

## **Final Grade Appeal Procedure**

### Appalachian State University

Any student considering a grade appeal should understand that each faculty member has the right and responsibility to determine grades according to any method chosen by the faculty member which is professionally acceptable, communicated to everyone in the class, and applied to all students equally. Prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious academic evaluation by a faculty member, however, is a violation of the student's rights and is a valid ground for a final grade appeal.

#### **Steps to take in final grade appeal**

--Any student who contests a course final grade shall first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. The student must explain her or his position to the instructor and attempt to understand the instructor's reasons for assigning the grade. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the instructor's actions and to resolve differences in an informal and cooperative manner. If the student fails to reach a satisfactory solution in consultation with the instructor, the student must present the appeal in writing, using the grade appeal form, to the chair of the department in which the contested grade was awarded. A copy of the necessary form is provided at the end of this document.

--**The student must file the written appeal with the department chair within 14 calendar days after consulting with the instructor.** The statement must be specific and concise and limit itself to citations of evidence pertaining to valid grounds for the appeal. Through conferring with the student and the instructor, the chair will seek resolution by agreement. The student must provide the chair with a course syllabus and all available tangible materials related to the grade (e.g., exam and term papers) as well a list of any items used in the evaluation for which the student cannot provide documentation (e.g., unreturned exams, grades on class participation, attendance records).

--**If there is failure to reach an agreement through consultation with the chair, the student may file the written appeal with the Grade Appeals Committee through the Office of the Dean of the college or school in which the grade was awarded. The student must file this written appeal within 30 calendar days after the beginning of classes in the next semester after the contested grade was awarded.** When possible, the form must be signed and dated by both the instructor and the department chair as well as the student. In accordance with the instructions on the form, the student must present with it the documentary evidence furnished to the department chair and any other evidence relevant to the case.

--The dean or her or his designee serves as convener of the Grade Appeals Committee of the college or school. Each full committee consists of the convener (who presides over hearings), the chair of the department in which the contested grade was assigned, three faculty, one undergraduate student, and one graduate student, all from the college or

school which the committee serves. The department chair sits in a non-voting capacity, and the convener votes only in the case of a tie. The three faculty members, one alternate faculty member, and two students are appointed by the dean from among volunteers for the assignment. A quorum for each committee shall consist of no fewer than one student and two faculty members, along with the convener.

**--The Grade Appeals Committee has authority to screen out frivolous or unsubstantiated appeals. The convener will explain any such finding in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the department chair.**

--If the committee grants a full hearing, the student will appear before it to present all evidence relevant to her or his case. The convener will also invite the instructor to appear and present any evidence in support of her or his grade decision. The committee may ask questions of either or both and will hold its deliberations in executive session after hearing the case. The dean, the department chair, the faculty member and the student will receive prompt written notification of the committee's findings. The committee's decision is binding. If the committee supports the student's appeal, the instructor will be required to re-evaluate the student according to a specific method. The method of re-evaluation will depend on the circumstances of the appeal. Re-evaluation will not be used in a punitive manner toward the student. The student has 14 calendar days to inform the instructor, department chair, and convener in writing whether she or he consents to the proposed method of re-evaluation (which must be completed within the semester of the finding). Should the student not consent to the proposed method of re-evaluation, the instructor, chair, and committee will mutually agree on a method of recalculating the appealed grade. In either case, the resulting grade is final and may not be appealed.

