



**Appeal of Final Grade Not Involving
Allegation of Academic Dishonesty or
Misconduct**

**1-012
Academic Affairs**

1.0 POLICY

- 1.01 It is the responsibility of the faculty members of Oklahoma Panhandle State University to communicate to students early in the term a clear statement of the grading practices and procedures that will be used to determine the student's final grade. If a student believes those practices and procedures were not consistently and accurately followed when the faculty member determined the student's final grade, the student shall have the right to appeal her or his case.
- 1.02 Students must initiate an appeal no later than eight weeks after the date the grades are officially due in the Registrar's office, or six weeks after the student begins a new semester, whichever comes first. The protocol for the grade appeal is as follows:
1. Provide written communication and seek redress with the instructor of the course.
 2. Provide written communication and seek redress with the course's department chair.
 3. Provide written communication and seek redress with the course's college dean.
- 1.03 Should these channels not satisfy the grievance, the student may appeal to the Academic Appeals Board. The guidelines of the Academic Appeals Board specify that the process is not adversarial. The Board makes a determined effort to provide a mechanism for exchanging information between student and instructor and affecting reconciliation without creating an air of judicial inquiry. The intent is not to embarrass students or instructors, nor to assess penalty or retribution when mistakes on either side are discovered, but to provide a forum in which honest differences of opinion are discussed rationally and peacefully. For these reasons, the Board does not have the student and the instructor appear at the same time during the proceedings.
- A. Types of issues that might come before the Board related to a syllabus include, but are not limited to:
1. The student was not adequately informed of the details of the requirements of the course, the prerequisites for the course, and/or the grading system.
 2. The evaluation system was not consistently and fairly applied.
 3. Criteria for determining the final grade were changed during the course of the semester, and the students were not adequately notified of this change. Note: Not

all syllabi changes must be made in writing so long as students are given adequate notice of the changes.

4. All students did not receive equal notification and consideration of extra credit or other grade adjustment opportunities that were provided during the course of the semester.
 5. Items such as attendance, participation, and/or attitude were criteria for determining the final grade and were not made clear in advance to the student.
 6. The student was not adequately informed in advance of criteria used in making subjective evaluations of academic activities such as essay examinations, papers, projects, and speeches.
 7. The grading system included non-academic criteria.
 8. The student did not receive adequate and timely feedback on his/her performance on assignments, exams, reports, and other assignments administered during the course of the semester.
- B. When evaluating the grading system of an instructor, the Academic Appeals Board makes no attempt to establish whether a grading system is academically sound; that is, the Board is not in a position to decide the case on the instructor's choice of one particular grading system over another. Rather, the Board must rule solely upon whether the grade was assigned fairly within the grading system adopted and announced by the faculty member. In all other instances, the case will be referred back to the college for resolution. The following guidelines have been cautiously developed for use in examining the internal merits of any grading system.
1. Were errors made in calculating the final grade?
 2. Was the student accurately informed, in writing, of the instructor's grading system; that is, was the student clearly and precisely informed of the decision-making process the instructor was using in determining the final grade for the course?
 3. Student absence is not to be considered a valid excuse for being unaware of the details of the grading system.
 4. Subjective criteria are recognized as valid in determining a grade. The grading system can be subjective but not arbitrary, capricious or personally biased.
 5. Did the instructor consistently and fairly apply the grading system to all students?

6. Did the instructor change the grading system during the course of the semester in such a way that it put the student at a serious disadvantage or without adequately communicating the change to the students in the class?
 7. Were all students given a chance to improve their grades when grade adjustment opportunities were made available during the course of the semester?
 8. Did the instructor single out the student for arbitrary or discriminatory treatment?
- C. It is very important to note that the Academic Appeals Board, while considering all the above issues, does not engage in the following activities.
1. Does not grade papers or examinations or challenge the instructor's evaluation of course participation.
 2. Decisions are not made on the basis of the academic soundness of the instructor's teaching methods or grading system.
 3. Decisions are not based on a general consideration of “good” or “bad” instruction. Recourse against generally “bad” instruction must be handled at the College level; therefore, these cases will be referred back to the pertinent College for resolution.
- 1.04 The Academic Appeals Board has the authority to instruct the Registrar to change a final course grade to any letter grade including “W,” “F” and “P.” Academic Appeals Board decisions are final.
- 1.05 The Academic Appeals Board consists of faculty members—including a Dean and Alternate Dean—who are appointed by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and students who are appointed by the President of the Student Government Association. In convening an appeals hearing, the Dean will ensure a minimum quorum of three faculty and three students. The Dean only votes in cases involving ties.

2.0 PROCEDURE

- 2.01 The following procedures shall be utilized in cases where a student appeals a final course grade and violation of academic integrity are not involved.
- A. Student obtains and completes a Grade Appeal Form. Appeal forms are available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs after grades are posted. In completing the form, the student verifies s/he has discussed relevant issues with the instructor and the instructor's Dean and notified each of her or his intention to further appeal the grade.

- B. Grade Appeal Form is submitted to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The Office of Academic and Student Affairs accepts the completed Grade Appeal Form and written statement from the student, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs reviews the information pertaining to the case. If a grade appeal hearing is deemed necessary, the Academic Appeals Board's Dean will provide the instructor with an opportunity to review the documentation submitted by the student prior to the hearing.
 - C. Academic Appeal hearing is scheduled. The date and time of a grade appeal hearing is confirmed in writing to the student and instructor by the Board Dean. The Board hears both parties separately to ensure there will be no confrontation between student and instructor. Both the student and instructor have the right to call witnesses to assist in establishing the facts of their cases. Other individuals may only attend a hearing upon consent of the Board.
 - D. Academic Appeal Board renders decision. Once the Academic Appeals Board has reached a decision, the Dean will notify the student, instructor, the instructor's Dean and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs of the outcome in writing within five (5) working days. When the Board votes to alter a grade, the decision is also sent to the Office of the Registrar which changes the grade.
- 2.02 Any current student or faculty member of the Academic Appeals Board involved in a grade appeal must excuse him- or herself as a voting member in that hearing. The Alternate Dean will coordinate and preside over any case in which the Board Dean is a party.

Policy History

Latest Revision: November 2023

First Adopted: June 2019

Revision History: November 2023