

Grade Grievance Policy

Grade grievance procedures apply only to the review and resolution of allegations of capricious grading. They are not for the review of the instructor's judgment in assessing the quality of a student's work.

Capricious grading consists of any of the following: (a) the assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than her or his performance in the course; (b) the assignment of a grade to a particular student that resorts to more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in that course; it is understood that standards for graduate credit may be different from standards for undergraduate credit; (c) the assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.

A student who has a complaint about a grade should begin with Step One of the procedure by contacting the instructor, either in person or in writing, as soon as possible and not later than 30 days after the course grade is available. The instructor should discuss the matter, explaining how the student's grade was calculated. A student who is unable to reach the instructor should contact the Vice President/Executive Director's office in Off-Campus Programs.

A student who is not satisfied with the results of Step One may move to Step Two by initiating the following process within 60 days after the course grade is made available: (1) writing a letter to the instructor stating the reason(s) for moving to Step Two and (2) writing a letter to the appropriate program director (e.g. MSA Director, MA in Counseling Director, MA in Education Director, MA in Humanities Director, or Undergraduate Programs Director) requesting a joint consultation with the instructor and the appropriate program director. The student must include a copy of the student's letter to the instructor stating the reason(s) for moving to Step Two.

In cases where the instructor is also the program director, the materials will be forwarded to the appropriate dean.

The program director will arrange for a conference call among the instructor, student, and program director as soon as possible. The purpose of the joint consultation is to provide an opportunity for the student and the instructor to discuss the student's allegations with a third party present. The role of the program director is to facilitate the discussion, not to recommend a change of grade. Following the joint consultation, the program director will confirm the outcome of the conference call to the student with a letter which outlines the procedures for moving to Step Three if the student is not satisfied. A copy of the letter will be sent to the instructor.

A student who is not satisfied with the results of Step Two may move to Step Three by writing a letter to the program director within 30 days of the consultation. The letter must include a description of the basis for claiming that the student's grade was the result of capricious grading as defined in the Off-Campus Programs Bulletin. Evidence such as tests, papers, etc., that would support the student's allegations must be included at the same time. A copy of the student's letter and documentation will be sent to the instructor, who will be given 30 days to respond. A copy of the instructor's response will be sent to the student.

Copies of the letters and documents submitted by both the student and the instructor will be referred to the appropriate council (e.g., MSA Council, MA in Counseling Council, MA in Education Council, MA in Humanities Council, or Undergraduate EDP Council). If the council finds the allegations of capricious grading to be supported by substantial evidence, the council will determine the most appropriate remedy. The council may direct the instructor to grade the student's work anew or to give the student a new examination in the course, or it may take other action that will bring about substantial justice in the individual case. The decision of the council is final and shall be reported in writing to the student, the instructor, and the Vice President/Executive Director's office of Off-Campus Programs.