

Grade Appeal Policy

I. Statement of Purpose.

The purpose of the grade appeal process is to provide a mechanism for student **appeal of a final course grade** that was given for impermissible or arbitrary reasons. Students who believe their final course grade was determined by a standard different from the standard used for other students in their class will be able to file a grade appeal. The grade appeal policy only applies to the appeal of a final course grade and not individual graded assignments. Grades that were given as a result of alleged violations of the student academic integrity policy cannot be appealed under the grade appeal policy. Appeal of decision under the academic integrity policy should be made according to the provisions of that policy. The appeal of grades that were given as a result of charges of sexual harassment should be filed with the Sexual Harassment Committee.

There shall be one policy for the appeal of a final course grade. All undergraduate students will follow this policy when appealing a final course grade. However, students in the School of Health Sciences and in other professional programs may appeal other academic concerns (program dismissals, dismissals from clinicals, etc.) using established guidelines outlined in their divisional/departmental handbooks.

II. Responsibility of Faculty and Students.

- A. Faculty Responsibility.** The faculty sets the evaluation standards for the courses they teach and use these standards in determining the grades on individual assignments and final course grades. Faculty members are responsible for including information in their course syllabi about all course requirements, all assignments/activities that will be graded and the method that will be used to evaluate each assignment, and the grading scale that will be used to determine the final grade. The course syllabi should be distributed to each student enrolled in a class. In the event that the faculty member decides to make changes in the course requirements and in methods and standards for evaluating a particular course, this information shall be shared in writing or orally with **all** students in the class prior to making an assignment. Faculty members are responsible for using previously established standards to grade all course assignments regardless of a student's race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, or other personal characteristics. Faculty members are obligated to meet with students regarding contested grades and to explain how the grades were determined.
- B. Student Responsibility.** The student is responsible for discussing any graded assignments that he/she believes were given due to error, or for impermissible or arbitrary reasons with the faculty member during the semester the grade is given. Students are responsible for being aware of all university policies regarding

academic integrity issues as published in the undergraduate catalog and codes of conduct in the Student Handbook.

III. Impermissible Grounds for Grading.

Impermissible or arbitrary grounds for assigning a grade are:

1. The final course grade was assigned in a manner not consistent with the standards and procedures stated in Section IIA and III; or
2. The final course grade was based upon the student's race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation; or
3. The final course grade was assigned because of personal malice towards the student; or
4. The final course grade was the result of an error in calculating or recording grades.

Individual graded assignments that contribute to a final course grade are not subject to appeal unless it can be established that the grade for the individual assignment was given for one of the four impermissible reasons cited above, and resulted in an unfair final grade.

IV. Grade Appeal Process.

A. A student **must** initiate the grade appeal process for a contested final grade no later than the last day to add (10th class day) a course during the fall or spring semester, immediately following the term in which the final grade was issued by completing a grade appeal form, and by submitting a written request for discussion with the faculty member. **For a grade appeal to be considered by the grade appeal committee, it must be based upon one of the impermissible grounds listed in Section III, when the appeal is first filed. The student cannot refile the same appeal and use a different set of impermissible grounds (See Section VI.2).**

B. Within **ten** business days, following the receipt of the grade appeal form and a written request for a meeting, the faculty member shall meet with the student to discuss the contested final grade. If a grade appeal form and a request for a meeting is filed during a summer session, and the faculty member is not under contract or is not available, the faculty member shall meet with the student within the first **ten** business days of the semester immediately following the term in which the final grade was issued.

C. Within **five** business days of the meeting with the student, the faculty member shall submit the grade appeal form with the faculty member's decision to the chair of the department and to the student.

D. If the student and faculty member have not resolved the grade dispute, the student must, within **five** business days of receipt of the grade appeal form which contains the faculty member's decision, submit a request for a meeting to the chair of the department.

E. The formal grade appeal process will follow these steps and may be accepted as final by the student at any level:

1. Within **five** business days of receipt of the grade appeal form and request for a meeting, the department chair shall meet with the student and faculty member individually, or in a joint meeting, to resolve the appeal. At the end of the meeting, action taken by the department chair shall be indicated on the grade appeal form, and it shall be forwarded to the dean with a copy to the student and the faculty member.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the department chair, the student may file a notice of appeal with the office of the dean of the school or college in which the contested grade was issued. The notice of appeal must be submitted within **five** business days following receipt of the decision of the department chair. The student's notice of appeal shall include a written statement that will be used by the departmental grade appeal committee as a basis for deciding the appeal. The statement shall clearly describe the impermissible grounds that form the basis for the appeal, the action taken to seek redress from the faculty member, and why the student believes the grade assigned was not a fair representation of the graded work done in the class. The student shall include copies of all relevant graded work returned by the faculty member, and written testimonies from others who have evidence to support the appeal. For work not returned by the faculty member, the student shall include the reference to the work and the grade. Once the request for the appeal is submitted, the dean shall distribute the request for an appeal to the chair of the grade appeal committee within **three** business days of its receipt from the student. A copy of the student's notice of appeal shall also be provided to the faculty member and the chair.
3. **If a student contests a final grade in a class taught by a department chair, the divisional dean shall facilitate a resolution with the student and the chair.**
4. **If a student contests a final grade in a class taught by a dean, the Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs/Undergraduate Programs shall facilitate a resolution with the student and the dean.**

