

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS ABOUT GRADE APPEALS

Should I file a grade appeal?

- Course grades assigned by instructors are presumed to be correct. If you appeal an assigned grade, you must demonstrate clerical error, prejudice, or capriciousness in the assignment of the grade.
- You should first seek to resolve the matter informally with the instructor. Sometimes the problem is just a mix-up of names, or a miscalculation. These errors can be corrected quickly if you bring them to the instructor's attention without assessing any blame.
- You should not appeal a grade because the final was very difficult or because most of the students in the class were given failing grades (or because most of the students were given "A" grades). You should not appeal because the instructor refused to discuss the homework or avoided answering questions in class or during office hours. You may wish to share these concerns with the department chair, but they are not grounds for appealing your grade.
- You should not appeal a grade because the instructor did not give partial credit, did not grade on a curve, did not allow calculators, did not distribute a review sheet, etc. These all relate to the instructor's style of teaching. If the instructor outlined his procedure on the course syllabus and/or applied it equally to all students, a grade appeal will not be successful.
- You should file a grade appeal if you can demonstrate that the grade reported by the instructor does not reflect the quality of evaluated work that you submitted in class.
- You should file a grade appeal if you can demonstrate that you were evaluated in a different manner than other students without good cause.

How does the process work?

- You, as well as any faculty, staff, or administrators involved in a grade appeal, have an obligation to make every effort to resolve the differences fairly and informally and to negotiate in good faith towards a mutually agreeable resolution of the problem.
- You should start the grade appeal as soon as possible after the grade is reported. If it is necessary for you to file a formal grade appeal, you will need to do so before the end of the quarter following the quarter for which the grade was assigned. (If the grade is assigned in the spring quarter, you must file the formal grade appeal prior to the end of the following fall quarter.)
- You should keep a written record of phone contacts, email messages and meetings with university personnel to document your actions with respect to the appeal process.
- If you cannot resolve your grade dispute with the instructor, you should first try to informally resolve the matter with an individual at the next level. In most cases this will be the chair of the department in which the course was offered. If the chair was the instructor, meet with the dean of the college in which the course was offered. If the dean was the instructor, meet with the Provost.
- At this point, if the dispute has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a formal grade appeal. Again, a formal grade appeal must be filed before the end of the quarter following the quarter for which the grade was assigned. Note that the process of a formal grade appeal might take six to eight weeks.

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The Chair of the University Course Grade Appeals Committee will forward your appeal to the instructor. The instructor will be required to respond in writing. The entire committee will then review your statement and the instructor's response. The committee will make a recommendation, and you will be notified in writing.

What is a formal grade appeal?

A formal grade appeal is a file submitted to the University Course Grade Appeals Committee, through the Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Success. The file should include:

- Your name, Bronco ID number, address, phone, and Cal Poly Pomona email address.
- The course number and title, the instructor's name, the quarter taken, the grade received, and the grade expected.
- A statement that provides a clear explanation of the error, prejudice, or capriciousness that occurred.
- Documentation that supports your explanation, such as a course syllabus or copies of assignments and exams.

Any advice on preparing a formal grade appeal?

- Keep your statement simple. State what happened without adding your opinions. Be as specific as possible. For example, "He said on Friday, May 13, during his office hours that female students should not take music" is better than "I don't think he likes female students."
- Avoid inflammatory remarks, such as, "This instructor should never teach again!"
- Do not just submit all the notes and assignments you completed for the class. Submit only work that supports your appeal. Your statement should explain how to interpret the documentation that you do include. It is helpful to the committee for you to include explanations such as, "The first midterm, dated May 13, 2004, demonstrates that the instructor did not follow the grading scheme outlined on the syllabus."

Where can I get more information?

- CSU Executive Order 1037 establishes minimum standards for campuses governing the assignment of grades by faculty and for provisions for appeal to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are properly recognized and protected. You can read it at <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/eo-1037.html>.
- The policies and procedures for grade appeals are in the catalog and on the web at http://catalog.cpp.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=769&hl=%22grade+appeal%22&returno=search#Grade_Appeals_Policy_and_Procedure
- Questions about University policy should be referred to the Associate Vice President, Office of Student Success (98-T7-16).

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