



Undergraduate Grade Appeal Policy	
Responsible Official: Provost	Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies how an ETSU undergraduate student may file an appeal of a Final Course Grade (FCG).

Policy Statement

A student may file an appeal of an FCG. The student must follow the procedures of this policy for an appeal to be considered at each level of review. The student has the burden of proof in a grade appeal proceeding. The committee will be provided guidelines for reviewing the case and the threshold for the burden of proof. The student must also be provided with an explanation of the guidelines and the burden of proof.

If the student is otherwise eligible for graduation in the semester in which the grade is issued, the appeal will be considered as soon as possible. Other exemptions to the timeline may be granted for documented, justifiable reasons including but not limited to NCAA eligibility, progression within an academic cohort, and/or financial aid eligibility. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Financial Aid about the implications of a grade change on their financial aid package.

If a student fails to meet a procedural deadline, the appeal will not move forward, unless the student provides evidence of extraordinary circumstances as soon as practically possible (e.g. car accident, hospitalization, family emergency, etc.) to the Dean of College. The decision of the Dean or designee on whether to grant an exception to a deadline is final. If a faculty member or department chair fails to meet a procedural deadline, the appeal automatically moves to the next step.

A Grade Appeal Hearing Panel member who discusses the grade appeal with the involved faculty member or the student outside of the formal hearing panel proceedings shall be automatically disqualified from any further proceedings of the case.

The decision of the Provost or designee on a grade appeal is final.

Authority: Focus Act, Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-8-203, et. seq.
SACSCOC Standard 10.2 (Public Information)

Previous Policy: Undergraduate Catalog

Defined Terms

A Defined Term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

Dean of the College: For this policy, the grade appeal should follow the academic leadership aligned with course. Dean of the College refers to the Dean of the College in which the course is offered.

Department Chair/Unit Head: For this policy, the grade appeal should follow the academic leadership aligned with the course. Department Chair/Unit Head refers to the chair of the department in which the course is offered or the head of the unit in which the course is housed.

Final Course Grade (FCG): A letter designation of a student’s achievement of course learning outcomes

Grade Appeal Hearing Panel: Consists of three faculty members and three undergraduate students appointed by the Dean of College. All hearing panel members have voting privileges. The Hearing Panel selects a chair from among its faculty members.

Policy History

Effective Date: 5/26/2022

Revision Date: 5/18/2022

Procedure

To file an appeal of a final grade, a student follows the following procedures:

I. Level One-Instructor Review.

- A. A student contacts the instructor to schedule a meeting (in-person, phone, or video) within ten (10) business days of the official start of the following semester, not including Summer terms. If the instructor is no longer employed at ETSU, the student moves directly to Level Two.
- B. If the grade is assigned during the Fall, the timeline begins in the following Spring semester. For grades assigned during the Spring or Summer, the timeline begins in the following Fall semester.
- C. The student explains his/her position to the instructor and attempts to understand the instructor's reasons for assigning the grade.
- D. If an agreement/understanding is reached, the process ends. In the event of an impasse between the student and faculty member, the student may move the appeal forward by following the procedure outlined in Level Two.

II. Level Two—Department Review.

A. Student Responsibility.

The student files a written appeal with the department chair or appropriate unit head within ten (10) business days of the date of the conference with the faculty member in Level One.

The written appeal shall be concise and specific and state the student's specific request (e.g., to change a final grade from F to C), and the grounds for the request. The written appeal shall include the following:

1. The student's name, E#, course name and number, semester, and year the course was taken, instructor, and grade assigned.
2. A brief description of Level One action taken including date(s) (unless the faculty member is no longer employed at ETSU).
3. Specific reason(s) the student believes the grade was assigned in a *malicious, capricious, erroneous, or arbitrary manner*.
4. Statement of special circumstances or considerations, if any resolution is sought.
5. Course requirements completed, including documentation (e.g. exams, papers) if available.
6. A list of any items used in evaluation for which the student cannot provide documentation (e.g. unreturned exams, grades on class participation, attendance records), if any.

7. Course syllabus.
8. Other pertinent information.

B. Review of the Appeal.

Within fourteen (14) business days of receiving the appeal, the Department Chair/Unit Head reviews the documentation and discusses the student's grade assignment with the instructor and pertinent individuals. The Department Chair/Unit Head may attempt, but is not required, to seek a resolution by agreement.

The Department Chair/Unit Head issues a written statement of findings which shall indicate whether an informal resolution has occurred and include a recommendation concerning the appeal. The written statement of findings is issued to both the instructor and the student and is part of the appeal record.

The Department Chair/Unit Head does not have the power to change the grade at this stage of the appeal process.

In cases where the Department Chair/Unit Head is the instructor who assigned the grade under appeal, the Dean assumes the duties of the Department Chair/Unit Head in this part of the process.

