



## College of Liberal Arts Student Grade Appeal Process

A student who questions a grade received in a course taught in the College of Liberal Art should first speak with the faculty member who assigned the grade to determine whether the two may arrive at a mutual understanding.

If a student's concerns are not satisfied after this discussion, he/she may elect to initiate procedures to appeal the grade.

**In order to appeal a grade, the appeal request must focus on specific departures from guidelines listed on the syllabus.** Dissatisfaction with a grade is not grounds for a successful appeal.

The procedures that follow apply to all of the College of Liberal Art's programs.

### Appeal to Instructor

1. A student will present the matter of grievance, in writing, to the Instructor through the Department Chair using the "[Student Grade Appeal Form](#)". This must be done within twenty (20) business days after the beginning of the next long (15-week) semester. (That is, if the student has a complaint about a fall semester grade, the student must submit the written grievance within twenty (20) business days after the beginning of the spring semester. Written grievances about grades assigned in the spring semester must be submitted within twenty (20) business days after the beginning of the fall semester. Written complaints about grades assigned in either summer session must be submitted within twenty (20) business days after the beginning of the fall semester.)
2. Normally within five (5) business days after receiving the written grievance, the faculty member will either sustain the original grade assigned or make a change. The faculty member will notify the student in writing or by email regarding this action using the "[Faculty Grade Appeal Response Form](#)". If the Instructor does not act within this period, or if the Instructor is unavailable for any reason, the student may appeal to the next level.

### Appeal to Department Chair

1. If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student/faculty level, or if the Instructor is unavailable for any reason, the student may submit the grievance to the appropriate Department Chair in the department in which the course is taught using the "[Student Grade Appeal Form](#)". (If the course is a first-year seminar, the student may submit the grievance to the chair of the Department of Undergraduate Studies.) The student will present the appeal in writing within five (5) business days after the Instructor has acted, or, if there has been no action by the Instructor, within five (5) business days after the time period for action has ended. If the student does not submit an appeal by these dates, the University is not required to process the grievance.

2. The Department Chair will review all facts and evidence in the case, consulting with the student and the Instructor, and attempt a successful mediation normally within five (5) business days of receiving the grievance. The Department Chair will issue to the student and Instructor a written statement of findings using the "Department Chair Grade Appeal Response Form", indicating that this stage of the appeal process is completed. If the student indicates using the "Student Grade Appeal Response Form" that s/he accepts the Chair's decision, the appeal will be considered to be resolved.

### **Preliminary Review and Advising**

If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Chair, the Chair will refer the matter, normally within five (5) business days, to the Associate Dean of the college for a hearing by the College Grade Appeals Committee (CGAC). The Associate Dean is not part of the CGAC. Rather her/his role is to objectively analyze the case and advise the principals involved as to possible ways to mediate the issue before going through a formal grade appeal. The student may withdraw the appeal at any time in the process.

### **Submission of File by Department Chair**

If no informal resolution can be reached by the parties in consultation with the Associate Dean, the Department Chair will provide the Associate Dean with the student appeal file normally within five (5) business days. This file will include the written appeal of step 2.2.1 above, the course description and syllabus, course criteria for grading, student work submitted for evaluation, the grade distribution for the course, and the statement of findings. Any other available and appropriate correspondence and documentation pertaining to the appeal should also be furnished.

### **Action by the Associate Dean**

The Associate Dean will schedule a hearing before the CGAC normally within twenty (20) business days of receiving the appeal file. The case will be heard at a time and place that does not conflict with class schedules of the students and faculty involved. If the hearing is set with the concurrence of the parties and the student or Instructor cannot attend, the hearing may proceed as scheduled. If the Instructor in the case is the Associate Dean, the role of this officer, as described above, will be assumed by the appropriate College Dean.

### **The College Grade Appeal Committee**

The College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) will be made up of three faculty members (one of whom will serve as Chair of the CGAC) and two students. These three faculty members will be pulled from a pool of six eligible faculty and the two students will be pulled from a pool of six eligible students. The composition of the CGAC may change during the academic year depending on availability of the faculty and of the students to serve on the committee. A total of four members will constitute a quorum.

1. Faculty members shall be appointed by the Associate Dean in consultation with the Department Chairs. The faculty will serve 2-year appointments on the CGAC. All full-time tenured, tenure-track, and professional assistant professors are eligible to serve on this committee. All members will complete a 1-hour training session.
2. Student Members shall be appointed by the Associate Dean in consultation with the Department Chairs. The students shall be drawn from the rosters of the clubs and organizations within the college. No student who has graduated is eligible to serve on the CGAC. Students will serve 1-year appointments on the CGAC. All members will complete a 1-hour training session.
3. In the event that faculty and/or student representatives of the CGAC are unavailable during the summer months, special appointments can be made by the Associate Dean in consultation with the Dean and with the Department Chairs.
4. In the event that faculty and/or student representatives of the CGAC are unable to serve on the committee due to conflict of interest or some other unavoidable obstacles, replacement or substitutions can be made by the Associate Dean in consultation with the Dean and with the Department Chairs.
5. While the students will have no right to preemptory challenge or challenge for cause of any Committee member, the CGAC may, by majority vote, recess to consider a student objection in closed session. In closed session 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 members of the Panel present constitute a quorum, the hearing will continue.

#### **College Grade Appeals Committee Process**

1. During the appeal process, the burden of proof rests with the student. The standard of proof shall be a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence is defined as a standard of proof that indicates that the evidence provided leads the hearing body to the conclusion that "more likely than not" a violation did or did not occur.
2. 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.
3. The Chair of the 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 officials and parties to a hearing. The Chair will have the right to adjust procedures, given the circumstances at issue, to ensure fairness.

4. Evidence and Testimony: The Committee shall hear all parties to the case and review all evidence presented. Both the faculty member and student shall be present at the same time during the formal hearing. Students not residing at or near Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi may request to attend the hearing via video conference call, as appropriate.
5. Counsel: All parties to the hearing may be accompanied by another person in an advisory capacity only. Such person may not testify or ask questions.
6. Decision: The College Grade Appeal Committee 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 Associate Dean of the College that 1) the original grade of the Instructor be upheld, or 2) that the grade in question be changed to a specific alternate grade. (In cases where the Instructor is no longer affiliated with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the Dean may initiate the change of grade, if so requested).
7. Notification of Findings: The Chair of the CGAC will present its findings and recommendations, in writing, to the Associate Dean (or Dean, if the Associate Dean is a party to the case) normally within five (5) business days after completion of its hearings and deliberations. The notification should include a short summary of the facts of the case, the hearing, and the specific recommendations of the committee. Using the Associate Dean Grade Appeal Response Form, the Associate Dean (or Dean) will send written notification of the decision to the student and the faculty member involved normally within five business days after receiving the CGAC's findings and recommendations.
8. The decision of the CGAC is final and may not be appealed.