



Texas Tech University

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 34.03: Student Grade Appeal

DATE: January 25, 2007

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to ensure understanding of the policy and procedures involved with handling student grade appeals.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in March of even-numbered years by the senior vice provost for academic affairs with recommended revisions presented to the provost/senior vice president for academic affairs (PSVPAA) by April 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Grade Appeals Policy

- a. The responsibility for determining all grades and for judging the quality of academic performance in a course rests with the instructor assigned to the course. A grade can be formally appealed only when there is demonstrable evidence that prejudice or arbitrary or capricious action on the part of the instructor has influenced the grade.
- b. Only letter grades used in calculating the grade point average may be appealed. The indications of "plus" or "minus" may not be appealed.
- c. The burden of proof that such an unfair influence has affected a grade rests with the student who appeals the grade.
- d. Only final course grades may be formally appealed to the responsible dean. If a student is suspected of cheating on a final exam, the faculty member should withhold the grade until the matter is resolved. When a faculty member determines according to Part II B 2 of the *Student Handbook* that academic dishonesty has occurred and assigns a grade of **F** for the course, the grade of **F** will stand as a final grade, notwithstanding a subsequent withdrawal from the course by the student. A faculty member shall notify the registrar of the intention to assign a grade of **F** for the course, in addition to the notifications of the department chairperson and the student's academic dean, as provided in Part II B 2 of the *Student Handbook*.
- e. Due process will be followed in all formal grade appeal procedures.
- f. A grade appeal may result in review of any or all aspects of a student's performance in a course.
- g. Processing formal grade appeals is the responsibility of the college that administers the course (Agriculture and Natural Resources, Architecture, Arts and Sciences, the Jerry S.

Rawls College of Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Honors, Human Sciences, Law, Mass Communications, and Visual and Performing Arts). The decision on a grade is the responsibility of the dean of the college that administers the course. For students in the Graduate School, that dean's decision will be forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School for final disposition.

2. Grade Appeals Procedures

- a. A student who believes that a received grade is incorrect should first discuss the grade with the instructor who assigned it.
- b. The student who is not satisfied with the outcome of this effort may contact the chairperson of the department/division/area in which the course was offered. (In the case of a cross-listed course, the chairperson of the department/division/area in which the instructor holds academic appointment should be chosen.) This contact, like that with the instructor, normally is informal, and the department/division/area chairperson may take what action is deemed advisable in attempting to resolve the issue. All parties concerned should make every effort to resolve the issue without going beyond this level.
- c. If the student still is not satisfied following these meetings and discussions and if the dispute is over a final course grade, then a formal grade appeal may be made to the office of the dean of the college administering the course. This appeal must be filed with the office of the dean using the Texas Tech University *Grade Appeal Form* (see attachment) within 45 days of the start of the next long semester after the term in which the grade was received. The appeal must include supporting information. After it is filed, it will be triplicated and sent to the student, the instructor, and the chairperson of the department/division/area involved.
- d. The dean of the college will request written information about the case from the instructor involved and will present the grade appeal and this information to the college grade appeals board, whose constitution is described below. This information will also be triplicated and sent to the student, the instructor, and the chairperson of the department/ division/area involved. The appeals board will examine the evidence and hold what hearings and meetings it deems necessary in order to make a recommendation in the case. Due process for all parties to the dispute will be followed in these proceedings. It is not necessary for the parties to appear unless requested by the appeals board, but parties have the right to appear if they wish to do so. The appeals board will give the dean a written recommendation as to whether the grade should be changed and, if so, to what other grade and will make any other recommendations that it deems advisable in the disposition of each specific case.

Board members who voted in favor of the board's decision must sign the recommendation; dissenting members may sign it if they wish.

- e. A college grade appeals board consisting of a voting chairperson, two other faculty members, and two students will be appointed by the dean to consider all grade appeals occurring during the academic year. Any member of the board who thinks that the professional or personal relationship with either party in a grade dispute would create a hindrance to objective judgment or a conflict of interest must recuse himself or herself and a replacement member for that appeal will be chosen by the dean.

The dean of the college or a designee may attend meetings of the appeals board and presentations of evidence to it. The dean may request presentations of evidence but must not

be present during the board's deliberation of its final recommendation. In a case involving a law student, the grade appeal process is as specified in the above procedures. In a case involving a student in the Graduate School, the appeal is processed through the college administering the course, with the grade decision being forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School for final disposition.

- f. Taking into account the recommendation(s) of the appeals board, the dean of the college administering the course will make a decision on the grade appeal and send it in writing to the student, the instructor, the chairperson of the grade appeals board, and the PSVPAA. If the student is in a different college from that of the appeal, the dean of the college administering the course will notify the student's dean.
- g. An appeal of the dean's decision may be made to the PSVPAA by either the student or the instructor, but only on the basis that due process has not been followed.
- h. A copy of this OP will be provided to each student initiating a grade appeal.

3. **Correspondence or Extension Courses**

The same procedure will be followed for correspondence or extension courses.

Attachment: Grade Appeal Form
