

**PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**



**13.02.99.P0.01**

**Student Grade Appeals**

Approved August 30, 2024

Next Scheduled Review: August 1, 2029

**UAP Purpose**

This procedure outlines the grade appeal process so all involved understand their respective roles. The rights and responsibilities of the student, faculty member, administrators, School/College Grade Appeal Committee, and University Grade Appeal Committee are provided in the appendix. This procedure outlines the grade appeal process for undergraduate and graduate students of PVAMU.

**Definitions**

In this university administrative procedure, the following words have the following definitions and no other:

**Arbitrary** - no reasonable factual basis for reaching the conclusion or taking the action.

**Capricious** - unpredictable and subject to whim.

**Information** - material by which an alleged fact is established or disproved. Information establishes or disproves an assertion.

**Faculty Member** - an individual holding a position in which the primary title includes the word "professor," "instructor," or "lecturer," regardless of other rank of appointment qualifiers associated with the title. Appointments with the word "dean" or "provost" with or without a specified faculty rank higher than assistant professor are normally tenured faculty appointments.

**Final Grade** - a grade assigned by the instructor at the end of an academic term.

**Good Faith** - making a final decision without a desire to deceive, take undue advantage, or in any way act maliciously towards others.

**May** - a condition that is not required to be met; it is discretionary. Contrast with the word shall.

**Parties** - the student and the faculty member.

**Objectively Reasonable** - another person, not the dean/designee making the final decision, would find the dean/designee's final decision impartial, reasonable, and ethical based on the evidence offered by the student and instructor of record.

**Prejudiced** - having or showing a dislike or distrust derived from prejudice.

**Preponderance of the Information** - the greater weight of credible information submitted in the hearing. For a fact to be established by a preponderance of the information, the School/College Grade Appeals Committee (CGAC) or the University Grade Appeal Committee (UGAC) must find the fact to be more likely true than not true.

**Shall** - a condition that must be met. Contrast with the word "may."

**Student** - an individual undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at the university who is the subject of an adverse academic decision.

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## **Official Procedures and Responsibilities**

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### **1. PROCEDURE**

Grade appeals should not be initiated based on the perceived difficulty of the course, or if a significant number of students received failing or exceptionally high grades, or the instructor's reluctance to discuss homework or respond to questions in class or during office hours, or the instructor's teaching style (such as grading methods, curving grades, etc.).

- 1.1 The basis of a grade appeal must be based upon one or a combination of the following:
  - 1.1.1 An error in calculating the grade or inaccurate recording of the grade;
  - 1.1.2 Failure of the instructor to notify students clearly and promptly of the criteria for grade determination;
  - 1.1.3 Assignment of a grade based on factors other than performance in the course, e.g., personal bias, or reasons other than the stipulated criteria or standards included in the course syllabus;
  - 1.1.4 Inconsistent or inequitably applied standards for evaluation of student academic performance.

### **2. GENERAL**

- 2.1 While faculty members should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression, student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis and not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
- 2.2 Faculty members are responsible for outlining the objectives and setting standards for each course and for making clear the means of evaluation for the purpose of grading students. Students are responsible for participating in and out of class, learning the content of any course of study, and maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
- 2.3 Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or arbitrary academic evaluation. A student who believes their final grade reflects

academic evaluation, which was arbitrary, prejudiced, or capricious, may appeal the grade given in the course.

- 2.4 The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal when they submit the informal or the formal grade appeal form (included in the appendix). A preponderance of the information will be used as the standard of proof.
- 2.5 A student who has failed to meet the grade requirements of a prerequisite course and is appealing the grade in that course is not allowed to register for the subsequent course(s) unless a grade change resulting from the appeal meets the prerequisite course requirements.
- 2.6 Grade appeals involving cases of academic misconduct, discrimination, sexual harassment, disability accommodations in academic programs, retaliation, or extenuating circumstances will be heard after the resolution of the associated cases.
- 2.7 Each school/college will be responsible for maintaining records of all grade appeals, including collecting and storing files associated with individual appeals. These records must be retained for a period consistent with The Texas A&M University System Records Retention Policy. Both logs and records will be made available upon request to demonstrate compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation standards.
- 2.8 Schools/colleges may expand on the grade appeal process stated in this procedure. Any additional school/college requirements must be clearly stated in the school/college's faculty handbook and be in place no later than the start of the fall semester to be applicable for that academic year. For assistance and/or guidance of the grade appeals process, students may contact the dean of the school/college where the course is taught.
- 2.9 Due process will be followed in all informal and formal grade appeal procedures.

