

G-005.2 COURSE GRADE APPEALS

This procedure outlines the process for students to appeal the final grade recorded for a course (See SMSU Policy A-034, "Grading"). Grade appeals are based on the objective of a course and the criteria which will be used in evaluating their performance.

Criteria for Course Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a grade for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The course objectives or the criteria for evaluation were not provided by the instructor.
2. The course objectives were significantly changed in a manner so as to create unfair treatment.
3. The criteria for evaluations were significantly changed in a manner so as to create unfair treatment.
4. Evaluation was arbitrary (evaluation for the class changed without notice) or capricious (evaluation was based upon instructor's personal feelings).

Deadline for Appeal

Students must appeal a course grade by the applicable deadline.

1. For course grades received at the end of a spring semester or summer session, the student must initiate an appeal by the end of the fifth (5th) business day of the following fall semester.
2. For course grades received at the end of a fall semester, the student must initiate an appeal by the end of the fifth (5th) business day of the following spring semester.

Appeal Process

The appeal process ensures a fair and quick resolution for students appealing course grades.

Start of Appeal Process

Before students meet with the Academic Appeals Committee (AAC), they should start by taking the following steps.

Instructor Meeting

Students should first present their case to the instructor who submitted the grade.

Student Appeal Form

If the meeting between the instructor and the student fails to resolve the complaint, or either party is uncomfortable with such a meeting, students may present their case to the deans' office by submitting a Student Appeal form. The Student Appeal form includes:

1. Where and when the meeting with the faculty member occurred (date, time, and place), if applicable
2. An outline of the student's case for the appeal
3. Supporting documentation regarding the appeal, if applicable

Academic Dean

The completed Student Appeal form is directed to the appropriate academic dean who will determine the merit of the appeal. The academic dean or designee will advise the student of their rights.

Preparing for Hearing

When the appeal is considered to have merit, the following steps will be taken in preparation for the hearing.

1. The academic dean will forward a copy of the Student Appeal form to the instructor and initiate the review with AAC.
2. Students have ten (10) business days to submit all evidence and materials to the Academic Deans' Office. The faculty member will then have ten (10) business days to submit all evidence and materials to the Academic Deans' Office. The student will then have five (5) business days to submit any rebuttal evidence and materials to the Academic Deans' Office. AAC will not consider evidence submitted by either party beyond this timeline.
3. A syllabus for the course must be provided to AAC.
4. The student and faculty member will decide their preferred format for appearing at the hearing.
 - a. Both appear in person.
 - b. Both appear via teleconferencing.
 - c. Neither appears before the committee.
5. Should there be a dispute as to the means with which the parties will appear before the committee, the academic dean will make the final determination while maintaining that both parties appear in the same format.
6. It is to the benefit of the student making the appeal to attend the hearing, either in person or via teleconferencing.

When the appeal is not considered to have merit, students have the right to appeal to another academic dean.

Appeals Hearing

When the dean notifies AAC that a course grade appeal has been submitted and all evidence has been received, it will convene as soon as possible.

If a member of AAC is the instructor who submitted the grade in question, then that faculty member's participation in the hearing will be as the role of instructor and not the role of committee member.

Decisions of the Academic Appeals Committee

AAC will make a decision based on the evidence presented.

1. AAC shall not specify a new grade.
2. AAC may mandate a re-evaluation of the student's coursework. AAC may select another faculty member in the same academic discipline to perform the evaluation. The faculty member shall maintain confidentiality, shall not be paid, and shall not have a conflict of interest. The results of the evaluation shall be submitted to AAC before the case is concluded. The academic dean will ensure that arbitrary or punitive decisions shall not extend into the re-evaluation process.

3. The academic dean will communicate the decision to the registration office if the result is a course grade change on the student's academic record.
4. Decisions of AAC are final and mandatory for both the student and the faculty.

Communication of the Academic Dean

The academic dean shall communicate the decision of AAC in writing with reasons to the student and the faculty member within five (5) business days after receiving the decision of AAC. Audio records of all appeals shall be made and kept by the Academic Deans' Office. The records will be destroyed one (1) semester after the appeal is completed. All evidence presented in the course of an appeal shall be held in the strictest confidence. No portion of the proceedings of AAC shall appear in any permanent records kept on the student or faculty member.

Communication with AAC

The student and the faculty member shall not contact any member of AAC (except the academic deans) before, during, or after the appeal regarding any matter relating to the appeal or the decision of AAC.

Related Documents

SMSU Policy G-005, "Academic Appeals"

SMSU Policy A-034, "Grading"

Procedure History

Date of Adoption: September 15, 1976

Date of Last Review: March 2023

Date and Subject of Amendments

3/15/2023 - Divided the procedure from the policy