College of Education and Human Development Student Grade Appeals

The College of Education and Human Development follows the student Grade Appeals procedures described in the University Rules and Procedures Manual (University Website, Section 13.02.99.C2.01).

These procedures and processes are used when a student questions an assigned final grade in a course in the College of Education and Human Development. The student may believe that a grade has been unfairly assigned and is not based on the student's performance. A different procedure is used for a grade that is low as a penalty for academic misconduct or for concerns about student-faculty interactions.

1. General

1.1) Teaching, learning, research and service are the main components of the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. The evaluation of student learning outcomes accompanies these goals. While the professor should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression, student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, and not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

1.2) Faculty are responsible for outlining the objectives and setting standards for each course, and for making clear the means of evaluation for purposes of grading students. Students are responsible for participating in and out of class, for learning the content of the course of study and for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

1.3) Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or arbitrary academic evaluation. A student who believes that his or her final grade reflects academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in the class syllabus, may appeal the grade given for the course.

1.4) The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A preponderance of the evidence is defined as enough proof to convince a majority of the hearing body that something is more likely to have occurred than not to have occurred.

1.5) A student who has failed to meet the grade requirements of a prerequisite course and is appealing the grade in that course is not allowed to register for the subsequent course(s) unless a decision has been reached in the grade appeal process to change the prerequisite course grade to one that meets the prescribed prerequisite.

1.6) For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeals process, students may contact the Office of the Associate or Assistant Dean of the college in which the course is taught.

2. Grade Appeal Process

2.1) A student who questions a grade received in a College of Education and Human Development course should first speak with the faculty member who assigned the grade to determine whether the two may arrive at a mutual understanding. Most issues can be resolved through discussions between the student and the instructor without initiating the appeals process.

If a student's concerns are not satisfied after this discussion, however, he/she may elect to initiate procedures to appeal the grade.

In order to appeal a grade, the appeal request must focus on specific departures from grading guidelines listed on the syllabus. Dissatisfaction with a grade is not grounds for a successful appeal. The burden of proof shall rest with the student. The standard proof shall be a preponderance of the evidence presented.

The procedures that follow apply to all of the College of Education and Human Development's program.

3. Appeal to the Instructor

3.1) A student must submit a written appeal using the "Student Grade Appeal Form," stating briefly and clearly the action requested and the reason(s) for the requested change. The student must present the written appeal to the faculty member who assigned the grade in question no later than 15 business days after the start of the next regular long (15 week) semester. A written appeal for short courses (minimesters, or online courses) must be made within 15 days of the end of the course, or the start of the next long semester.

3.2) After reviewing the student's written appeal, the faculty member will make a decision within 7 days of receiving the written grievance. The faculty member will notify the student of his/her decision. If the appeal is approved, the faculty member will submit a grade change form to initiate the "change of grade" process. The faculty member will document their decision on the "Faculty Grade Appeal Response Form."

4. Appeal to the Department Chair

4.1) If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal in writing using the "Student Grade Appeal Form" to the department chair within 7 days after receiving the decision of the instructor. Department chairs will only review an appeal that is made in writing. Students must state clearly the specific request being made and include a brief statement of the reasons for the proposed change.

4.2) After reviewing the student's written statement and after consulting with the faculty member, the departmental chair will make a decision regarding the grade

appeal using the "Department Chair Grade Appeal Response Form," within 7 days of receiving the appeal form.

In reviewing a student's appeal, the departmental chair will consider whether the professor adhered to guidelines for equitable treatment and to evaluation procedures identified on the course syllabus. Appeals must focus on specific departures from guidelines listed on the syllabus.

4.3) Students will use the "Student Grade Appeal Response Form" to indicate if they accept or do not accept the decision of the department chair. If the student accepts the decision of the chair, the forms are filed and the appeal is concluded. The department chair will submit a grade change if the decision is in favor of the student. If the student does not accept the decision of the department chair, the department chair may advise the student to submit the appeal to the Associate/Assistant Dean who may convene the college grade appeal committee.

5. Appeal to the College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC)

5.1) If a student does not accept the departmental chair's decision, he or she may appeal in writing with using the "Student Grade Appeal Form" to the Associate/Assistant Dean of the college, within 14 business days from the receipt of the decision of the department chair. The student should deliver all of the documentation for the appeal to the Associate/Assistant Dean. If the student does not submit a written appeal within fourteen calendar days following issuance of decision of the department chair, the College of Education and Human Development is not required to process the grievance. The Associate/Assistant Dean will appoint a Chair of the College Grade Appeals Committee and two additional faculty from the faculty pool to make up the Committee, and notify the Department Chair, and the faculty member of record that a grade appeal has been received. The Associate/Assistant Dean will also select two student representatives from the appropriate student pool (Undergraduate or Graduate) to serve on the Committee. The Associate/Assistant Dean will ask the Chair to convene the College Grade Appeal Committee to arrive at a final decision within 14 days of the receipt of the student's appeal to the Associate/Assistant Dean and the College Grade Appeal Committee. This final decision will be recorded on the "Associate/Assistant Dean Grade Appeal Response Form." The final decision of the College Grade Appeal Committee is not appealable.

