

## CLAS Grade Appeal Procedure Follow-Up

### Background/Update:

This document is a follow-up to the recommendations/suggestions prepared in response to the Dean's Charge regarding the grade appeal policy in the 2018-2019 academic year.

**CHARGE #2 - Review current grade appeal policy - University, College, Department levels.** Consider ways in which a change to policy or procedure could improve clarity for students, faculty and staff. Identify ambiguity in language and consider ways in which all levels of the policy can function consistently.

### 1. Recommendations/Suggestions Approved May 2019:

- a. Each unit in the College should have a "Grade Appeal Policy" even if the procedures followed are similar to the grievance procedures.
- b. Each unit in the College should have their Grade Appeal Policy available in the policy library.
- c. A grade appeal policy is needed for LA&S courses and any other courses that are offered outside of an academic unit.
- d. The timelines for various aspects of the grade appeal process should be uniform across units in the College and to the extent possible, be consistent with the timelines for grievances. Timelines in the College Grievance Policy should be clarified. Some language is confusing or ambiguous.
- e. CUSA could develop a unit level policy that can be adopted or adapted by units in the College.
- f. Each Grade Appeal Policy should explain what can be appealed using this policy, the procedure for submitting a grade appeal (including required materials for an appeal, timelines, who to direct the appeal to, and in what format), the process after an appeal has been submitted, grounds for not hearing an appeal, and procedures available to appeal the decision made at the unit level.
- g. Boiler plate language regarding where to find details of the grievance and grade appeal procedures that can be incorporated into course syllabi would be useful. As would a flow chart describing the grade appeal process using more straightforward language.

### 2. Follow Up Documents:

- a. Appendix A: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Grade Appeal Procedures Statement (modeled after the Grievance Procedures Statement)
- b. Appendix B: Guidelines for Developing Unit Level Grade Appeal Procedures
- c. Appendix C: Draft Text of Generic Department/Unit Grade Appeal Procedure that can be adopted or amended.
- d. Appendix D: Sample Departmental Grade Appeal Procedures Form
- e. Appendix E: Grade Appeal Frequently Asked Questions
- f. Appendix F: Grade Appeal Procedure Flowchart

### 3. Next Steps:

- a. CLAS will request that instructional departments/units create a grade appeal procedure that is distinct from the department/unit grievance procedure and submit a copy for the policy library. Guidelines for developing unit level grade appeal procedures, unit examples, text of generic departmental/unit grade appeal procedures that can be adopted or amended, and sample grade appeal procedures form to be provided to instructional departments/units.
- b. CLAS will make department/unit level grade appeal procedures available in the policy library.
- c. CLAS will create a procedure for petitioning that a grade appeal be heard at the college level.
- d. CLAS will create a grade appeal procedure for LA&S courses.
- e. CLAS will make the frequently asked questions and flowchart available for students.
- f. Timelines in the College Grievance Policy should be clarified. Some language is confusing or ambiguous.

## **Appendix A**

### **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Grade Appeal Procedures**

#### **Grade Appeal Procedure for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

##### **PROCEDURES STATEMENT:**

The only grounds for a grade appeal is improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor (USRR Articles [2.3.5](#) and [6.4.4](#)). For disputes involving alleged academic misconduct, see the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences policy on academic misconduct. For disputes involving other grievances, see the unit level grievance procedures.

Pursuant to Article XII of the University Senate Code and Articles II, and VI of the University Senate Rules and Regulations of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, the College Office establishes the following procedure to hear grade appeals arising within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Instructional units that report to the College must establish unit level grade appeal procedures.

Grade appeals arising within the subordinate unit or its subunits must be heard under the subordinate unit's grade appeal procedure unless exceptional circumstances, as determined by the College, make it more appropriate for those grade appeals to be heard at the College level. Either party may petition the College to have the review at the College level. The petition must state why a fair review cannot be obtained at the subordinate unit level.

Appeal of decisions at a subordinate unit level is to the Judicial Board, not to the College.

## Appendix B

### Guidelines for Developing Unit Level Grade Appeal Procedures

- Each unit in the College shall have a “Grade Appeal Policy” even if the procedures followed are similar to the grievance procedures.
- Each unit in the College shall have their Grade Appeal Policy available in the policy library.
- To provide consistency across units, all units shall allow a six-month time period (from the date the final grade was assigned) for the student to file a grade appeal.
- All unit level grade appeal procedures shall include information on:
  - what materials are required to submit a grade appeal
  - who the materials should be submitted to
  - the timeline for submitting materials
  - what to expect after materials are submitted
  - appealing a unit level decision to the judicial board
- If a unit already has a grade appeal procedure in place they can confirm it meets these criteria or amend their procedures as needed.
- If a unit does not already have a grade appeal procedure in place they can adopt or amend the generic unit grade appeal policy provided, or develop one on their own. Examples of other unit level grade appeal policies are also provided. [Ask Math and Biology for permission to share their procedures. Other suggestions?]
- A form to guide students through this process is suggested. See example provided.

