

## Faculty of Human and Social Development

### Procedures for Review of Assigned Grades or Grading Process

#### Undergraduate Students

These procedures are for two forms of appeal:

- Appeals regarding a grade for all or part of a course, and which are based solely on academic judgment.
- Appeals concerning the process by which a grade is determined, rather than the grade itself.

The difference is crucial, as only in the second case may an appeal eventually be placed before Senate Committee on Appeals.

1. Undergraduate students wishing clarification about, or are dissatisfied with, an assigned grade or the process by which a grade was calculated, for either a whole course or a portion of it, should first discuss their concerns with the course instructor. Alternately, they may submit a written statement to the instructor clearly stating why the grade does not reflect the academic quality of the work, or the reason(s) for dissatisfaction with the process by which the grade was calculated. Students make their request to the instructor usually within 10 business days of receiving the grade for the portion of the course or the process used that is in question. The review will typically be completed within 21 business days of the start of the student-instructor discussion. If the instructor agrees to change a grade before the final course grades have been submitted no further action is required.

If the instructor agrees to change a grade after the course grades have been submitted the instructor will complete a grade change form and submit it for approval to the Director and the Faculty of Human and Social Development (HSD) Associate Dean Academic.

2. If the instructor's review confirms the original grade and the undergraduate student remains dissatisfied, or if the instructor is not available, the student should appeal to the Director of the school in writing, stating clearly the reason for the Director to review the instructor's decision and the grade or grading process. The appeal to the Director should take place usually within 14 days of the student receiving the instructor's decision. If the Director and the course instructor are the same, the Director will designate a senior tenured faculty member to handle all further aspects of the appeal and review the assigned grade.

3. In a grade or grading process review, if the Director or designate believes the grounds to be reasonable, the Director will initiate a grade review using the procedures below, (4.1-4.8). If the Director does not agree with the need for a grade review:

3.1 An undergraduate student may submit a formal request for a grade review to Undergraduate Records and Graduation Services, including the grade review fee of \$25, normally within 21 days of the release of grades, as set out in the Calendar under Undergraduate Programs and Review of an Assigned Grade.

3.1.a Students must keep all written work returned to them by the instructor during the term and make any work available that forms part of the grade to be reviewed. The Office of the Registrar will make available completed final examinations when necessary.

3.1.b The Office of the Registrar will send all materials involved in the grade review to the Director, who will arrange an independent evaluation of the grade as outlined in this document.

4. In a review of a grade for an undergraduate student the following procedures are used:

4.1 The Director informs via email the student requesting a grade review of the university policy, found in the academic calendar, that the grade determined by the review will be recorded as the official grade regardless of whether it is the same, higher than or lower than the original grade. The student must send a confirmation email to the School Director, within 5 business days of receiving notification, their understanding of this university policy before the grade review proceeds.

4.2 The Director will appoint a second instructor (who was not involved in team teaching and preferably an experienced faculty member who has recently taught the course or one closely related to it) to review the work in question.

4.3 The original instructor shall provide to the Director:

- (a) the course syllabus,
- (b) a description of the assignment(s) in question, if not included in the course syllabus,
- (c) unmarked copies of the work submitted for the grade in question,
- (d) an explicit statement on how grades were determined and what assessment techniques were used in the course,
- (e) explicit criteria, scoring keys, or a marking guide for evaluating the components of the grade, and
- (f) if available and the assignment is a paper, a representative sample of other graded papers from the course.

4.4 The reviewer will read unmarked copies of all work submitted for the grade in question. Students do not have the option to rewrite, edit, or in any other way change their papers prior to the review process.

4.5 The reviewer will receive copies of the items detailed in 4.3 and 4.4. The reviewer will evaluate the assignment without knowledge of the original mark and without consultation with the course instructor.

4.6 To minimize risk of bias, the student's name and number will not be identified to reviewer and the reviewer's name will not be identified to the student.

4.7 The reviewer will submit to the Director, or designee, an independent evaluation of the grade normally within two weeks of receiving the material.

4.8 If the evaluation is different from that of the initial instructor, then the Director may consult with both instructors and/or seek further opinion before awarding the final grade. The revised

grade, regardless of whether it is the same, higher than or lower than the original grade becomes the official grade.

**Procedure to follow in the case of students' dissatisfaction with and appeal of the process of grading, rather than the grade itself.**

5. Students wishing to appeal the process of grading, not the grade itself, should first discuss their concern with the instructor. At this stage, the student and instructor are free to decide how the problem may be resolved.

6. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written appeal to the school Director (or designate if the Director is the instructor of the course in question). The appeal must clearly state the procedural grounds for believing that a process has been violated, ignored, or applied improperly. This request for a process appeal should be made within 21 days of the alleged violation or of the completion of the course.

7. If the Director or designate, in consultation with the student and instructor, cannot resolve the issue, then the appeal shall be forwarded to the Associate Dean, Academic.

8. Appeal processes beyond the level of the School:

8.1 An undergraduate student dissatisfied with the Director's decision may request a review of the grading process to the HSD Associate Dean Academic within two weeks of receiving the Director's decision. The Associate Dean's review will attend to fair implementation of academic policies and procedures. The Associate Dean will not consider an appeal where the sole question in a student's appeal is a matter of academic judgment (academic merit of the assigned work). The outcome of the Associate Dean's review will include a confirmation of the existing grade or a grade change. The Associate Dean's decision will be recorded as the final grade, irrespective of whether it is the same, higher than, or lower than the grade given by the Director.

8.2 The final level of appeal for undergraduate grades is the Senate Committee on Appeals (see Senate Committee on Appeals Procedural Guidelines – Office of the University Secretary).

**Materials students submit to the Associate Dean for review:**

- Reason for the appeal (e.g. on what basis does the student believe there has been unfair implementation of academic policies and procedures at the school's level)
- A timeline including a sequence of events and a list of key documents
- Any supporting documentation relevant to the appeal (e.g. course syllabus/requirements, course evaluation components/feedback, emails & correspondence between the instructor and student)
- A copy of the final decision being appealed
- A statement of the outcome being sought