

Undergraduate and Graduate Course Grade Appeal Policy

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I. Policy Statement

The University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) believes students have the right to receive a grade determined through a fair evaluation of their work using a method that is consistently applied and is not arbitrary. Students further have the right to be informed in writing of the grading methods and standards that will be applied to them. This notification should occur at the beginning of the semester, typically through the course syllabus, and at any time during the course in which the faculty member alters the grading standard/method. ULM further believes that the faculty member assigned to a course has the right to develop this method and standard for Determining a grade provided that they are professionally acceptable. ULM presumes that the course instructor's judgment of assignment grades is authoritative.

II. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to

- ensure that students are protected from receiving an unfair grade,
- preserve the academic responsibility and judgment of ULM's faculty members, and
- ensure that all individuals involved in the matter have an opportunity to present their side of the issue.

It is designed to provide a means for students to seek change when they feel their grade has been determined unfairly and for the professional judgment of faculty members to be protected. Thus,

1. **What may be appealed:** Only the final grade for the course may be appealed. Individual assignment grades are not subject to appeal since they are determined by the professional judgment of the faculty member.
2. **Basis for appeal:** Grade appeals must claim that the student was unfairly evaluated because (a) the course grading standards and/or methods were not followed as specified in the course syllabus, amended as announced by the faculty member, and/or (b) were not applied uniformly when compared to other students in the course. Appeals may not be expanded once they are initiated.
3. **Time frames:** Student appeals must be made to the course instructor within ten working days after the Registrar has posted grades for the course. Any subsequent appeals must be made within five working days from when the parties are notified of the decision. Under normal circumstances, if the party making the appeal fails to meet any deadline for appeal to the next level, the matter will be considered closed. Personnel hearing an appeal should strive to reach a decision within five working days of receiving all information related to the appeal.
4. **Materials to be submitted by the student when appealing beyond the faculty member:** Each grade appeal shall contain the following information:
 - a. **Dated letter of appeal** to include the student's name and identification number; semester in which the course was taught; course subject, number, and record number (CRN); faculty member's name; statement of the basis for appeal (see II.2); explanation to support the claim

m a d e in the appeal; and the grade believed deserved with an explanation of how the student determined the requested grade. The letter should be signed by the student.

b. **Supporting information** used by the student to corroborate the claim should be attached to the appeal letter and submitted along with it. The course syllabus must be included in this information.

5. **Materials to be submitted by the faculty member:** When an appeal proceeds beyond the faculty member, it shall contain the following information:

a. **Dated informational memorandum** to include the faculty member's name; semester in which the course was taught; course subject, number, record number (CRN), and syllabus; student's name and identification number; explanation of how the grade was determined; and any supplemental information that would be helpful in understanding the case. The memorandum should be initialed by the faculty member.

b. **Supporting information** used by the faculty member to corroborate the explanation should be attached to the informational memorandum and submitted along with it.

6. **Letter of notification:** The student or faculty member choosing to continue a grade appeal to the next level should write a letter to the administrator hearing that appeal. The letter should be dated, signed by

The person making the appeal, and express the desire to continue the appeal.

III. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to all students enrolled in ULM courses and to all faculty members teaching those courses.

IV. Definitions

Fair evaluation: Assignment of a course grade to a student using a method and standard known by the student and applied uniformly and without bias to all students in the course.

Grading method: The procedure by which the final course grade is determined for a student, including but not limited to the individual elements (i.e., assignments, examinations, papers, and other factors) whose value and relative weight are used to calculate a final course grade.

Grading standard: The set of expectations applied in determining the final course grade (i.e., grading scale).

Professionally acceptable: Adherence to the standards commonly used in higher education.

V. Policy Procedure

Step 1. Within ten working days after the Registrar has posted grades for the course, students considering a grade appeal should discuss their concerns with the course's faculty member and seek to resolve the matter at that level. It is hoped that most issues will be settled in this manner.