### **3. SCHOOL/COLLEGE GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE**

- 3.1 Each academic school/college will have a School/College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) made up of no fewer than three (3) faculty members, one of whom will serve as chair of the CGAC, and two (2) students. At a minimum, school/college policy will specify each of the following:
  - 3.1.1 Appointment of Faculty Members selecting faculty members for the CGAC, qualifications, required training, and terms of service.
  - 3.1.2 Appointment of Student Members: selecting student members for the CGAC, qualifications, required training, and terms of service.
  - 3.1.3 Replacement or substitution of Faculty Members: the process of replacing a faculty committee member unable to serve and the process of substituting a faculty committee member involved in a particular case.

- 3.1.4 Replacement or substitution of Student Members: the process of replacing a student committee member unable to serve and the process of substituting a student committee member involved in a particular case.

#### **4. THE APPEAL PROCESS**

Each academic school/college will follow the steps and actions indicated below:

##### **4.1 Faculty Member (Informal Grade Appeal Process)**

- 4.1.1 The faculty member of the class is the primary authority with respect to determining a student's performance and final grade in that course. Most problems or complaints can be resolved through discussions between the student and the faculty member. Therefore, before beginning the formal grade appeal process, the student must discuss the matter with the faculty member unless the faculty member is, for any reason, unavailable.
- 4.1.2 After the final grade submission period has closed, the student shall have a ten (10) business day window to initiate the appeal process. Within this period, the student shall fill out the Student Informal Grade Appeal Form (see the appendix), email the form directly to the faculty member, and schedule and attend a meeting with the faculty member to discuss and resolve the grade appeal.
- 4.1.3 The faculty member shall meet with the student within five (5) business days after receiving the Student Informal Grade Appeal Form.
- 4.1.4 After the meeting, the faculty member must provide the student with a summary of the findings on the Student Informal Grade Appeal Form and forward a copy of the form to the department head within three (3) business days.
- 4.1.5 If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student-faculty level, or if the faculty member is unavailable or no longer with the university, an appeal of the final grade in the class must be submitted in writing on the Student Formal Grade Appeal Form (see the appendix), to the appropriate department head in the school/college in which the course is taught.

##### **4.2 Department Head (Formal Grade Appeal Process)**

- 4.2.1 If the faculty member in the case is the department head, their role, as described below, will be assumed by the school/college dean or their designee.
- 4.2.2 Receiving Grade Appeals from Students: If the department head is not in possession of the Student Informal Grade Appeal Form sent by the faculty member (see 3.1.4), the department head shall check with the student if the Informal Grade Appeal Process (steps outlined in 3.1) was duly followed. If the student does not have any documentation that the Informal Grade Appeal Process was duly completed, the department head shall redirect the student to 4.1; otherwise, the department head

shall proceed with the Formal Grade Appeal Process (as outlined in this section).

- 4.2.3 This formal grade appeal should be initiated no later than twenty (20) business days after the start of the next long semester.
  - 4.2.4 Within five (5) business days, the department head will consult with the student and the faculty member to attempt a successful resolution of the appeal. If successful, the department head will issue a written statement of the findings and any actions agreed upon to the student and faculty member and follow up to see if any such actions are executed.
  - 4.2.5 If no satisfactory resolution can be found as agreed upon by the faculty member, department head, and student, the department head will refer the matter, within five (5) business days, to the School/College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC). The department head will issue a written statement of findings to the student, faculty member, and CGAC, indicating that this stage of the appeal process is complete.
- 4.3 Each academic school/college's CGAC will adhere to the following requirements:
- 4.3.1 Burden of Proof: The burden of proof shall rest with the student.
  - 4.3.2 Standard of Proof: The standard of proof shall be a preponderance of the information.
  - 4.3.3 Quorum: A statement of what shall constitute a quorum of the CGAC.
  - 4.3.4 Objections to Panel Membership: While the student has no right to preemptory challenge or challenge for cause of any committee member, the panel may, by majority vote, recess to consider a student's objection in a closed session. In closed sessions, the member in question may choose to recuse themselves, a majority of the panel may vote to recuse the member, or a majority of the panel may vote to continue with the member in question impaneled. If the member is recused for any reason and the remaining panel members present constitute a quorum, the hearing will continue. If, after such recusal, the membership present does not constitute a quorum, the hearing will be rescheduled, and a substitute member of the panel will be appointed.
  - 4.3.5 Privacy: The proceedings, findings, and recommendations shall not be open to the general public or available to any individuals other than those involved with the case.
  - 4.3.6 Hearing Protocol: Hearings shall include at least the following elements.
    - 4.3.6.1. Role of the chair: The chair of a CGAC will preside at the hearing, maintain orderly proceedings, and assure that all parties receive a fair hearing. The chair will be a voting member of the CGAC. The chair will keep appropriate records of meetings and actions of the

CGAC and is responsible for all communications by the CGAC with other parties to a hearing. The chair will have the right to adjust protocol, given the circumstances, to ensure fairness.