V. **Creation and Composition of Grade Appeal Committee.**

- A. During the spring semester of each year, each department shall select three faculty members and one to three alternate faculty members, two student representatives (juniors, seniors) and two student alternates (juniors, seniors) to serve on its grade appeal committee. Faculty and student members shall serve a one or two year term. Alternates will serve on an appeal panel only when regular members are unavailable or ineligible to serve. Alternates shall not have voting rights unless they actually serve on a hearing panel. **For each grade appeal committee, at least one faculty and one student should be selected from a related discipline in another department in the college or in one of the schools.** Members of the committee will

elect a chair from the three faculty members who serve on the committee. If a department has multiple majors, then at least one faculty member shall be selected from an area other than the one in which the grade appeal occurred. The dean shall appoint a faculty member from the school or college to serve on the grade appeal committee in those departments that have fewer than five full-time faculty members.

- B. An appeal shall be heard by the grade appeal committee from the department or school from which the grade originated. Only regular members of the committee are voting members.
- C. A quorum for the committee shall consist of two faculty and one student.

VI. Guidelines for Grade Appeal Panel

1. Upon receipt of the grade appeal form, the grade appeal committee will meet within **five** business days to determine which members will serve on the appeal panel, and whether one of the impermissible grounds for grading has been asserted. In reaching a decision, the committee shall review the student's statement and all documents presented by the student. The committee shall decide whether the student's assertion of impermissible grounds and the student's evidence suggest that the assertion may be established.
2. If the appeal committee determines that the student has failed to sufficiently assert one of the impermissible grounds for grading, the appeal of the student shall be dismissed and notice of that decision shall be forwarded to the dean who shall notify the student, faculty member and chair of the department within three business days after notification by the committee. **The student cannot refile the same appeal and use a different set of impermissible grounds.**
3. If the committee determines that the student has sufficiently asserted impermissible grounds for the grading, the faculty member shall be given **five** business days in which to reply to the student's statements, and a hearing shall be scheduled.
4. The hearing panel shall schedule a hearing within ten business days **after receipt of a faculty member's written response to the student's statement** and shall provide the student and the faculty member written notice of the hearing at least five days prior to the hearing. The student's notice shall include any statement or documents submitted by the faculty member. Both the student and faculty member shall be advised of the names of the members of the hearing panel by the chair.
5. The hearing shall be informal. The chair of the panel shall advise the parties of the reason for the hearing. The student will be allowed to present his/her evidence first, followed by the presentation by the faculty member. The hearing panel shall record the hearing except for its deliberations and shall provide a copy of the hearing recording to the faculty member and the student.
6. The hearing panel may review documents and interview students, faculty, department chair or other individuals they deem appropriate. **Individuals providing testimony will only be allowed to remain in the hearing room during the time**

they are providing testimony or answering questions. Following the hearing, the committee will meet in executive session to deliberate and to determine whether to support the original final course grade, recommend a re-evaluation of the final course grade, or designate an alternate grade. The standard for review shall be a preponderance of the evidence. This means that the student must establish that the allegations of impropriety are more likely true than not true. The committee determines whether this standard of proof has been met, by weighing all of the evidence, and the demeanor and credibility of the witnesses, in the light of experience and common sense.

7. The chair of the committee will forward the decision of the committee to the dean within three business days.
8. The dean will inform all parties of the decision of the hearing panel in writing within three business days of receipt of the hearing decision and will enforce the decision of the committee.
9. If a change of grade is recommended, the faculty member shall be responsible for contacting the Office of the Registrar to make any changes to a grade within three business days, following receipt of the directive from the committee. The appropriate dean will ensure that grade changes are made as directed by the grade appeal committee and filed with the Office of the Registrar. In the event that the faculty member refuses to accept the recommendation of the committee, the dean will make an administrative grade change and will submit it to the Office of the Registrar.
10. Notice of submission of a change in grade to the Office of the Registrar shall be submitted to the student, the faculty and the chair of the department by the dean within three business days.

