



Policy: 03-30-00

Appealing Academic and Administrative Decisions

OFFICE OF RECORD: Vice President for Academic Affairs

ISSUED BY: Vice President for Academic Affairs

APPROVED BY: 03-30-00

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Policy

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study.

It is the policy of Dakota State University to allow students to appeal the decisions of faculty, administrative, and staff members and the decisions of institutional committees.

Procedures

Appealing a Final Grade:

It is the obligation of each instructor to inform students at the beginning of each course of the objectives, requirements, performance standards and evaluation procedures for the course. This information should be in writing and incorporated into the current syllabus for the course. (AAC Operational Guidelines, 11a.)

If a student believes that the final grade assigned in a course was inappropriate, he/she may appeal that grade by filing a formal grade appeal within 15 days of the start of the next academic session.* Appropriate grounds for a grade appeal include:

1. Assignment of a grade on some basis other than the student's performance and participation in the course, or

2. Evaluation of his/her work, using more stringent or demanding criteria than were applied to other students in the class, or
3. A major departure from the instructor's published or announced standards for assigning grades.

(*Academic sessions include fall, spring and summer terms. Students who wish to challenge an action taken in a spring term must bring their challenge during the immediately following summer term if they enroll during summer; otherwise, they may bring their challenge in the following fall term.)

To begin the appeal process, the student should detail his/her concerns in writing to the instructor and should request a meeting with the instructor to discuss the matter. The official Grade Appeal Form (found on the DSU web site or in the College office) should accompany the student's letter to the instructor. The meeting between the instructor and the student should be scheduled as soon as possible after the written notice is received. It may be conducted in person, by phone, or via email. The instructor should provide his/her decision on the grade appeal to the student within two weeks of the student's letter to the instructor. The instructor's decision should be provided in writing to the student and should be accompanied by the official Grade Appeal Form.

If the student feels the issue has not been resolved, he/she may ask the dean of the college offering the course to act as a mediator. This request for mediation must be made in writing to the dean within two weeks of the student's notification by the instructor. The student's written request for mediation should include copies of the original documentation provided to the instructor by the student, the signed Grade Appeal Form, the student's written notification from the instructor, and any additional pertinent information.

The dean's role in the grade appeal process is to mediate the matter in consultation with the instructor and the student. This mediation should occur as soon as possible after the written notice is received. The dean should summarize the outcome of this mediation for the student and the instructor within two weeks of the student's written request to the dean. The dean's summary should be provided in writing to the student and the instructor and should be accompanied by the official Grade Appeal Form.

If the student feels the issue has not been resolved, he/she may ask the Vice President for Academic Affairs to refer the issue to a review committee. This request must be made in writing to the VPAA within two weeks of the student's notification by the dean. The student's written request for review should include copies of the original documentation provided to the instructor by the student, the signed Grade Appeal Form, the student's written notification from the instructor, the student's request to the dean and the dean's notification to the student and the instructor. The Vice President for Academic Affairs should appoint a committee of three

faculty members and two students to review the appeal and make a recommendation for resolution of the issue to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The committee should submit their recommendation to the VPAA within two weeks of notification of appointment. The final decision, from the VPAA, should be provided in writing to the student and the instructor by the Vice President for Academic Affairs within 1 week of receipt from the committee.

Appealing other Academic or Administrative Decisions:

Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should follow the process described above to initiate a review of that academic evaluation.

Students who believe that a non-academic / administrative decision made by a faculty, administrative, or staff member or by an institutional committee was inappropriate may appeal that decision to the official who has supervisory responsibility for that individual or committee. Before the student may appeal the decision, he/she must have exhausted all other appeal processes outlined by the institution for that academic or administrative decision.

To begin the appeal process, the student should detail his/her concerns in writing to the appropriate official. This written statement should describe the specific act or acts which are the grounds for the appeal and should include all known information, relevant documents, the names of any known witnesses, and other relevant data and information, including a description of the appeal processes already exhausted relative to the decision.

If the student's complaint is against a vice president, the formal appeal process should be directed to the president of the institution. This is the highest level of procedural review within the institution.

Grade Appeal Form ([also available as PDF document](#))

Student's Name _____

Course Number and Title _____ Semester _____

Instructor's Name _____

Instructor: I received written notice of the student's grade appeal on

(Date)

(Instructor's signature) (Date)

Instructor's decision _____

Change grade from ____ to ____ _____ No change

Student: I received notice of instructor's decision on my grade appeal on

(Date)

(Student's signature) (Date)

Dean: I received written notice of the student's request for mediation on

(Date)

(Dean's signature) (Date)

Dean's decision _____ Concur with the instructor's grade recommendation

_____ Do not concur with the instructor's grade recommendation

Student: I received notice of the results of the mediation from the dean on

(Date)

(Student's signature) (Date)

VPAA: I received written notice of the student's request for review on

(Date)

(VPAA signature) (Date)

Committee's recommendation: _____ Concur with the instructor's grade
recommendation

_____ Do not concur with the instructor's recommendation