

**Southern Connecticut State University
Grade Appeal Procedures**

I. Assumptions

- A) The award of grades¹ is the responsibility of the instructor of the course.
- B) A grade shall be changed only with the consent of the instructor of the course and with the approval of the provost or appropriate Dean except for cases which are specified in this document.
- C) In order to protect academic freedom, promote academic integrity, and to avoid possible negative implications for faculty evaluations, all grade appeals must be based on a claim of palpable injustice. A palpable injustice occurs when a faculty member has been demonstrably inconsistent and unfair to the student. Palpable injustice represents a clear and blatant violation of a reasonable evaluation procedure, regardless of whether that procedure is stated or implied. Palpable injustice is NOT warranted when other faculty members simply disagree with the grade, would have graded differently, would have rounded off to the next highest grade, or would have preferred a different evaluation procedure. For example, the Department Grade Appeal Committee or University Grade Appeal Committee is not justified in changing a WF to a WP by considering the circumstances for the withdrawal. The issue is whether the faculty member applied the policy appropriately.
- D) These procedures apply only to the change of a grade under conditions specified in section 4.2.2.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. They may be implemented after a final grade has been submitted or after a request for a late withdrawal has been denied by the instructor, and any change may be upward or downward.
- E) These procedures may be implemented at any time during the academic year subject to II A below.
- F) The week of Spring Break shall not be counted when determining how long the grade appeal has been in process.

II. Procedures

- A) Grade appeals must be initiated on an individual basis. A student must submit a written and signed rationale to the instructor (no electronic submissions permitted) stating the reason for the grade appeal and the grade s/he feels should have received anytime after receipt of the grade until the end of 3rd week of the semester² (called hereinafter the appeal semester) following the date on which a grade was awarded. Grade appeals for work during summer, winter and spring break sessions must be made according to the schedule for the next full semester. See the section on deadlines below. The student and the instructor shall then attempt to settle the matter in good faith.
- B) If it is impossible for the student to contact the instructor (with the help of the instructor's chair if needed), or if the student and instructor cannot reach an agreement, the student must report this to the instructor's chair or the program director (in the case of courses in interdisciplinary programs) by the end of the 5th week of the appeal semester.
- C) If the instructor can be contacted, and the student and instructor disagree, the following shall take place:
 - 1. Working in good faith, the chair/director, the instructor, and student shall attempt to settle the matter.
 - 2. If the student, the chair/director and instructor are unable to reach an agreement, then the chair/director has until the end of the 7th week of the appeal semester to do one of the following:

A. Convene a committee elected³ by the department (hereinafter called the Department Grade Appeal Committee or DGAC) which shall, in consultation with the instructor and student, decide whether a palpable injustice has occurred.. The DGAC must reach its decision by the 10th week of the appeal semester, or the appeal goes directly to the University Grade Appeal Committee UGAC. The student or the faculty member has the right of appeal to the (UGAC). In such instances, the UGAC must reach its decision by the last day of the finals' week of the appeal semester.

B. Refer the matter to the UGAC, which shall, in consultation with the instructor and student, decide whether a palpable injustice has occurred.

C. Decide not to convene a DGAC or to refer the matter to the UGAC, only if the chair/director determines that the grade appeal has no merit.

3. If the chair/director decides not to convene a DGAC nor refer the matter to the UGAC, the student may refer the matter to the UGAC, but must do so by the end of the 9th week of the appeal semester.

4. The DGAC or the UGAC shall make a decision with reference to the grade appeal following consultation with the instructor and student and with others whom it deems appropriate. The meetings of the DGAC or UGAC shall consist of the respective committee members, and others, only if invited by the DGAC or the UGAC. A grade change may take place when the DGAC or the UGAC decides that a palpable injustice has occurred, and the new grade will be based on the evidence presented. The DGAC or the UGAC shall treat each student as a separate case. The DGAC's or UGAC's decision shall include a written rationale for each decision signed by the committee members. The student, the instructor, the department chair/director, and the chair of the DGAC (when applicable) shall be notified in writing of the committee's decision. If a grade change has been made, the registrar shall also be notified in writing. **THE DECISION OF THE DGAC CAN BE APPEALED TO THE UGAC BY EITHER STUDENT COMPLAINANT OR AFFECTED FACULTY MEMBER, AND THE DECISION OF THE UGAC SHALL BE FINAL.**

5. If a student or instructor appeals a DGAC decision, the appellant takes the matter directly to the UGAC by the end of the 12th week of the appeal semester. The UGAC will entertain an appeal on the basis of a palpable injustice that should or should not have been determined by the DGAC, or if the student, instructor, chair/director, or DGAC did not follow correct procedure. **THE DECISION OF THE UGAC SHALL BE FINAL.**

D) If it is impossible to contact the instructor, or the instructor refuses to participate, the procedure in II C is followed without the presence or involvement of the instructor.

E) Deadlines and deadline extensions.

1. "By the 3rd week" means 3 weeks (21 calendar days) into the semester, starting with the 1st day of classes. Other deadlines are to be interpreted similarly.

2. A dean of the appropriate school may extend any grade appeal deadline only at the appellant's request and only if the appellant provides written evidence that physical or mental incapacitation led to the missed deadline. The request must be made, in writing, no later than the end of the first week of classes following the original grade appeal semester.

F) Structure of the Department Grade Appeal Committee.

The DGAC shall consist of three department or program members, excluding the instructor, the chair, non-tenured faculty and those on leave. In cases of hardship (when not enough

department/program members are available), the chair will follow the same procedures as those for convening a hardship DEC.

G) Structure of the University Grade Appeal Committee

The UGAC shall consist of seven members, including six university-wide elected members who serve a term of three year each, plus one member of the affected department/program, and one university wide elected alternate who fills in as needed. Two elected members will be from the school of Arts and Sciences; the other four Schools shall have one member each. No more than one elected member per department is permitted. Any grade appeal decision shall not be made by fewer than three UGAC members. The instructor whose grade is being appealed cannot serve on UGAC for that appeal.

III. Amendments

This document may be amended by two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate with the concurrence of the University President.

IV. Interpretation

This section may not be invoked with respect to the interpretation of any item of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. If an issue develops concerning interpretation of this Document whether initiated by the Senate, a faculty member, or any member of the administration, a binding decision on such an issue shall be made:

1. by agreement between the President of the University and a majority of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate or, failing to obtain agreement on an issue by this method,
2. by a committee consisting of one member selected by the Senate Executive Committee, one selected by the President of the University, and one selected by the first two committee members, who, by a two-thirds vote shall decide such an issue.

V. Implementation

This document shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate with the concurrence of the President of the University.

Notes:

1. By grade is meant any of the grades specified in the University Undergraduate or Graduate Catalogs.
2. Semester means the January to May or the September to December sessions of classes.
3. The composition of this committee and its election procedures shall be determined by each department, subject to II F.

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