

Grade Change

Background

The grade change policy provides recourse through a system of appeals to a student who has evidence or believes that evidence exists that an inappropriate grade has been assigned. The reasons for the inappropriate grade may be the result of:

- a grade discrepancy that arises because of computational errors,
- a grade discrepancy that arises because of errors in recording grades,
- a grade dispute that arises because of grading a paper or assignment in a manner that is inconsistent with grades assigned to other students,
- a grade dispute that arises because the grading criteria were not followed
- or other improper conditions.

In some rare instances, the grade change policy may be appropriate for a course withdrawal but only in rarely and when extenuating circumstances exist (for example, the student was incapacitated in such a way that a withdrawal was not possible or imposed a significant burden).

The grade change policy and appeal system is not designed to respond to poor instruction or to complaints that the course objectives were unreasonable and grades were lower than expected.

SPEA's grade change policy covers two situations.

1. The first case is a student is seeking to raise the grade received in a class.
2. The second in when students are seeking a withdrawal after the course has been completed.

The SPEA faculty has affirmed that students should be granted a withdrawal after the completion of a course only in extraordinary circumstances that prevented the student from official withdrawing or would have imposed an unreasonable hardship on the student.

Withdrawals after a course has been completed are never granted in the following situations:

- the student received a failing or poor grade,
- the student forgot to attend class,
- the student forgot to withdraw, or
- the student did not know about the need to withdraw.

Students in these situations should use grade replacement to improve a low or failing grade. Students whose grade appeals are been denied should consider grade replacement to improve a low grade.

SPEA's policy on grade change applies to both graduate and undergraduate students.

The IUPUI campus policy, which can be accessed at <http://registrar.iupui.edu/gradechg.html>, provides the basis for SPEA's policy and procedures that must be followed for making grade appeals.

Policy (*Orig. 2003, Rev. 5/2006*)

A student may appeal a course grade at the completion of a course to resolve a request for a grade discrepancy or a grade dispute. A student may appeal to change a course grade after the completion of a course to a 'W,' providing there are extraordinary circumstances that prohibited the student from withdrawing before the completion of the course or when withdrawing before the course completion would impose an unreasonable hardship on the student. The appeal must be made within 90 days of the date when the grade was issued. In those instances when a student is unable to contact the professor who issued the grade, the student must give a notice of intent to appeal the grade within 90 days of the date when the grade was issued.

Responsibilities

- ✓ The student is responsible for understanding and following the procedure for making a grade appeal and for making the initial appeal to the instructor.
- ✓ The faculty (full-time, part-time, and associate) is responsible for considering the student's initial appeal and for responding to the appeal in a timely manner.
- ✓ The Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for conducting the second level of appeal.
- ✓ The Director of Academic Affairs will appoint a Grade Appeal Committee to conduct the third level of appeal. The Grade Appeal Committee will typically consist of the Program Directors.
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- ✓ The Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for notifying the IUPUI Office of the Registrar when a grade change is approved.

Procedure

1. IUPUI e-mail can be used for official communications in the process of resolving a student's grade appeal.
2. When a student has a pending academic misconduct case and a grievance against the instructor in the same class, the grievance will be resolved after the case of academic misconduct is resolved.
3. Timing of Appeal
 - a. As allowed by campus policy, SPEA limits the time for filing a grade appeal. The appeal must be made within 90 days of the date when the grade was issued. In those instances when a student is unable to contact the professor who issued the grade, the student must give a notice of intent to appeal the grade within 90 days of the date when the grade was issued. This notice must be given to the Director of Academic Affairs.
4. Reasons for Appeal
 - a. Students may appeal to correct a mistake or error in assigning a course grade. Grades may be disputed because the final grade was computed or recorded incorrectly; the criteria for issuing the final grade were different from the criteria given in the syllabus; the test or other grades were recorded incorrectly; the evaluation of a paper, grade on a paper or other assignment was not consistent with the stated criteria for evaluation.
5. First Appeal - to Course Instructor
 - a. When a student believes he or she has grounds for an appeal, the student must make a written request to the instructor. The written request should explain why the student believes the grade should be changed. The instructor will respond to the student's request in writing in a timely fashion.
 - b. When a course instructor declines the student's request for a change of grade or in situations where the instructor cannot be contacted, the student may appeal the course grade according to the procedures listed below.
6. Second Appeal - to Director of Academic Affairs
 - a. A student must make a written request to the Director of Academic Affairs if the student wishes to appeal an instructor's decision to deny a request for changing a grade or when the instructor cannot be contacted. The written statement must identify the course, semester, and year when the course was taken. It must state the reasons why the grade is in dispute and provide relevant evidence in support of the appeal.

- Examples of relevant evidence include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a re-computation of the grade if the student believes the grade was not computed correctly
 - a syllabus that states a grading scale different from the one used to compute the final grades
 - grading criteria for assignments, papers, tests, etc. that are different from grading criteria used to assign grades
 - assignments, papers, tests, etc. with stated assessment criteria if the student believes that the grade was based on an evaluation that did not match the criteria in the syllabus or for an assignment, paper, test, etc.
- b. The Change of Grade petition form, which can be accessed at the Office of the Registrar's website at <http://registrar.iupui.edu/grdfm.html> can be used to make the written appeal. The student should complete the form as directed. The Office of the Registrar will send the completed form to SPEA Students Services. The Administrative Assistant will forward the completed form to the Director of Student Services, who will notify the Director of Academic Affairs of pending petitions.
- c. The Director of Academic Affairs will review the appeal and supporting information to determine if the student's request meets the reasons for appeal. If the student's request meets the criteria for an appeal, the Director of Academic Affairs will provide the faculty member with an opportunity to provide additional information, which can be submitted electronically.
- d. If the Director of Academic Affairs determines that the evidence supports the appeal, he/she will issue a grade change using the Grade Change Authorization form and will notify the Office of the Registrar and the faculty member and student of the grade change. If the Director of Academic Affairs does not support the appeal, he/she will notify the student in writing of the decision and of the student's right to appeal in writing the Director of Academic Affairs' decision to a Grade Appeal Committee.
7. Third and Final Appeal – to Grade Appeal Committee
- a. When a student decides to appeal the decision of the Director of Academic Affairs, the Director will convene a Grade Appeal Committee and designate a chair. The Committee typically consists of the Program Directors or other faculty in the event of a conflict of interest. The student's written statements, the faculty member's response, and the Director of Academic Affairs' response and relevant supporting documents will be forwarded to the Grade Appeal Committee by the Director of Academic Affairs.
- b. The Grade Appeal Committee will review the materials provided and make a determination on the merits of the case. The Grade Appeal Committee may invite the student and faculty member to attend any deliberations in those instances when the Committee feels such input is needed. The Committee will dismiss the invited student and faculty member before it deliberates and makes its decision.
- c. The decision of the Grade Appeal Committee will be communicated in writing to the student, faculty, and Director of Academic Affairs. The Director of Academic Affairs will notify the Office of the Registrar (Grade Change Authorization Form) when the Grade Appeal Committee supports a change of grade.

Documentation

- ✓ Student's written appeal or Change of Grade petition form (available at <http://registrar.iupui.edu/grdfm.html>)
- ✓ Director of Academic Affairs Decision (second-level appeal)
- ✓ Grade Appeal Committee Decision (third-level appeal)
- ✓ Director of Academic Affairs Report of a Grade Change to the Office of the Registrar (Grade Change Authorization form)