Step 2. If the issue is not resolved at Step 1 and the basis of the appeal is an unfair evaluation, the student may appeal to the next level by submitting the materials specified in II.4 as follows.

a. **College of Arts, Education, and Sciences or College of Business and Social Sciences:** Send the information to the faculty member's school director. The school director will provide this information to the faculty member and request the information in II.5 along with any comments that the faculty member wishes to make in response to the student's appeal. The information in II.5 will be provided to the student and the student will be allowed to respond. Responses may be submitted in writing or provided verbally if the school director chooses to meet with the student and/or the faculty member. After reviewing all information, the school director will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available.

b. **College of Health Sciences, Kitty Degree School of Nursing:** Send the information to the Director of the Kitty Degree School of Nursing. The school director will provide this information to the faculty member and request the information in II.5 along with any comments that the faculty member wishes to make in response to the student's appeal. The information in II.5 will be provided to the student and the student will be allowed to respond. Responses may be submitted in writing or provided verbally if the school director chooses to meet with the student and/or the faculty member. After reviewing all information, the school director will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available.

c. **College of Health Sciences, School of Allied Health:** Send the information to the faculty member's program director. The program director will provide this information to the faculty member and request the information in II.5 along with any comments that the faculty member wishes to make in response to the student's appeal. The information in II.5 will be provided to the student and the student will be allowed to respond. Responses may be submitted in writing or provided verbally if the program director chooses to meet with the student and/or the faculty member. After reviewing all information, the program director will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available. If either party chooses to continue the appeal, a notification letter should be sent to the school director. The school director will then request information previously submitted and a summary of the matter from the program director. After reviewing all information, the school director will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available.

d. **College of Pharmacy:** Send the information to the faculty member's school director. The school director will provide this information to the faculty member and request the information in II.5 along with any comments that the faculty member wishes to make in response to the student's appeal. The information in II.5 will be provided to the student and the student will be allowed to respond. Responses may be submitted in writing or provided verbally if the department head chooses to meet with the student and/or the faculty member. After reviewing all information, the department head will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available. If either party chooses to continue the appeal, a notification letter should be sent to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the College of Pharmacy. The Associate Dean will then request information previously submitted and a summary of the matter from the department head. After reviewing all information, the Associate Dean will notify each party of the decision and appeal options available.

Step 3. If the issue is not resolved at Step 2 and the basis of the appeal is an unfair evaluation, the student or the faculty member may appeal to the faculty member's college dean for undergraduate and graduate courses by submitting a notification letter. Appeals are not sent to the Director of the Graduate School. The dean will then request all information previously submitted and a summary of the matter from the previous reviewing administrator. The dean will form an ad hoc Faculty Committee for Grade Appeals to review all submitted information and provide advice on a decision. The Committee will consist of three full-time faculty members selected from the college, excluding individuals teaching in the course subject area, and will be chaired by the college's associate dean, a non-voting member of the committee. After discussions are concluded, all submitted information, a summary of the case, and a recommendation will be given to the dean. The dean will review this information, make a final decision on the appeal, and notify each party of the decision. No further appeals will be allowed and the case will be closed.

Note: If the faculty member of the course is one of the administrators involved in the review process, then the appeal information after Step 1 will be given to that administrator's supervisor. Further appeals will proceed from that point. If the faculty member is a dean, appeals will be made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

VI. Enforcement

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for the enforcement of this policy.

VII. Policy Management

The Vice President for Academic Affairs will be the Responsible Executive for the management of this Policy. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee will be the Responsible Officer in charge of maintaining and disseminating it. The University Policy Coordinator will post this Policy on the Official University Policy Website.

VIII. Exclusions

N/A

IX. Effective Date

Policy will be in effect with the 2017 Spring Semester (January 9, 2017).

X. Adoption

This policy is hereby adopted on this 22nd day of September, 2016.

XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials

N/A

XII. Revision History

Original adoption date: September 22, 2016.