

Minnesota State University, Mankato University Policy	
<b>Procedure Name:</b> Grade Appeals	<b>Effective Date of Last Review:</b> August 1, 2025
<b>Custodian of Policy:</b> Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs	<b>Date of Last Review:</b> September 2024
<b>Date of Adoption:</b> September 1992	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> September 2030

This procedure supports the University Grade Appeal policy.

## Procedure

Grade appeals will be reviewed in the following manner. The student must retain a copy of the petition and the response at each stage for their records.

### Step 1. Informal Resolution

- A written petition will be submitted by the student to the instructor of the class no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of following regular semester.
  - Appeals for Fall semester grades must be submitted no later than the 10th class day of the following Spring semester.
  - Appeals for Spring and Summer semester grades must be submitted no later than the 10th class day of the following Fall semester.
- The petition must contain the following information:
  - A concise yet specific explanation of why the student believes the grade was incorrect
  - Relevant evidence that supports the appeal, such as graded assignments, email correspondence, syllabus, grading rubrics, and other supporting materials.
  - The resolution requested by the student.
- By the end of week 3 of the semester, the instructor will respond to the student in writing.

If the student is not satisfied with the response provided by the instructor, or if the student does not receive a response after two weeks, they may proceed to Step 2. In cases where the

departmental chairperson is the faculty member whose grade is being appealed, the student shall proceed to Step 3.

## Step 2. Formal Appeal to the Department Chairperson

- During week 4 of the semester, the student may submit a written petition to the departmental chairperson.
- The petition must contain the following information:
  - The original petition sent to the instructor, including all evidence to support the petition.
  - A copy of the instructor's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
  - The resolution requested by the student
- The department chair will review the grade appeal. They may request additional information, including meeting with the student and instructor to discuss the complaint, if necessary. Should such a meeting occur, students have the right to have a representative be present. The representative may only respond to direct questions from the department chair or instructor.
- By the end of week 6 of the semester, the departmental chairperson will respond to the student in writing with a copy to the instructor of the class.
  - Refer the appeal to the dean and the Office of Title IX/Equal Opportunity if it contains allegations of discrimination.
  - Uphold the grade if they determine insufficient evidence exists of error, arbitrariness, or failure to follow published grading criteria.
  - Adjust the grade if they determine the grade was assigned in error.
  - Request a new evaluation if they determine the grading was arbitrary or failed to follow published grading criteria.

If the student is not satisfied with the response provided by the chairperson, or if they do not receive a response after two weeks, they may proceed to Step 3.

## Step 3. Formal Appeal to the Dean of the Academic College

- During week 7 of the semester, the student may submit a written petition to the dean of the college.
- The petition must contain the following information:

- The original petition sent to the instructor, including all evidence to support the petition.
- A copy of the instructor's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
- A copy of the chairperson's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
- An explanation why the prior attempts at resolution were unsatisfactory.
- The dean (or their designee) will review the grade appeal. They must confer with the Office of Title IX/Equal Opportunity if it contains allegations of discrimination. They may request additional information, including meeting with the student and instructor, if necessary. Should such a meeting occur, students have the right to have a representative be present. The representative may only respond to direct questions from the dean.
- By the end of week 9, the dean or designees will make a decision and will respond to the student in writing of the decision reached, with a copy to the instructor and departmental chairperson.
  - Uphold the grade if they determine insufficient evidence exists of error, arbitrariness, discrimination, or failure to follow published grading criteria.
  - Adjust the grade if they determine the grade was assigned in error.
  - Request a new evaluation if they determine the grading was arbitrary, discriminatory, or failed to follow published grading criteria.

If the student is not satisfied with the response provided by the dean/designees, or if they do not receive a response after two weeks, they may proceed to Step 4.

## Step 4. Final Appeal to the Provost or Dean of Graduate Studies

By the end of week 10, the student may submit a final appeal.

Undergraduate students: Submit a written appeal to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee) with a copy to the instructor of the class, departmental chairperson, and dean.

Graduate students: Submit a written statement petition to the Dean of Graduate Studies (or designee) with a copy to the instructor of the class, departmental chairperson, and dean.

In both situations, the petition must contain the following information:

- The original petition sent to the instructor, including all evidence to support the petition.
- A copy of the instructor's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
- A copy of the chairperson's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
- A copy of the dean's response to the petition (or an explanation that no response was received).
- An explanation why the prior attempts at resolution were unsatisfactory.

The Provost (or designee) or Dean of Graduate Studies will review the petition. They may choose to consult a Grade Appeals Panel

### Use of a University Grade Appeals Panel

During consideration at Step 4, the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/designee or the Dean of Graduate Studies may convene a University Grade Appeals Panel, a standing committee that shall serve in an advisory capacity. This panel shall consist of two faculty members and two students from colleges other than the college from which the grade appeal originates. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Faculty Association, shall name the faculty members. The Student Government shall name the student members.

