

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
LONG BEACH**

POLICY STATEMENT

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Amended

October 10, 1988

SUBJECT: GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE

(This Policy Statement supersedes Policy Statement 79-17 and Policy Statement 86-05 dated March 19, 1986.)

The following policy was recommended by the Academic Senate in its meeting of March 6, 1986 and received the concurrence of the President on March 19, 1986. The policy was amended by the Academic Senate in its meeting of September 29, 1988, and received the concurrence of the President on October 10, 1988.

Grounds for Appeal

Although the University presumes that grades assigned are correct, the University has established procedures to protect students against academic evaluations which are prejudicial or capricious, or arbitrary. The procedure is available equally to both undergraduate and graduate students and constitutes the only grade appeal procedure at California State University, Long Beach.

Only final grades may be appealed. Grounds for appeal are prejudicial, or capricious, or arbitrary grading by the instructor of the specific student appealing. The burden of proof rests upon the student. It is therefore important that the student include a clear, coherent written statement of the basis for the grade appeal together with any supporting documentation the student may wish to include, if the appeal goes beyond the instructor. The statement should support the change of grade requested; committees normally will not consider any other possible change. The written statement for the appeal and the evidence supporting the appeal should avoid personal comments about the instructor.

Continuation of Appeal

Once filed with the Department/Program Chair, the appeal must be

forwarded through subsequent levels of the appeals process unless it is terminated. The appeal may be terminated by a grade change or by a letter of withdrawal from the student to the instructor and the Department/Program Chair.

Confidentiality

Grade appeal papers are confidential and are available only to the student who initiated the appeal, the instructor whose grade is being appealed, the Department/Program Chair, the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee (where one exists) of the department in which the course involved is offered, the Dean of the School, members of the School Grade Appeals Committee, and the University Grade Appeals Review Committee. All phases of grade appeals shall be confidential. Cases shall be discussed by committee members only when the committee is in session.

Advisor

A student may have the assistance of an advisor, who will not be an attorney, in the preparation of the appeal. If department procedures permit oral arguments, the advisor may accompany the student to the departmental hearing.

Committees

- a. Departments may choose whether to have a Department Grade Appeals Committee. If there is a Department Grade Appeals Committee, it shall include student representation.
- b. Each School shall have a standing Grade Appeals Committee, with the provision that each School shall have student representation on its committee.
- c. Committee members at any level will not participate in any way in any appeal in which they have been involved personally. This includes assignment of the grade in question, participation in the work of, or grading in a class in which the grade in question was assigned, or any other involvement which might lead to a question of the member's ability to make an objective evaluation of the appeal. Either the student or the faculty member involved in an appeal may request that a committee member not serve for the particular appeal. In case of disagreement, the School dean shall decide whether the committee member will participate.

At both the School and the Department level, there shall be provision for replacement of Grade Appeal Committee members, for the purpose of considering an individual appeal, if the committee is left too small by the removal of members who cannot participate.

- d. Committees at all levels shall consider only information available to all parties.

Procedure

- a. An appeal of a final grade for a course must be initiated by the student involved, within the regular semester immediately following the semester or special session in which the course was completed. As long as a student has filed a written notification that the appeal process has been started with the Department/Program office within the required semester, action on the appeal may continue during subsequent semester(s).
- b. The appeal must be directed to the instructor of the course, orally or in writing, to permit an effort to resolve the problem. For an instructor who cannot be available to participate, the Chair of the involved department may appoint another instructor whose area of expertise most closely approximates that of the instructor of record to represent the interests of the latter. If the instructor of record refuses to participate, the Chair of the Department/Program shall include a written statement to that effect to accompany the evidence supplied by the student and shall forward the appeal through the remaining steps of the procedure. Committees shall then base their decisions on the evidence supplied by the student.
- c. If further action is deemed necessary, the student will next direct the appeal in writing to the Department/Program Chair, who will consult with both the student and the instructor involved. If a student is appealing a grade assigned by the Department/Program Chair, the School Dean or designee shall perform all functions of the Chair in the appeals process.

If consultation does not resolve the appeal to the satisfaction of the student and instructor, the Department Chair must, within ten (10) instructional days from the date the appeal is received, forward the appeal, with or without a written recommendation, to the Department Grade Appeals Committee, where one exists. The Department Grade Appeals Committee shall forward its recommendation within twenty (20) instructional days from the date the appeal is received to the School Grade Appeals Committee.

- d. If there is no Department Grade Appeals Committee, the appeal shall be forwarded by the Department/Program Chair within ten (10) instructional days to the School Grade Appeals Committee with the written recommendation of the Department/Program Chair if so provided.
- e. All parties to an appeal shall be notified in writing of all responses at all points of the appeal process and shall have full opportunity to comment in writing before the appeal reaches the School Committee. All comments must be submitted within ten (10) instructional days of the receipt of a response. The School Committee shall consider such information and, if necessary, obtain clarification in writing from the student, the instructor, or both. This may include a request for information that will help the

Committee understand the basis for assignment of the grade. The School Committee shall consider only information presented in writing and available to all parties. Committee deliberations shall be confidential. The School Committee shall make its determination within twenty (2) instructional days of the time it receives the information on the appeal.

- f. If any substantial new written evidence is received (within twenty [20] instructional days from the date the appeal is received) as determined by the School Grade Appeals Committee, and prior to reaching a final decision, the School Committee has the option to return the appeal to the Department/Program Chair or committee for reconsideration. Reconsideration must be completed within ten (10) instructional days from the date the appeal is received, and the appeal returned to the School Committee.
- g. The School Grade Appeals Committee shall determine whether to uphold or to recommend a change in the earlier decision. In the event the Committee determination is the the grade should be changed, the Committee shall recommend the change of grade in writing to the instructor.
- h. If the instructor does not change the grade within five (5) instructional days from the date the appeal is received, the School Grade Appeals Committee shall have the power to change the grade. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee chair to see that the grade change form is filed. The School Grade Appeals Committee's decision is final and does not require the approval of the department chair or dean.
- i. Should the student or faculty member involved feel that a serious violation(s) of procedure or due process has occurred, that person may ask in writing, within thirty (30) instructional days from the date of the written recommendation of the School Grade Appeals Committee, for a review of the appeal by the University Grade Appeals Review Committee. If the University Review Committee determines that a violation(s) has not occurred or the violations(s) is not serious enough to warrant a grade change, the appeal shall be sent back to the School Committee. The School Committee's decision then is final. If the University Review Committee determines that a major violation(s) of procedure or due process has occurred, and, in its opinion, a grade change is appropriate, the appeal shall be returned to the School Committee for reconsideration. The University Review Committee shall have the authority to initiate a change of grade in the event the School Committee, after relevant communication between both committees, persists in denial of due process. The University Review Committee's decision then is final. This review process, by both committees, shall be completed within thirty (30) instructional days from the date of the written recommendation of the School Grade Appeals Committee.

- j. All duplicate materials shall be destroyed within thirty (30) instructional days of the decision. The original appeal, with a copy of the grade change, denial of grade change, or student's letter of withdrawal, shall be kept by the Instructional Dean of the School involved for a period of not less than five years from the date of notification of decision by the instructor, School Grade Appeals Committee, or the University Grade Appeals Review Committee.

Each Instructional Dean will report at the end of each academic year to the President and the Academic Senate on the number of cases heard and disposition of each case.

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

