals Committee to grant or deny appeals from school committees shall be final.</p> <p>b. If the University Grade Appeals Committee finds, on the basis of the appellant's written statement and other available evidence, that substantial procedural irregularities or inequities existed in the college/school hearing or that substantial new evidence has been uncovered, the University Grade Appeals Committee shall hear the case de novo. Additionally, the committee may, at its discretion, hear appeals from the college/school level, when the appellant's statement substantiates to its satisfaction that the college/school decision may have been erroneous or unfair. If the University Grade Appeals Committee grants an appeal, the chairperson shall promptly give notice to both parties of the time, date, and place of hearing (which shall be</p>	<p>The process may be initiated by filing out an appeal with OSRR within 5 university business days of after Department Head (or their designee) decision.</p> <p>The notice shall be accompanied by a statement of the alleged procedural irregularities or new evidence, or a substantial enumeration of why the appellant believes the Department Head (or their designee) decision is erroneous or unfair.</p> <p>Upon request, the respective Department Head (or their designee) will transmit any items of evidence to the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee.</p>
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<p>held not less than five and, whenever practicable, not more than 10 days after the receipt of such notice), as well as providing them with a copy of the procedures and sequence of events to be followed in conducting the hearing.</p>	
<p>8. Conduct of University Grade Appeal Committee Hearing, General</p> <p>a. The appeal hearing shall be closed, unless both parties agree in writing for it to be open.</p> <p>The chairperson’s determination of the hearing location and the number of individuals that can be conveniently accommodated shall be final. The appellant and opposing parties are both entitled to be accompanied at the hearing by advisors of their choice. Because the hearings are administrative and not judicial in nature, the advisors may not be lawyers.</p> <p>If an appeal is heard on the basis of procedural irregularity or new evidence, both parties have the right to present evidence and witnesses in their behalf and to confront and question opposing witnesses. If, however, the University Grade Appeals Committee elects to hear an appeal on the grounds that the college/school grade appeals committee’s decision appears to be erroneous or unfair, it shall not accept additional evidence but shall consider only matters introduced at the college/school hearing. The audio record of the college/school hearing shall be made available for audition by both parties and the members of the University committee. Additionally, the committee may, at its discretion, have a transcript of the college/school hearing prepared. If a transcript is prepared, it will be safeguarded and used in the same fashion as audio records of hearings.</p> <p>b. If a duly notified appellant does not appear for the hearing, the committee may close the case and it will be subject to no further hearing or appeal. If the</p>	<p>7. Conduct of University Grade Appeal Committee Hearing, General</p> <p>a. The appeal hearing shall be closed.</p> <p>The chair’s determination of the hearing location and the number of individuals that can be conveniently accommodated shall be final. The appellant and opposing parties are both entitled to be accompanied at the hearing by advisors of their choice.</p> <p>Both parties have the right to present evidence and witnesses on their behalf and to confront and question opposing witnesses.</p> <p>a. If a duly notified appellant does not appear for the hearing, the committee may close the case and it will be subject to no further hearing or appeal. If the opposing party (having been duly notified)</p>

<p>opposing party (having been duly notified) does not appear, the hearing will continue on the presumption that there is no desire to challenge evidence or witnesses that may be presented.</p> <p>c. An official audio recording shall be made of each hearing and kept by the chairperson of the University committee for at least one year. The recording will be confidential and used only under legal compulsion in civil court proceedings.</p> <p>d. After the University Grade Appeals Committee hears an appeal, it may (by a majority vote of the committee membership) recommend changing the original grade.</p> <p>A written report of the University Grade Appeals Committee’s decision shall be sent to both parties no later than 15 days after the conclusion of the hearing.</p> <p>If the instructor who originally gave the grade is not willing to initiate any recommended grade change, the chairperson of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall file the change with the registrar who shall record the new grade. The University Grade Appeals Committee’s decision is final, and shall not be subject to further hearing or appeal.</p>	<p>does not appear, the hearing will continue on the presumption that there is no desire to challenge evidence or witnesses that may be presented.</p> <p>b. An official audio recording shall be made of each hearing.</p> <p>c. After the University Grade Appeals Committee hears an appeal, it may vote (by a majority vote of the committee membership) to uphold or change the original grade.</p> <p>The University Grade Appeals Committee’s decision shall be sent to both parties no later than 5 university business days after the conclusion of the hearing.</p> <p>If the instructor who originally gave the grade is not willing to initiate any recommended grade change, the chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall file the change with the Office of the Registrar who shall record the new grade. The University Grade Appeals Committee’s decision is final, and shall not be subject to further hearing or appeal.</p>
<p>9. Other Academic/Grade Appeal Jurisdictions</p> <p>a. Informal boards or committees may be established within academic departments to resolve grade grievances and appeals.</p> <p>b. Students involved in cases of alleged academic dishonesty may be subject to disciplinary penalties under Section III-B-2-a of the Regulations Governing Student Conduct, Disciplinary Proceedings, and Appeals.</p>	<p>8. Other Academic/Grade Appeal Jurisdictions</p> <p>[This section is deleted]</p> <p>Students involved in cases of alleged academic dishonesty may be subject to disciplinary penalties under Section III-B-2-a of the Regulations Governing Student Conduct, Disciplinary Proceedings, and Appeals.</p>

Committee Votes: Educational Policy Committee

For:

Faculty

Eric Kvam (Chair)
Abdelfattah Nour
Antônio Sá Barreto
Steven Scott
John Sheffield
Jeffery Stefancic
Howard Sypher
Monica Torres

Advisors

Lesa Beals
Jeff Elliott
Jenna Rickus

Students

Shye Robinson

Against:

N/A

Abstained:

N/A

Absent:

Faculty

Burton (Lee) Artz
Andrew Askounis
Risa Cromer
Daniel Frank
Alice Pawley
PV Ramachandran
Mark Russell
Jeffrey Watt

Students

Adewole Babalola