

**Creighton University College of Professional Studies  
Policies and Procedures**

<b>POLICY:</b>	<b>ISSUED:</b>	<b>REV.</b>	<b>REV.</b>
<b>Grade Appeals Policy</b>	3/27/2015		
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**Grade Appeals Policy**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to identify the conditions under which a student may appeal a final grade assigned for a specific course. Procedures for conducting a grade appeal are found in the policy appendix.

**Policy:**

Students have the right to appeal a final course grade they believe to have been assigned in an arbitrary or capricious or incorrect manner. Grade appeals may be filed only for courses in which a grade of C or lower was assigned. Grade appeals must follow the process described in the appendix of this policy.

The instructor has jurisdiction in determining and assigning grades earned by students at the end of each term in which a course is offered. The criteria and mechanisms for performance evaluation shall be published in the course syllabus and communicated to students at the beginning of the course. When assigning course grades, Instructor(s) of Record will evaluate student performance in a manner that is fair, unbiased, and consistent with those previously published criteria and mechanisms.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all courses offered through the College of Professional Studies.

**Definitions:** For the purpose of this policy, "arbitrary or capricious" is defined as "the assignment of a final course grade through means that are erratic, irregular, or inconsistent with grading policies published in the course syllabus and/or inexplicably different from those applied to other students enrolled in the same course." "Incorrect" implies a mistake was made in computing or entering the final grade.

**Appendix: Grade Appeal Process**

The grade appeal process for students enrolled in courses offered through the College of Professional Studies involves the following steps (the issue may be resolved at any level):

1. The student confers with the instructor(s) involved, outlining the basis for dissatisfaction with the assigned grade in an attempt to come to resolution in the absence of third parties. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor(s) to initiate this step. If the student disputing a course grade is unable to attend a face-to-face meeting, the required conversation with the instructor(s) may be held via phone, web conferencing, or other mutually agreed upon synchronous electronic communication.
  - a) Timeline – semester courses: The student must contact the instructor no later than 4:30 PM on the Friday of the second week of the start of the next semester.

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- b) Timeline – 7/8 week terms: The student must contact the instructor no later than 4:30 PM on the Friday of the first week of the start of the next term.

If at any point in this process, the instructor(s) agree(s) with the student and elects to alter the original grade issued, the process is terminated and the issue is considered closed. Likewise, if the student becomes convinced at any point in the process that the original grade was appropriate and correct, the process is terminated and the issue is considered closed. [If the dispute is unable to be resolved, the process proceeds to Step 2.]

2. The student and instructor(s) (preferably together) confer with the program director. If the instructor is the program director, the appeals process proceeds to Step 3. The program director’s role is to host the meeting and facilitate professional and productive communication between parties. If the student disputing a course grade is unable to attend a face-to-face meeting, the required conversation with the instructor(s) and program director may be held via phone, web conferencing, or other mutually agreed upon synchronous electronic communication.
  - a) Timeline – semester courses: The meeting with the program director must occur no later than 4:30 PM on the Friday of the fourth week of the start of the next semester.
  - b) Timeline – 7/8 week terms: The meeting with the program director must occur no later than 4:30 PM on the Friday of the second week of the start of the next term.

At no time should the program director assume the role of decision-maker in the grade dispute. The student may request the presence of his/her academic advisor during this meeting. The academic advisor/student navigator, if present, may counsel his/her advisee but should not take an active role in the discussion.

If, at any time during this step of the process, the instructor(s) agree(s) with the student and elects to alter the original grade, or if the student becomes convinced that the original grade was appropriate and correct, the process is terminated and the issue is considered closed.

The program director summarizes the outcome of the meeting in a memo and provides a copy of the memo to the instructor(s) of record, the student, the student’s advisor, and to the student’s academic file through the Dean of the College of Professional Studies within 5 working days of the meeting.

3. If resolution of the issue cannot be attained through Steps 1 and 2 outlined above, the student may initiate a grade appeal to the College of Professional Studies Dean. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean’s office no later than 10 working days after the date of the meeting held in Step 2.

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- a) Failure of the student to adhere to the timeline described above will result in forfeiture of all rights to appeal the grade in question. The student may appeal to the Dean for an extension of the timeline in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- b) Failure to review grades posted online by the Registrar's Office at the end of the semester or term will not be viewed as a reason to suspend any of the timelines set forth in this policy. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the Registrar's Office has the address to which official correspondence should be sent so that it is received by the student in a timely manner.
- c) The student's written appeal must include:
  - A description of the specific grounds for the appeal
  - A description of the arbitrary or capricious or incorrect manner in which the grade was assigned to the student
  - Documentation to support the appeal

The Dean's office will forward the appeal documents to the instructor(s) of record, the program director, and the Adult Learning Council Student Issues Subcommittee within 3 working days of receipt.

4. The student appealing a grade has the right to attend classes and exercise the privileges of all other students pending the outcome of the appeal, except in cases where the physical or emotional welfare of the student or of others is at risk, or the safety of persons or property is at risk. The Dean will determine a student's right to attend class during the appeals process.
5. The Adult Learning Council Student Issues Subcommittee adjudicates grade appeals.

The Adult Learning Council Student Issues Subcommittee shall secure the course syllabus and request from the instructor(s) of record his/her written response to the appeal. The Subcommittee shall also request from the instructor(s) of record any additional written information on grading policy previously communicated to the class, or other data pertinent to the appeal.

Within two weeks of receiving the grade appeal documents from the Dean's office, the Subcommittee shall review the all documentation related to the appeal, including the student's academic file and transcript and schedule a hearing. All written documentation reviewed by the Subcommittee will be shared with the student and instructor(s).

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6. The Subcommittee shall convene a hearing with 10 working days of notification provided as described in the previous step. Subcommittee members who have an actual or perceived conflict of interest in the case will not be allowed to attend the hearing or to vote on the outcome.
  - a) The Subcommittee may choose to interview the principals as well as other faculty and students who may provide insight and/or have direct knowledge about the events of the case.
  - b) The student will be asked to make a brief statement to the Subcommittee. The statement should contain any additional pertinent information that might not be addressed in written materials, information that the student feels the Subcommittee should hear. Written notes to which the student can refer while speaking are permissible. For face-to-face hearings, given the nature of the proceeding, the student should appear before the Subcommittee appropriately professionally dressed. The student has the right to the assistance of an advisor, from within the University community, at the hearing. The advisor may not be an attorney. Obtaining an advisor is the student's responsibility. The advisor may attend the interview but may not take an active role in the discussion. No other individual will be allowed to sit in on an interview unless permission is granted by the Dean.
  - c) The specific charge to the Subcommittee regarding a grade appeal is to assess whether the mechanisms utilized by the instructor(s) of record to determine the grade in question were applied consistently and fairly to all students enrolled in the course, and, if not, to identify specifically which evaluation mechanisms were arbitrarily, capriciously or incorrectly applied. The Board will not attempt to determine the grade to be received by the student.
  - d) The Subcommittee decision will be reached by simple majority vote.
  - e) The Dean will communicate the final decision to the student, the instructor(s) in question, and the program chair.
7. The Dean vests full authority for the adjudication of grade appeals in the Subcommittee, and will not serve as a source for further appeal or decision review unless requested to do so by the Provost or the President of the University.