

Grade Appeals

The grade appeals policy applies to all students enrolled at Purdue University Fort Wayne. It can be used by any student who has evidence or believes that evidence exists to show that a course grade was assigned or a similar evaluation was made as a result of prejudice, caprice, or other improper condition such as mechanical error. In appealing, the student must support in writing the allegation that an improper decision has been made and must specify the remedy sought. The student should seek the assistance of the dean of students in pursuing the appeal. During an appeal, the burden of proof is on the student, except in the case of alleged academic dishonesty, where the instructor must support the allegation. The student may have an advisor or friend present during all meetings with faculty members, administrators, and/or committees; he or she may advise the student but may not speak for the student during the meetings. Grades may be changed only by a university authority upon the decision of the grade appeals subcommittee or by the instructor any time prior to the decision of the grade appeals subcommittee.

Steps in the Process of a Grade Appeal

Step 1. Course instructor: The student makes an appointment with his or her instructor to discuss the matter. If the instructor is unavailable, the department or program chair shall authorize an extension of time or allow the student to proceed to Step 2. If the chair is unavailable, the dean of the college or school shall authorize the extension.

Step 2. College/school/department/program: If the matter has not been resolved at Step 1, the student makes an appointment with the chair of the department or program offering the course, who may make an informal attempt to resolve the appeal. If the appeal is not resolved informally, the chair will direct the student procedurally in making an appeal to the college, school, department, or program committee. Only one committee shall hear the appeal in Step 2. The student filing an appeal shall have the opportunity to be heard in person by the committee.

Step 3. Grade appeals subcommittee: If the matter has not been resolved at Step 2, the student makes an appointment with the dean of students, who will direct the student procedurally in submitting the case to the grade appeals subcommittee.

A. Definitions

A Grievance shall be defined here as a complaint, for which a remedy is sought, falling under one or more of the following categories:

1. An allegation of a deviation from established standards in grading or evaluation. Student must be able to document case. Opinions or feelings of being treated unfairly are not sufficient.
2. An allegation of a breach, or improper application, of the implicit contract between a faculty member and the aggrieved student.

B. Initiation

Initiation of grievance procedures may be made by any full or part-time student, graduate, or undergraduate. Students may not appeal simply because they believe they should have had a higher grade, or the instructor was too difficult or unreasonable, as long as the same standard was applied to everyone in the class.

Appeal deadlines

An appeal must be initiated no later than the fourth week of the fall or spring semester immediately following the session in which the grade was assigned. A final decision at each step must be reported within 30 calendar days of the filing of an appeal at that step, provided that this deadline falls within the regular academic year (fall or spring semester). If the deadline falls during the summer, the decision must be reported within 30 calendar days of the start of the fall semester. Each successive step in the appeals procedure must be initiated within three calendar weeks of the completion of the prior step.

C. Department of Civil and Mechanical Engineering Procedure

1. Any perceived grievance should be first discussed informally between the parties.
2. If this discussion does not resolve the situation, the perceived grievance should be discussed informally between the department chair and the parties to the grievance.
3. If this discussion does not resolve the situation, the student should fill in a departmental Academic Grievance Form obtainable from the Civil & Mechanical Engineering department office, and return with it to the instructor, once more attempting to resolve the grievance by discussion. If such resolution is accomplished, the form should be so noted and signed by the parties. If no resolution is obtained, both parties should sign the form to so indicate, and the student should return the form together with a copy of his/her schedule, the Civil & Mechanical Engineering department office.
4. Following receipt of such a form in the department office, a grievance committee of three or more will be appointed, by the department chair, from the Civil & Mechanical Engineering faculty. The

committee must include any one member of that faculty who has been requested by either party to the grievance, except that the committee must not include a party to the grievance.

5. The department grievance committee shall meet within five class days of the receipt of the form in the Civil & Mechanical Engineering department office, elect a member of the committee to act as chair, and set a date or dates for meetings, including those with the student and/or the instructor to discuss the grievance. The chair shall be responsible for conducting these meetings.

6. Within the guidelines of this document, the committee shall establish and/or modify its procedures as deemed necessary and appropriate.

7. Within five (5) class days after the completion of these discussions, the committee shall provide the opportunity for the student filing an appeal to be heard in person.

8. Within five (5) class days, after hearing the details of a case from the student, the committee shall decide either to hold a formal hearing on the grievance, or take no action on the grievance. The committee's decision shall be communicated, in writing, to both parties of the grievance.

9. At any time prior to the beginning of a formal hearing, the aggrieved party may withdraw the grievance at his own discretion. Once the formal hearing has begun, the grievance may be withdrawn only by mutual consent of the parties to the grievance, and of the committee.

10. The committee shall initiate formal hearings within five (5) class days, and shall hold hearings until a decision has been reached.

11. Each formal hearing conducted by the committee shall be heard by all members of the committee.

12. At a formal hearing, the aggrieved party presents the grievance and may have an advisor or friend present during all meetings. The advisor or friend may advise the student but may not speak for the student during the hearing. The parties to the grievance may present statements and interrogate each other, and may interrogate witnesses to the dispute. The parties to the dispute shall be afforded access (with sufficient time for response) to any document or other evidence reviewed or considered in any grievance procedure pertaining to the case.

13. To maintain confidentiality of student records, taping of hearings by the Grievance Committee and the parties involved in the grievance shall not be permitted.

14. All hearings shall be open, except that they shall be closed at any time upon the request of the aggrieved party, or of a majority of the hearing panel. The closing of a hearing shall not prevent the panel and the parties to the dispute from calling witnesses.

15. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the committee shall be presented to the parties to the dispute, in writing within 30 calendar days of the appointment of the grievance committee. The committee shall request that the parties to the dispute respond to such recommendations within ten (10) days. With the submission of the recommendations to both parties, the case is closed at the departmental level.

16. If the student has followed all of the above steps without resolving his/her appeal, believes he/she has grounds for further appeal, student should contact the Dean of Students for guidance in preparing an appeal to the Grade Appeals Subcommittee.

Revised on January 20, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL & MECHANICAL ENGINEERING: Academic Grievance Form (Part A & B to be filled in by student)

Part A

Name of Student _____

Name of Instructor _____ Course No. _____ Semester _____

Nature of Grievance

Remedy Sought

Was solution of grievance reached between the parties by discussion? YES/NO (circle one, delete other.)

Date of meeting_____

This certifies that step one of the grade appeals procedure has been carries out.

Student:_____

Instructor:_____

Was the perceived grievance discussed between the department chair and the student?

Date of meeting_____

This certifies that step two of the grade appeals procedure has been carried out.

Student:_____

Chair:_____

Part B

The student should take this signed form to the Department of Civil & Mechanical Engineering office. If the above question is answered NO, the student should attach a complete listing of the times he will not be available for a hearing to the form.

Name of Civil & Mechanical Engineering faculty member requested by student to serve on Grievance Committee.

Date of Receipt in Civil & Mechanical Engineering office: _____ (to be entered by Civil & Mechanical Engineering department administrative assistant)

Action by Chair: Names of faculty appointed to Grievance Committee; with name of person responsible for calling first meeting underlined (copies of the form should be supplied to all named).

Action by Grievance Committee

Name of chair of committee _____

Decision following discussion of grievance with student and faculty (circle one)

a. To hold formal hearing(s)

b. To take no action