6. The College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC)

6.1) The Associate/Assistant Dean in collaboration with Chair convenes the CGAC to determine the facts of the case and attempt to issue an appropriate, fair, and reasonable resolution to the appeal. The CGAC may recommend to the Associate/Assistant Dean that 1) the original grade of the instructor be upheld, or 2) that the grade in question be changed to a specific alternate grade.

6.2) The College Grade Appeal Committee (CGAC) will be made up of three faculty members and two students selected from the faculty and appropriate student pool. If it is an undergraduate appeal the student representatives will be undergraduate students. If the appeal is from a graduate student, the student representatives will be graduate students. One of the faculty members will serve as the chair of the committee. The three faculty members will be selected from a pool of six eligible faculty and the two students will be pulled from a pool of six eligible undergraduate and six eligible graduate students. The composition of the CGAC may change during the academic year depending on the availability of the faculty and of the students to serve on the committee. A total of four members will constitute a quorum. The Associate/Assistant Dean may attend the committee meeting, but shall not have a vote.

6.3) Faculty members shall be appointed to the CGAC faculty pool by the Associate/Assistant Dean in consultation with the Department Chairs. The faculty will serve a 2 year appointment on the CGAC. All full-time tenured, tenure track, and clinical or professional assistant professors are eligible to serve on this committee. All members will complete a 1 hour training session.

6.4) Students Members shall be appointed to the CGAC student pool by the Assistant/Associate Dean in consultation with Department Chairs and college student organizations faculty sponsors. Students will serve a 1 year term on the CGAC. All members will complete a 1 hour training.

6.5) In the event that a faculty or student representative is not available during the summer months, or cannot serve due to a conflict of interest, special appointments can be made by the Associate/Assistant Dean in consultation with the Dean and with the Department Chairs.

6.6) While students will have no right to preemptory challenge or challenge for cause of any Committee member, the CGAC may, by majority vote, recess to consider a student objection in closed session. In closed session the member in question may choose to recuse themselves, a majority of the Committee may vote to recuse the member, or a majority of the Panel may vote to continue with the member in question as a part of the Committee. If the member is recused for any reason and the remaining members of the Committee constitute a quorum, the appeal hearing will continue. If after such recusal, the membership present does not constitute a quorum, the appeal hearing will be rescheduled and a substitute member will be appointed to the Committee.

6.7) The CGAC proceedings, findings, and recommendations shall not be open to the general public or available to any individuals other than those involved with the case.

7. Hearing Protocol

7.1) **Role of the Chair**: The Chair of a CGAC will preside at the hearing, maintain orderly proceedings and assure that all parties receive a fair hearing. The Chair will be a voting member of the CGAC. The Chair will keep appropriate records of meetings and actions of the CGAC and is responsible for ensuring proper communications by the CGAC with other officials and parties to the hearing. The Chair will have the right to adjust procedures, given the circumstances at the issue to ensure fairness. The Chair will communicate to the Associate/Assistant Dean the results of the hearing with the Associate/Assistant CGAC Grade Appeal Student Form.

7.2) **Evidence and Testimony**: The Committee shall hear all parties to the case and review all evidence presented. Both faculty member and student shall be present at the same time during the formal hearing. Students not residing at or near Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi may request to attend the hearing via video conference call, as appropriate.

7.3) **Counsel**: All parties to the hearing may be accompanied by another person in an advisory capacity only. Such person may not testify or ask questions.

7.4) **Decision**: The College Grade Appeal Committee will determine the facts of the case and attempt to affect a fair and appropriate resolution to the complaint. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the CGAC may recommend to the Associate/Assistant Dean of the College that 1) the original grade of the instructor be upheld, or 2) that the grade in question be changed to a specific alternate grade. In cases where the instructor is no longer affiliated with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the Dean may initiate the change of grade, if so requested.

7.5) **Notification:** Chair of the CGAC will present its findings and recommendations in writing to the Associate/Assistant Dean (or the Dean, if the Associate/Assistant Dean is a party to the case) normally within five business days after completion of its hearing and deliberations. The notification should include a short summary of the facts of the case, the hearing, and the specific recommendation of the committee. Within five working days of the decision, the Associate/Assistant Dean or the Dean will send written notification of the decision to the student and the faculty member normally within five business days after receiving the CGAC's findings and recommendations. The decision of the CGAC is final. The records of the proceedings of the CGAC meeting will be retained by the Associate/Assistant Dean for SACS accreditation documentation.