## **Appendix C: Draft Text of Generic Department/Unit Grade Appeal Procedure that can be adopted or amended**

The Department Office shall provide a copy of this procedure to anyone who requests it.

The only grounds for a grade appeal is improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor (USRR Articles [2.3.5](#) and [6.4.4](#)).

1. A student wishing to appeal a final course grade must first consult with the course instructor to make sure there has been no error in calculating or recording the grade, and to request clarification about the reason for assigning the grade. The student should attempt to resolve the matter informally with the instructor.
2. If consultation with the instructor does not resolve the issue, the student has six months to submit a written grade appeal to the Chair of the Department. The appeal shall contain a statement of the facts underlying the grade appeal, including the specific provision(s) of the announced grading procedures alleged to have been improperly applied, copies of relevant graded work, and a summary of steps taken to resolve the grade dispute with the instructor. Copies of any documents relevant to the appeal shall be attached to the appeal.
3. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Chair of the Department shall provide a copy of the appeal, with accompanying documents, to the designated Grade Appeal Officer for the department.
4. If the Grade Appeal Officer determines that any of the following grounds exist, he or she may recommend to the Chair of the Department that the complaint be dismissed without further proceedings. The grounds for such dismissal are: (a) A grade appeal or a grievance involving substantially the same underlying occurrence or events has already been, or is being, adjudicated by proper University procedures; (b) the grade appeal has not been filed in a timely fashion; (c) the Department lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter; (d) the grade appeal fails to specify which grading procedures are alleged to have been improperly applied; or (e) the party filing the grade appeal lacks standing because his or her grade in the course was not adversely affected by the alleged violation of grading procedures.
  - Pursuant to [USRR 6.8.4.2](#), the Grade Appeal Officer may contact other hearing bodies within the University to determine whether a grade appeal or complaint involving the underlying occurrence or events is currently pending before or has been decided by any other hearing body.
  - If the Grade Appeal Officer determines that a grade appeal on its face properly should be heard by another body, they will recommend that the Chair of the Department send the grade appeal to the appropriate hearing body without further proceedings in the Department. The Chair will send a copy of the referral to the student and the instructor(s).
5. The Grade Appeal Officer shall provide the instructor with a copy of the appeal and accompanying documents, as well as these grade appeal procedures.
6. The instructor shall submit a written response to the Grade Appeal Officer. The response shall contain the instructor's statement of the facts underlying the dispute as well as any other defenses to the allegations in the appeal. The response shall include copies of any documents relevant to the appeal.
7. Upon receipt of the response, the Grade Appeal Officer shall provide a copy of the instructor's response to the grade appeal to the student, but the names of other students and their grades shall be redacted from the copy provided to the student.
8. The Grade Appeal Officer will attempt to mediate a resolution between the instructor and the student. If this is not possible, the Grade Appeal Officer will create a faculty committee with at least three members. All committee members shall be disinterested parties. Either party may petition the College to have the review at the College level. The petition must state why a fair review cannot be obtained at the subordinate unit level.
9. The grade appeal committee will review all the written materials provided by the student and the instructor and provide a written recommendation to the Chair of the Department.
10. The Chair of the Department will make the final decision on the grade appeal and communicate this decision to the student and the instructor along with instructions on how to appeal the decision to the Judicial Board if they choose.

## Appendix D      Sample Departmental Grade Appeal Procedures Form

### Departmental Grade Appeal Procedures

University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR) outlines the circumstances under which grade appeals may be made, as well as the procedures for such appeals. For details, please see the following references:

- Article 2: Section 3: [Change of Grade, specifically 2.3.5](#)
- Article 6, Section 4: [Jurisdiction, specifically 6.4.4: Disputes involving allegedly improper application of grading procedure](#)

**Departmental procedures for appeal of a final course grade, as required by USRR 2.3.5.1:**

Insert departmental level procedure here. This may involve a reference to complete an “Initiation Form”, a sample of which may be found on the next page.