C. Finding in Favor of the Student.

1. If the Department Chair/Unit Head determines that the grade is inappropriate, the finding will recommend that the faculty member change the grade. The faculty member may or may not concur with this recommendation.
2. The faculty member has ten (10) business days to submit a written response indicating whether the grade will be changed, or provide reasoning for not changing the grade. If the faculty member does not respond by the deadline, the Department Chair/Unit Head may change the grade.
3. The Department Chair/Unit Head notifies the student in writing within ten business (10) days of receiving the faculty member's written response, informing the student whether the faculty member will change the grade.
4. If the grade is changed to the student's satisfaction, the matter is concluded.

D. Finding Not in Favor of the Student/Faculty objects to grade change.

If the finding is not in favor of the student, or if the Department Chair/Unit objects to the grade change, the Department Chair/Unit Head notifies the student in writing of the finding and the right to proceed to Level Three.

III. Level Three—Grade Appeal Hearing Panel and Dean Review.

A. Student's Responsibility.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Department Chair/Unit Head's written statement, the student files a written appeal to the Dean of the College. This appeal includes all the elements submitted to the Department Chair/Unit Head in Level Two and includes all written statements from the Department Chair/Unit Head that were issued in Level Two.

B. Scheduling.

The Dean of the College notifies the student, faculty member, and Department/Unit Head that a grade appeal hearing will occur, forms a Grade Appeal Hearing Panel, and schedules and notifies the parties of the hearing date. A hearing should occur within thirty (30) business days of the student's written appeal to the Dean of the College.

C. Review of Appeal.

All written documentation is provided to the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel for review prior to the hearing. The Grade Appeal Hearing Panel selects a chair from among its faculty members.

1. Hearing.

- a. A hearing can proceed with one missing panel member if both the faculty and student agree to continue. Without an agreement to continue, the hearing must be rescheduled.
- b. A hearing may be conducted without the presence of the student or faculty member if the student or faculty member waives their right to attend. The student and/or faculty member may be present to present evidence but should not be present for deliberations and/or voting of the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel.
- c. At the hearing, all relevant material is presented by the student, faculty member, department chair, and any others who may be called to assist the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel.
- d. Following the hearing, and within fourteen (14) business days, the panel presents to the Dean of the College its recommendation for a specific course of action regarding the appeal. The recommendation includes a tally of the vote taken and the reasoning to support the recommended

course of action.

2. Dean's Decision

The Dean of the College reviews the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel's recommendation and reasoning. The Dean of the College may also confer with any of the parties involved. After consideration of all appropriate information, the Dean or designee provides a written statement that accepts, rejects, or modifies the recommendation.

The Dean of the College notifies the student, the faculty member, the chair of the Hearing Panel, the department chair, and any other relevant individuals of the outcome of the appeal.

3. Finding in Favor of the Student.

- a. If the Dean of the College determines that the grade is inappropriate, the finding will recommend that the faculty member change the grade. The faculty member may or may not concur with this recommendation.
- b. The faculty member has ten (10) business days to submit a written response indicating whether the grade will be changed, and if not, provide reasoning for not changing the grade. If the faculty member does not respond by the deadline, the Dean or designee may change the grade.
- c. The Department Chair/Unit Head notifies the student in writing within ten business (10) days of receiving the faculty member's written response, informing the student if the faculty member will change the grade.
- d. If the grade is changed to the student's satisfaction, the matter is concluded.

4. Finding Not in Favor of the Student/Faculty Objects to Grade Change.

If the finding is not in favor of the student or If the faculty member objects to the grade change, the Dean notifies the student in writing of the faculty member's objection to the grade change and of the student's right to move the appeal to Level Four.

IV. Level Four: Appeal to the Provost and Final Decision

A. Student Responsibility.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Dean's written statement, the student

files a written appeal to the Provost. This appeal includes all the elements submitted to the Dean in Level Three and includes all written statements from the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel and the Dean of the College.

B. Provost Office Review

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the student's written appeal, the Provost or designee will meet with the student and with the Dean of the College. At the conclusion of these meetings, the Provost will consider all evidence as presented in previous levels of review and will take one of the following actions.

1. Request Further Review by the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel.

Should the grade appeal be remanded to the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel, the panel will submit additional findings (if any) and, if necessary, revised or additional recommendations to the Provost within ten (10) business days of receiving the request for additional review. Upon receipt of additional findings and/or recommendations from the Grade Appeal Hearing Panel, the Provost will issue a final decision.

2. Issue a Finding in Favor of the Student

If the Provost finds in favor of the student, the Provost or designee will notify the student and notify the Registrar to change the student's grade. If the finding is in favor of the student and the grade cannot be determined using existing assessments and other evidence, the Provost, in consultation with the Dean and the Department Chair, will determine the methodology that will be used to determine the student's grade.

3. Finding Not in Favor of the Student

If the Provost does not find in favor of the student, the Provost notifies the student in writing within fourteen (14) days that the grade shall stand.

V. Withdrawal of Appeal.

A student may withdraw a grade appeal at any level without prejudice. However, the deadlines outlined in this policy continue to apply if the student decides to continue with the process at a later time.

Effective Date: 5/26/2022

Revision Date: 5/18/2022

Related Form(s)

Scope and Applicability

Primary:

Secondary: