

PFW GRADE APPEALS POLICY

The grade appeals policy applies to all students enrolled at PFW. It can be used by any student who has evidence or believes that evidence exists to show that a course grade was assigned or a similar evaluation was made as a result of prejudice, caprice, or other improper condition such as mechanical error.

In appealing, the student must support in writing the allegation that an improper decision has been made and must specify the remedy sought. The student should seek the assistance of the dean of students in pursuing the appeal. During an appeal, the burden of proof is on the student, except in the case of alleged academic dishonesty, where the instructor must support the allegation. The student may have an advisor or friend present during all meetings with faculty members, administrators, and/or committees; he or she may advise the student but may not speak for the student during the meetings.

Grades may be changed only by a university authority upon the decision of the Grade Appeals Board, or by the instructor any time prior to the decision of the Grade Appeals Board.

Timing of Appeals

An appeal must be initiated no later than the fourth week of the fall or spring semester immediately following the session in which the grade was assigned. A final decision at each step must be reported within thirty calendar days of the filing of an appeal at that step, provided that this deadline falls within the regular academic year (fall or spring semester). If the deadline falls during the summer, the decision must be reported within 30 calendar days of the start of the fall semester. Each successive step in the appeals procedure must be initiated within three calendar weeks of the completion of the prior step.

Steps in the Process of a Grade Appeal

1. Course instructor: The student makes an appointment with the instructor to discuss the matter. If the instructor is unavailable, the department or program chair shall authorize an extension of time or allow the student to proceed to Step 2. If the chair is unavailable, the dean of the school shall authorize the extension.
2. Department/school/program: If the matter has not been resolved at Step 1, the student makes an appointment with the chair of the department or program offering the course, who may make an informal attempt to resolve the appeal. If the appeal is not resolved informally, the chair will direct the student procedurally in making an appeal to the department, school, or program committee. Only one committee shall hear the appeal in Step 2. The student filing an appeal shall have the opportunity to be heard in person by the committee. The instructor shall be provided with a written copy of the appeal and the identity of the student who filed the appeal.

3. Grade Appeals Board: If the matter has not been resolved at Step 2, the student makes an appointment with the dean of students, who will direct the student procedurally in submitting the case to the Grade Appeals Board.

Department/School/Program Appeals Procedure

Each department, school, or program will establish appeals procedures which provide for a committee of three or more Faculty members responsible for hearing grade appeals related to courses listed or administered by that department/school/program if those appeals have not been satisfactorily resolved between the student and the instructor or informally by the department chair. The procedures established by each department, school, or program shall provide for each case to be heard by only one such committee. The procedure shall provide the opportunity for the student to be heard in person, and for the decision to be reported in writing to the student and the instructor. A copy of each unit's procedures will be given to the vice chancellor for academic affairs, to the dean of students, and to students upon request.

Grade Appeals Board

This board shall consist of nine members elected from among the Teaching Faculty according to procedures specified in the *Bylaws of the Senate*.

Before hearing the details of a case, the board will decide by majority vote whether to consider the appeal, and will report its decision in writing within 30 calendar days. The bases for a decision to consider an appeal may include (but not be limited to) a finding that (1) improper procedures have been followed by university employees at earlier steps of the appeal; (2) new information is present; or (3) the instructor has declined to accept the department, school, or program committee's recommendation.

No member of the board may take part in an appeal involving a course or instructor from the member's department or program. Members should also recuse themselves from cases in which they have potential conflicts of interest, personal involvement in the case, schedules that will interfere with hearing the appeal in a timely manner, or other disqualifying causes. From those members remaining, the chair will select the five-person hearing panel. The panel members will elect a chair who will be responsible for making arrangements related to the case.

If the case is to be heard, the hearing will take place within 30 days of the decision to hear the appeal, or within 30 days of the start of the fall semester, whichever is applicable. Each member of the panel will vote on whether the appeal is valid and, if so, on what remedy should be provided. If the panel, by majority vote, finds in favor of changing a grade, the chair shall report this finding to the registrar and to the parties listed below. The decision of the panel is binding on all parties and may not be appealed.

Reporting of Board and Panel Decisions

The board and each panel shall report its findings and actions to the student, the department, school, or program from which the appeal came, the instructor, the chair of the student's department, the dean or director of the student's school or division, the dean of students, and (in the case of a panel decision) the chair of the Grade Appeals Board.