4.3.6.2. Evidence and Testimony: The committee shall hear all parties to the case and review all information presented. If the hearing is set with the concurrence of the parties and the student or faculty member cannot attend, the hearing may proceed as scheduled. Students not residing at or near PVAMU may request to attend the hearing via video conference call or another electronic medium as appropriate. Likewise, a faculty member who is unavailable for an extended period or unable to be physically present may also request to attend the hearing through an appropriate electronic medium.

4.3.6.3. Rights to an Advisor: All parties to the hearing may be accompanied by another person in an advisory capacity only. Such person may not participate directly in the hearing.

4.3.7 Decision: The CGAC will determine the facts of the case and attempt to affect a fair and appropriate resolution to the complaint. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the CGAC may recommend to the dean or their designee in the school/college that 1) the original grade given by the faculty member is upheld or 2) that the grade in question is changed to a specific alternate grade. In cases where the faculty member is no longer affiliated with PVAMU, the dean or their designee may initiate the change of grade if so requested.

4.3.8 Notification of Findings: The chair of the CGAC will present its findings and recommendations, in writing, to the dean or their designee within five (5) business days after the completion of its hearings and deliberations. The notification should include a summary of the facts of the case, the hearing, and the committee's specific recommendations.

#### 4.4 Action by the Dean of the School/College or Their Designee

4.4.1 If the faculty member in the case is the dean, their role, as described below, will be assumed by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee.

4.4.2 Receiving Grade Appeals from Students: If the dean or their designee is not in possession of the Student Formal Grade Appeal Form sent by the CGAC (see 3.3.8), the dean or their designee shall check with the student if the Informal Grade Appeal Process was duly completed, and the Formal Grade Appeal Process was duly initiated. If the student does not have any documentation that the Informal Grade Appeal Process was duly completed and the Formal Grade Appeal Process was duly initiated, the dean or their designee shall redirect the student to the steps outlined in 5.1 and 5.2; otherwise, the dean or their designee shall refer the matter, within five (5) business days, to the School/College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) to initiate the steps outlined in section 4, Proceedings of the School/College Grade Appeal Committee.

- 4.4.3 Receiving Notification and Recommendations from CGAC: Within five (5) business days after receiving the findings and recommendations from the chair of the CGAC, the dean or their designee will make a decision and send written notification of the decision to the student and the faculty member involved.

5.4.1

## **5. FINAL GRADE APPEAL**

### 5.1 University Grade Appeal Committee

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (henceforth Provost) or designee will convene a University Grade Appeal Committee (UGAC) made up of three (3) faculty members, one of whom will serve as chair of the UGAC and two (2) students. At a minimum, the Academic Affairs policy will specify each of the following:

- 5.1.1 Appointment of Faculty Members: selecting faculty members for the UGAC, qualifications, required training, and terms of service.
- 5.1.2 Appointment of Student Members: selecting student members for the UGAC, qualifications, required training, and terms of service.
- 5.1.3 Replacement or substitution of Faculty Members: the process of replacing a faculty committee member unable to serve and the process of substituting a faculty committee member involved in a particular case.
- 5.1.4 Replacement or substitution of Student Members: the process of replacing a student committee member unable to serve and the process of substituting a student committee member involved in a particular case.

### 5.2 Appeal to the University Grade Appeal Committee

- 5.2.1 If no satisfactory resolution can be found as agreed upon by all previous levels of the Informal and Formal Grade Appeal, a student may initiate a final appeal with the Office of Academic Affairs.
- 5.2.2 The Office of Academic Affairs will convene the UGAC and employ the review process appropriate to the situation.
- 5.2.3 Receiving Final Grade Appeal from Students: It is the responsibility of the student to provide a written appeal to the Office of Academic Affairs. A student must provide copies of all documents and decisions of the Formal Grade Appeal within five (5) business days of receiving the written notification of the decision from the dean or their designee. The submission must include the student's original written appeal.
- 5.2.4 Receiving Final Notification from the UGAC: Within fifteen (15) business days after receiving the final appeal from the student, the UGAC will make a final decision. The chair of the UGAC will notify the student and

the dean of the outcome by official letter. A decision that has been reviewed by the UGAC is final.

- 5.2.5 Grading and other class-related academic issues are referred in writing to the Office of the President only in instances where a preponderance of the evidence reveals that a student's constitutional rights or human dignity may have been violated. The Provost will transmit to the President the entire record of reviews conducted at each level if requested by the President following their receipt of the student's written appeal. The President will employ a review process appropriate to the matter presented and notify the Provost and dean of the outcome. The dean will then notify the student of the outcome.

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**Related Statutes, Policies, Regulations and Rules**

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[System Policy 13.02, Student Rights and Obligations](#)

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**Forms**

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[Grade Appeal Form](#)

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**Appendix**

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[Grade Appeal Process - Student, Faculty, and Administrative Rights and Responsibilities](#)

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**Contact Office**

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Office of Academic Affairs

(936) 261-2175

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