## Departmental Grade Appeal Initiation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course # and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester / Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Course Grade Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following must be submitted (department says to who) as part of this appeal:**

[Departments should modify below in accordance with their Grade Appeals Policy]

- Copy of course syllabus
- Written statement from student (below or attached)
- Summary statement of steps taken to communicate with instructor (below or attached)
- Copies of available graded work for the course and/or a list of grades received on assignments.

1. Explain why you believe there was an improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor. If desired, this statement can be attached as a separate document.

2. Summary of steps taken to resolve the grade dispute. If desired, this statement can be attached as a separate document.

## Appendix E

# Grade Appeal: Frequently Asked Questions

**Grade Appeal:** A grade appeal is a procedure which allows you in certain circumstances to ask for a review of a decision relating to a final grade you received in a course.

### What are the grounds for a grade appeal?

The grade appeal procedure can only be used to appeal a final course grade, and only if you believe there has been an improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor ([University Senate Rules and Regulations Section 2.3.5](#)).

### What if I have an issue with my final course grade that is not a result of an improper application of the grading procedure used in the course, or involves allegations of other improper behavior on the part of the instructor?

If the instructor violated any provision(s) of the Faculty Code of Conduct, University Senate Code, the University Senate Rules and Regulations, the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, or other applicable rule, policy, regulation, or law that resulted in harm to the student, including a lower grade, you can file a grievance.

In order to file an academic grievance, the student must demonstrate actual harm. It does not involve perceived rude treatment, classroom style or general grading policies. For example, the student may not like a particular professor's classroom style or grading practices as a whole, but this does not constitute grounds for a grievance.

You can find grievance procedures for units in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the policy library [here](#).

### Can the grade appeal process also address a grievance?

No, but the grievance process can result in a grade change. This is the case when a faculty member who has been charged with a grievance and found guilty (e.g. sexual harassment or academic misconduct) has assigned a grade to the student who has filed the grievance. Under these circumstances, a committee of at least three faculty members appointed by the chairperson of the department in which the course is given may review a student's work and assign the course grade ([University Senate Rules and Regulations 2.3.2.1](#)).

### Are instructors allowed to change the grading procedures announced for the course after classes have started?

Yes, but only in response to extenuating circumstances such as:

- Unforeseen circumstances – cancelled physical classes, technology outages, availability of guests or instructional supplements
- Situations in which a substantial number of students misinterpret directions or expectations resulting in grades that affect the class as a whole.

### Who should I contact prior to filing a grade appeal?

Prior to submitting a grade appeal, you should communicate with the instructor for the course to make sure there has been no error in calculating or recording the grade, and to request clarification about the reason for assigning the grade. Document your attempts to resolve the grade dispute informally with your instructor.

If you are unable to resolve the grade dispute informally with your instructor, the grade in dispute is the final grade, and you believe there was an improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor, you can initiate a grade appeal through the department that is the home department for the instructor. This is often, but not always, the department through which the course was offered.

### **How much time do I have to file a grade appeal?**

You have six-months from the time the final grade was assigned to initiate a grade appeal. The six-month time period shall be calculated using calendar days (including weekends and days during which classes are not in session).

### **How do I submit a grade appeal?**

Each department has procedures whereby students may appeal grades assigned to them by instructors in their department. You can find grade appeal procedures for units in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the policy library [here](#).

You should initiate a grade appeal through the department that is the home department for the instructor. This is often, but not always, the department through which the course was offered.

If the course is not 'housed' under any specific department, you can appeal with the college directly [\[LA&S courses? Who should the student contact? Include hyperlink to procedures here\]](#).

If the Department Chair or other unit representative in charge of grade appeals, is the instructor for the course that you want to appeal the grade for, or there are other extenuating circumstances, you can petition the College to review the grade appeal at the college level.

### **What do I need in order to submit a grade appeal?**

Each unit will have their own procedures for submitting a grade appeal. However, you will likely need the following:

- Summary statement of steps taken to resolve the grade dispute informally with the instructor, and any supporting documentation or evidence that you asked for a meeting with your professor, and/or that you met with them to inquire about your grade (i.e. notes following the meeting, copy of email exchanges).
- Copy of course syllabus and any grading procedures announced for the course by the instructor
- Copies of available graded work for the course and/or a list of grades received on assignments.
- Written statement where you explain why you believe there was an improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor.

### **What if I want to appeal the decision about my grade appeal made by the Department/Unit?**

All appeals of decisions at the department/unit level are made to the Judicial Board, not the College. Contact the University Governance Office located in Strong Hall, Room 33, for further instructions.



# Appendix F

## Grade Appeal Procedure Flowchart

