

323 UNIVERSITY-LEVEL GRADE APPEALS

Policy 323 was approved by the ISU Board of Trustees on May 9, 2009.

- 323.1 Basis for Appeal.** A student may appeal a grade granted by any instructor of any course. The student may appeal the grade based on one or more of the following:
- 323.1.1 Error.** An error in the calculation of the grade.
 - 323.1.2 Disparate Treatment.** The assignment of a grade to a particular student by application of more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the same section of the same course, in the same semester, with the same instructor.
 - 323.1.3 Inappropriate Basis.** The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course.
 - 323.1.4 Departure from Announced Standards.** The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards for that section of that course. (Note: An instructor may alter original grading standards for an assignment as long as that change has been announced with reasonable notice in advance of the due date for the assignment. An instructor may reasonably add or subtract assignments or assessments from those that have been previously announced. Instructors are highly discouraged from altering the grading scale for the course if that grading scale has been included in the syllabus or previously announced.)
 - 323.1.5 Departure from Departmental Standards.** The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the written departmentally approved standards for a course.
- Any other grounds for appeal shall be considered irrelevant. (Note: Unless the appeal is on the basis of Paragraph 323.1.5, above, cross-instructor or cross-section comparison appeals are not to be considered as relevant. Instructors are free to have different assignments, assessments, and standards for different sections and different instructors of the same course are free to have different assignments, assessments, and standards from one another.)
- 323.2 Informal Appeal.** All students must follow the informal appeals process for questioning grades prior to engaging the formal appeal. Students must initiate their informal appeal within 30 working days of the posting of the grade. Should no resolution occur by the informal appeal, the student may choose to engage the formal appeal process.
- 323.2.1 Student to Meet with Instructor.** In so doing, they are to, where possible, seek out the instructor for a face-to-face conversation.
 - 323.2.2 Instructor to Give Due Consideration.** The instructor is encouraged to listen to the entirety of the student's case and then to consider whether the current grade is appropriate.

- 323.2.3 Student to Contact Department Chairperson.** Should no resolution occur, the student is required to contact the department chairperson. The chairperson is required to meet with the student one-on-one, to seek a conversation with the instructor one-on-one, and then highly encouraged to meet with the two of them together.
- 323.3 Filing a Formal Appeal.** A formal appeal is made in writing to the dean of the college of the instructor, hereafter referred to as the “Dean.” When filing an appeal, a student must specify the basis (bases) of the appeal and do so within 30 working days of the conclusion of the informal appeal. The student must indicate one of the following:
- 323.3.1 Instructor Unwilling to Communicate.** The instructor is unable or unwilling to communicate with the student on the appeal and the informal appeal could not proceed, or
- 323.3.2 No Resolution.** No resolution resulted from the informal appeal process.
- 323.4 Contents of Formal Appeal.** The contents of the appeal should include as much of the relevant physical or electronic record as is possible for the student to collect. If the basis contained in Paragraph 323.1.2, above, is asserted, the student should provide a list of the names of other students and specific assignments so that a review of the relevant materials and appropriate comparisons can be made.
- 323.5 Verification of Appropriateness of Appeal.** An instructor “cannot respond” if (s)he has died or has suffered a debilitating physical or mental condition. For appeals of grades submitted by instructors who have been terminated, resigned, or retired, it is the Dean’s responsibility to manage the notification process. In doing so, the Dean shall make three separate attempts at contact within 30 days, with the last one in writing by registered letter to the last known address. If after ten working days of the Dean’s receiving the registered letter receipt the instructor still refuses to discuss the grade appeal, the Dean shall convene the Grade Appeal Committee.
- 323.5.1 Instructor Has Denied the Appeal.** If an instructor has denied the grade appeal after having met with the department chairperson, the Dean must review the materials and discuss the matter with the student. The Dean may choose to discuss the matter with the instructor, the chairperson, or both. If the Dean cannot create a resolution satisfactory to the instructor and student, the Dean shall convene the Grade Appeal Committee.
- 323.6 Composition and Purpose of the Grade Appeal Committee.**
- 323.6.1 Committees Formed at the Beginning of Each Academic Year.** At the beginning of each academic year, each college shall create its Grade Appeal Committee(s) in a fashion that
- 323.6.1.1** it has only tenured faculty; and
- 323.6.1.2** it has no fewer than 5 members with one alternate.

- 323.6.2 No Conflict for Departmental Colleagues.** Members of a department may serve on the Grade Appeal Committee of a departmental colleague.
- 323.6.3 Recusal in Cases of Conflict.** When the instructor in question is a member of the Grade Appeal Committee, he/she is recused, and the alternate shall serve in his/her place.
- 323.6.4 Certain Required Membership.** Within the College of Arts & Sciences, the committee shall include faculty from the Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences, and Math & Sciences. Within the College of Nursing, Health, & Human Services, the committee shall include faculty from Nursing and Health & Human Service areas.
- 323.6.5 Consistency.** Without regard to the calendar, once a formal appeal has been submitted to the Grade Appeal Committee, that committee shall remain with the appeal until its conclusion.
- 323.6.6 Notification for Similar Appeals.** If two or more appeals are received by the Dean about the same instructor and the same course, the Dean shall inform the Grade Appeal Committee.
- 323.6.6.1 Combining Appeals.** If the Grade Appeal Committee determines that the appeals are of identical character and that the students' rights to appeal would not be compromised by combining the appeals into one process, the Grade Appeal Committee may make this determination. The Grade Appeal Committee has the sole authority to make this determination.
- 323.7 Grade Appeal Committee Actions.** The Grade Appeal Committee, by majority vote, shall within 10 working days recommend one of the following:
- 323.7.1** That the original grade stand, or
- 323.7.2** That any higher grade be substituted for the original grade, or
- 323.7.3** That an incomplete grade be granted. (If this recommendation is made, the chairperson shall be appointed the instructor of record for the course for this student. The conditions for completion, the default grade, and the expiration of the incomplete shall be specified.)
- 323.8 Transmission.**
- 323.8.1 To the Student.** When a recommendation is made by the Grade Appeal Committee, the Dean shall prepare a written summary of the recommendation and transmit the recommendation to the student and the instructor.
- 323.8.2 To the Provost, Chairperson, and Committee.** A copy of the recommendation shall be transmitted to the Provost, the department chairperson, and the members of the Grade Appeal Committee.

- 323.8.3 To the Registrar.** When the Grade Appeal Committee recommends a changed grade or an incomplete grade, the Dean shall prepare a letter to the Registrar stating the new grade. The letter shall carry the signatures of the Dean and the members of the Grade Appeal Committee. No such letter is required if the grade does not change.
- 323.9 Registrar's Action.** In the event a grade is changed, the following notation shall appear on the transcript: "*Original grade of ____ was overruled as authorized by the Grade Appeal Committee.*"
- 323.10 Definition of Working Day.** A "Working Day" for purposes of this policy includes all weekdays that the University is open. In cases where a Grade Appeal Committee's or a department's committee must meet during the summer, synchronous telephonic meetings shall be permissible.

Last revised February 1, 2011.