

## APPEAL OF A GRADE

Students who think that they have been graded unfairly must appeal the grade at issue in writing within 30 days after the last day of the final examination period for the semester in which the grade was assigned. (The written appeal follows step 1 below and must be addressed to the Chair/Dean of the Division or School, signed by the student, and delivered or postmarked within the 30-day limit.) Because the appeal of a grade is an in-house procedure, and not a court of law, no legal counsel or any other person may be present other than the persons specifically mentioned in each step below. Exceptions to this may be granted by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs only for the following reasons: (1) a student has disabilities requiring extraordinary assistance; or (2) a student's first language is not English and is not sufficiently fluent in English to allow him/her to represent himself/herself adequately. In these cases, the appointment will be left to the discretion of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. The steps in the process are as follows:

1. The student will discuss the grade with the instructor involved.\* This meeting should occur within three weeks of the last day of the final examination period for the semester in which the grade was assigned. The majority of grade disputes are resolved at this step.
2. In the rare case that the dispute is not resolved in step 1, the student must file a written appeal to the Division Chair or Dean of the School within 30 days after the last day of the final examination period for the semester in which the grade was assigned. Only the final course grade may be appealed. Individual assignment grades are to be addressed with the instructor as needed throughout the semester and are not subject to appeal. The letter should clearly address the basis for the appeal which must be grounded in one of the following situations:
  - a. Computational or clerical error by the instructor.
  - b. Bias on the part of the instructor resulting in a negative impact on the student's grade.
  - c. The grading was arbitrary or capricious.

Within two weeks of receipt of the written appeal, the Division Chair or the Dean of the School will meet with the student and the instructor to resolve the difficulty. A memorandum of records will be prepared that will include the substance of the conversation during the meeting.

3. If the difficulty remains unresolved, a divisional review board will be appointed by the Division Chair or the Dean of the School to hear the student's appeal. The review board will meet to hear the appeal no later than two weeks after step two above.

1) There will be three members of this board, to be chaired by the Division Chair or the Dean of the School.

2) The instructor involved will not be a member of this board.

3) In small divisions, the membership of the board may come from outside the division.

4) If the charge of unfair grading is made against a Division Chair or the Dean of the School, the review board will be appointed by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, who will serve as its chair.

5) The review board shall hear statements from both the student and the instructor involved and will examine documents that are pertinent to the matter under review.\*\*

6) A record will be kept of the review board's proceedings.

7) The findings of the review board will be reported to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, along with a recommendation. The decision of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall be submitted to the student in writing within seven days.

4. The decision of the VPASA regarding grades is final.

\*In the unlikely event that the student cannot locate the instructor, the student will submit a written appeal directly to the Division Chair or Dean. The Division Chair or Dean will make a reasonable attempt to locate the instructor. If the instructor is not available, the Division Chair or the Dean will send reliable notice to the instructor (e.g., via certified mail) notifying the instructor that the appeal will proceed on a specified date no sooner than ten days from the sending of the notification. On the specified date, the Division Chair or the Dean of the School will meet with the student as specified in Step 2, with or without the instructor present.

\*\*If the instructor cannot be present before the review board, the student will present his or her case to the review board, and the board will make a recommendation to the VPASA.