

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FINAL COURSE GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE

Faculty members at Tidewater Community College are responsible for assigning course grades and for advising students of the objective criteria on which those grades are assigned. As such, most student disagreements regarding course grades are best resolved informally between the student and faculty member.

The Final Course Grade Appeal Procedure provides a fair and orderly process for students who wish to pursue a formal appeal of their final course grade. In taking such action, students shall assume the burden of proof concerning any perceived error in the grade assigned. Further, they shall follow the sequence of steps outlined in this procedure with the presumption that, as a matter of rule, instructors do not assign arbitrary and capricious course grades.

Step One

Students are encouraged to resolve final course grade disagreements with their instructors on an informal basis. Should the dispute not be resolved at this level, the student may proceed to Step Two.

Step Two

The student shall submit a written appeal to the academic dean¹ under whose division the course was offered not later than ten (10) working days after the first day of classes for the next academic term. Within five (5) working days of receiving the written appeal, the academic dean shall hold a conference with the student and instructor to consider the grade appeal. The dean shall provide a written report of his/her findings to both parties within five (5) working days of the conference. For the record, a copy of the report shall be kept on file in the division office.

Should the student wish to advance his/her appeal to the next level, he/she may submit a written appeal to the campus provost within five (5) working days of receipt of the dean's report.

Step Three

Within five (5) working days of receiving the student's written appeal of the Step Two findings, the campus provost shall appoint a Grade Appeal Committee to consider the appeal. The committee shall consist of three (3) teaching faculty members and two (2) students who are not directly involved in the case. The provost shall notify the student, instructor, and academic dean of this action.

¹ At the Visual Arts Center, the director functions as the academic dean.

Within five (5) working days of its appointment, the Grade Appeal Committee shall hold at least one face-to-face meeting with the student and instructor. The committee shall conclude its deliberations within a reasonable time period, submitting a written report of its findings to the provost within five (5) working days of the conclusion of its review. Based on this report, and within five (5) working days of receiving the committee's report, the provost shall render a written decision on the student's appeal. The decision shall be shared with the student, faculty member, and dean, as well as with the Grade Appeal Committee.

Should the student wish to advance his/her appeal to the next level, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs within five (5) working days of receipt of the provost's written decision.

Step Four

At Step Four, the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall consider the student's final course grade appeal only within the context of assuring that the decision as rendered by the provost was supported by the evidence presented and, as such, was neither arbitrary nor capricious. The vice president shall issue his/her written ruling, sharing it with the student, faculty member, and provost within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal. The ruling shall be considered final.

Time Limitations

The time limitations specified for the Final Course Grade Appeal Procedure are binding on all parties involved, unless they are extended by written mutual agreement.

Authorization: Michael D. Summers
Title: Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
Date: February 1, 2008
Effective Date: March 1, 2008