VII. Appeal of Hearing Panel Decision.

1. Within five business days of receipt of notice of the decision of the hearing panel, either the faculty member or the student may challenge the recommendation of the hearing panel, **only** on grounds that procedural errors occurred during the hearing process. A notice of appeal should be made to the dean of the school/college in which the grade was given. A written statement describing the procedural errors must be included in the notice of appeal. The dean will examine the procedures employed by the department or the grade appeal committee.
2. If the dean determines that the procedures involved were not properly followed, and the procedural violations could have been material to the outcome of the hearing, within five days after receipt of notice of appeal, the dean will direct that the process be resumed at an appropriate point with such other recommendations designed to prevent further procedural violations.
3. If the dean finds that no violations have occurred, the dean shall notify the faculty, student, and department chair, and grade appeal committee within five business days after receipt of notice of appeal. The decision of the dean is final.

4. In the event that the dean is the course instructor or is directly involved in a contested final grade, the notice of appeal of the hearing panel's decision shall be made to the provost. **The decision of the provost is final.**

VIII. Finality of Appeal.

There shall be no further appeal from the decision of the grade appeal committee except for procedural errors as indicated in Section VIII. **No appeals from these decisions are allowable to the president or to the Board of Governors (The Code, Appendix I, p. 43)**

IX. Representation of Parties.

No attorney shall be allowed to appear in any meeting or hearing under this policy. A student may have a non-legal advisor in the hearing before the hearing panel.

X. Compliance with Timelines.

The intent of this policy is to resolve all grade appeals in the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was given. Failure by the student to comply with any of the scheduled timelines without justifiable excuse shall result in forfeiture of the right of appeal and dismissal of the appeal. A student may appeal to the next level of appeal if there is failure without justifiable excuse of any other person in the appeal process to comply with scheduled timelines. The presentation of an excuse shall be made to the appropriate dean of the school or college to which the appeal is filed.

XI. Confirmation of Receipt of Notice.

Any notice required by this policy to be responded to following receipt shall be delivered to the party with a requirement of response within a specified time by any means that documents actual receipt of the notice by the person to whom it is addressed.

XII. Definitions

1. Whenever business day is used in this document, it shall mean any day except Saturday, Sunday, or an institutional holiday.
2. In computing any period of time, the day in which notice is received is not counted but the last day of the period being computed is to be counted.
3. The delivery method may include: certified mail, registered mail, commercial service, personal delivery service, or hand-delivery by an employee or the student or his/her representative that obtains a signature.

Approved by the Academic Standards & Curriculum Committee: January 7, 2004
Approved by Cabinet: March 29, 2004

This policy becomes effective March 29., 2004 pending approval of BOT

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM (FINAL COURSE GRADE)
Request for Meeting with Faculty

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND FACULTY MEMBER BY THE 10TH CLASS DAY OF THE FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER FOLLOWING THE TERM THE FINAL GRADE IS RECEIVED. (The student should refer to Grade Appeal Process prior to filing appeal)

Student Information

Student's Name: _____ ID#: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Home () _____ Work() _____

E-mail Address: _____

Course Information

Course Title _____

Course ID#: _____ - _____ - _____ Faculty's Name _____

Semester (Year): _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer

Information Regarding Grade

Grade Received in Course: _____ Grade Expected in Course: _____

Reasons for appealing the grade: (Provide an additional sheet if necessary)

Attach documentation of performance in class, clinical and/or laboratory portions of the course.

Include copies (not originals) of all materials such as:

1. Syllabus and other course materials
2. All tests, term papers, etc. returned by the faculty member
3. A list of all other grades that you know you received in the course
4. Any other pertinent documents or information

Student should retain copies of all information that is filed with this statement.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date this Statement Received by Department Chair: _____

Signature of Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

Date this Statement Received by Faculty: _____

Signature of Faculty Member: _____ Date: _____

pc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean

**WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM (FINAL COURSE GRADE)
ACTION BY FACULTY MEMBER**

The faculty member should return this form to the student and the department chair's office within **ten** business days from date the request for a meeting form was received.

Date of Meeting/Communication with Student _____

Action/Response (Provide a statement of action to resolve final grade appeal; attach additional sheet if necessary):

Resolved: _____ Yes _____ No

Action Taken: _____ Grade Changed _____ Grade Not Changed

Signature of Faculty _____ Date _____

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Faculty member should attach copies (not originals) of all materials related to contested grade such as:

1. Syllabus and other course materials.
2. All tests, term paper requirements, assignments, etc.
3. Any other materials or information (materials should include grading policy and any anecdotal notes as evidence of the student's performance, especially in laboratory or clinical courses).

Faculty should retain copies of all information that is filed with this statement.