University Grade Appeals Panels shall have the right to the student petitions, all relevant information, and all relevant instructor records. The panel may also interview the student and the instructor. Should such an interview occur, students have the right to have a representative be present. The representative may only respond to direct questions from the panel. The panel shall then make a written recommendation to the Provost and Senior Vice President or Dean of Graduate Studies within two weeks of completion of the review.

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or Dean of Graduate Studies will review the recommendation of the University Grade Appeal Panel and all supporting evidence to make their decision. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the student with copies to the instructor, departmental chairperson, and college dean.

Note: \*The time period consists of normal university operating days when classes are held. Under unusual circumstances, deadlines may be extended. If the University representative, at any step, fails to review and/or respond within the time limits provided, the student may proceed to the next step. If the student fails to respond within the time limits provided, the appeal shall be deemed to have been withdrawn.

**Faculty Right to Appeal.** The instructor of the class who is not satisfied with a decision may submit a written statement to counter the student's petition. The timeline for faculty appeals follows the student appeals as outlined below. Appeals regarding a Step 2 decision may be sent to the dean during Week 7, and a response will be given during Weeks 8-9. Appeals regarding a Step 3 decision will be sent to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Dean of Graduate Studies during Week 10, and a response will be given by Week 14.

### Timeline For Grade Appeals

Timing in Semester	Action
Weeks 1-2	Step 1: Informal resolution with instructor.
Week 3	Instructor responds.
Week 4	Student accepts resolution or proceeds to Step 2.
Weeks 5-6	Step 2: Formal appeal to the department chairperson. Chairperson reviews the appeal and responds.
Week 7	Student may accept resolution or proceeds to Step 3.
Weeks 8-9	Step 3: Formal appeal to the dean of the academic college. Dean or designee reviews the appeal and responds.
Week 10	Student may accept the resolutions or proceeds to Step 4.
Weeks 11-13	Step 4: Formal appeal to the Provost or Dean of Graduate Studies
Week 14	Provost or Dean of Graduate Studies responds. This decision is final.

### Rationale

Students have the right to ask an instructor for an explanation of any grade received.

### Definitions

#### Grade Appeal

A written complaint raised by a student about a final course grade assigned by a faculty member. In order to have a right to the entire grade appeal process, the claim must meet the grounds described in this policy.

#### Retaliation

Punishment inflicted on a student in revenge for behavior inside or outside of a course, including the act of filing a grade appeal.

#### Arbitrary

A decision that appears to be based on individual preference or convenience rather than by policy, procedure, necessity, or logic.

## Associated Policies and Procedures

Grading Policy

Last Date of Attendance Policy

Student Complaints and Grievances Policy

Board Policy 1B.1 Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education

## Grade Appeal Template

*This template is intended to guide students in composing a thorough grade appeal petition. It is not the only acceptable format. Students are encouraged to personalize the petition to address the specific circumstances of your appeal.*

Date

Recipient title and name

Recipient title

Recipient address

Dear (Recipient title and name),

The opening of your petition should briefly state the purpose of the petition. Include the course name, number, and section number (e.g., ALA 100 Introduction to the Liberal Arts, section 01) and the semester in which you were enrolled in the course. If you are writing this email to someone other than the instructor of the course, include the instructor's name as well.

The body of your petition should explain the reason you are appealing the final grade in the course. A student may appeal the final grade in a course if they believe that one or more of the following conditions exist: mathematical or clerical error, arbitrary grading, or failure to follow published grading criteria. Disagreement with the academic standards, workload, or the grading scale does not constitute grounds for a grade appeal. Students bear the burden of proving there are sufficient grounds for changing a final course grade, so you must describe the situation and any previous attempts to appeal the grade here, then attach evidence (e.g., records of coursework from the class, communication with the instructor about their grade as part of the appeal, the decision of previous steps in the appeal).

If you are submitting a Step 2, 3, or 4 appeal, explain why the prior attempts at resolution were unsatisfactory.

The closing of your petition should state the resolution you are seeking. Express goodwill to the reader, such as thanking them for their time.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your Tech ID number

Your email address

Your phone number



## Bibliography

<https://www.minnesota.edu/about/policies-and-procedures/grade-appeal-policy#:~:text=Minnesota%20State%20Community%20and%20Technical,changing%20a%20final%20course%20grade>

<https://www2.winona.edu/regulations/Images/Fall%202016%20Revised%20Grade%20Appeal%20Policy%20re-write-5-1.pdf>

<https://registrar.ecu.edu/grade-appeal-policy-and-process/>

<https://www.metrostate.edu/sites/default/files/2024/Procedure%202020%20Academic%20Appeals.pdf>

<https://catalog.smsu.edu/policies-procedures/academic-appeals/>

<https://www.mnstate.edu/about/policies-procedures/list/grade-appeal/>

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