Date faculty submits this form and documents to the department chair _____ and the student. _____

Signature of Faculty _____ Date _____

Date this Statement Received by Department Chair _____

Signature of Department Chair _____ Date _____

pc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean

**WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM (FINAL COURSE GRADE)
ACTION BY DEPARTMENT CHAIR**

The department chair should return the action by faculty form to the dean's office and to the student within **five** business days from the date received.

Date of Meeting/Communication with Student and/or faculty member _____

Action/Response (Provide a statement of action to resolve final grade appeal):

Resolved: _____ Yes _____ No

Action Taken: _____ Grade Changed _____ Grade Not Changed

Signature of Department Chair _____ Date _____

Department chair should attach copies (not originals) of all materials related to contested grade such as:

1. Syllabus and other course materials.
2. All tests, term paper requirements, assignments, etc.
3. Any other materials or information (materials should include grading policy and any anecdotal notes as evidence of the student's performance, especially in laboratory or clinical courses).

Department chair should retain copies of all information that is filed with this form.

Date department chair submits appeal forms and documents to the dean's office and the student

Signature of Department Chair _____ Date _____

Date received by dean's office _____

Signature of Dean _____ Date _____

Date dean submits appeal forms and documents to the chair of the grade appeal committee _____

Signature of Dean _____ Date _____

pc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM (FINAL COURSE GRADE)
Request for Appeal by Student to the Grade Appeal Committee

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL/COLLEGE IN WHICH THE GRADE WAS GIVEN BY THE STUDENT WITHIN 5 BUSINESS DAYS OF NOTIFICATION BY THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR OF DECISION UNFAVORABLE TO STUDENT (STUDENT SHOULD REFER TO GRADE APPEAL POLICY PRIOR TO FILING A FINAL GRADE APPEAL)

Student Information

Student's Name: _____ ID#: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Home () _____ Work() _____

E-mail Address: _____

Course Information

Course Title _____

Course ID#: _____ - _____ - _____ Faculty's Name _____

Semester (Year): _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer

Information Regarding Grade

Grade Received in Course: _____ Grade Expected in Course: _____

Reasons for appealing the grade: (Provide an additional sheet if necessary)

Attach documentation of performance in class, clinical and/or laboratory portions of the course.

Include **copies** (not originals) of all materials such as:

1. Syllabus and other course materials
5. All tests, term papers, etc. returned by the faculty member
6. A list of all other grades that you know you received in the course
7. Any other pertinent documents or information

Student should retain copies of all information that is filed with this statement.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date this Statement Received by Dean: _____

Signature of Dean: _____ Date: _____

pc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean

Page 4 of 6 of the Grade Appeal Form (Final Course Grade)

**WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM (FINAL COURSE GRADE)
ACTION OF THE GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE**

The chair of the Grade Appeal Committee should return this form and related documents to the Office of the Dean within 3 business days following the grade appeal committee's decision.

Date request for appeal by student form is received by the chair of the grade appeal committee _____

Signature of the Chair, Grade Appeal Committee: _____ Date _____

GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Upon a review of the statements and/or information provided by the student and the faculty and/or department chair, we have decided to:

_____ Recommend that the final grade issued to the student remain as recorded.

_____ Recommend a change of grade from _____ to _____.

_____ Other (attach further explanation)

Date decision made: _____

Committee Chair's Signature _____

Appeal Committee Members: _____

Please attach findings and minutes to this form and forward to dean only.

pc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean

**WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM
NOTICE OF APPEAL OF DECISION OF COMMITTEE**

The faculty member or the student may request that the dean review the decision made by the grade appeal committee for procedural errors and violation of policies that might have affected the outcome of the decision. This request must be filed within 5 business days following receipt of notification of the grade appeal committee's decision.

Date notification received: _____
Signature of Faculty or Student _____

Student Information (To be provided by student, if appeal is filed by student)

Student's Name: _____ ID#: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: Home () _____ Work() _____
E-mail Address: _____

Course Information

Course Title _____

Course ID#: _____ - _____ - _____ Faculty's Name _____

Semester (Year): _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer

Faculty Information (To be provided by faculty, if appeal is filed by faculty)

Faculty's Name: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Campus Office Location _____
Campus Box _____
Phone: Home () _____ Office () _____
E-mail Address: _____

Justifications for Review of Decision of the Committee

List procedural errors and violations that occurred and indicate when/where they occurred and how they affected the outcome of the decision: (Provide an additional sheet if necessary)

Signature of Person Submitting Request: _____ Date _____
Date form Received by Dean's Office: _____ Person Receiving Form _____
Signature of Dean _____ Date _____

cc: Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean