

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
University of Missouri – Kansas City
Grade Appeal Procedure

The grade appeal procedure in the School of Biological Sciences is designed to assure students an orderly process for appeal and review of allegedly capricious grades and to assure instructors of their essential function of evaluation of student performance. Students, of course, are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

The School grade appeal procedure is available only for review of allegedly capricious grading and not for review of the judgment of instructors in assessing the quality of student's work. This appeal procedure must be initiated within six weeks after the start of the next regular semester.

Capricious grading, as that term is used here, consists only of the following:

- I. the assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than the performance in the course;
- II. the assignment of a grade to a particular student by resort to more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the same course. (Note: This does not preclude instructors from setting more demanding standards for those taking undergraduate level courses for graduate credit.);
- III. the assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.

In general, students are encouraged to discuss any academic matter informally with their instructors, course coordinators, or with the Division Director. If the instructor is a Division Director, the student should discuss matters with the Associate Dean of the School.

The following procedure should be used only when the student believes his course grade was capriciously assigned and the results of informal consultation are unsatisfactory:

Step 1: Students should discuss a course grade which they consider capricious first with the instructor of the course. If anyone other than that instructor is first approached, the student should be referred to that instructor. If the issue is not resolved for the student at this stage, then the course coordinator should be consulted if a team taught course is involved. IF the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at this stage, or if the appeal does not involve a team taught course, the student should be referred to the Director of the division responsible for the course. If a grade appeal is made against a Division Director, another Division Director will handle the appeal with the assistance of a faculty committee.

Step 2: If the matter cannot be resolved by consultation with the instructor/course coordinator, the student should confer with the appropriate Director (head of Division or Chair of the Appeals

Committee) and present in writing all facts and allegations on which the student is prepared to rely thereafter (only matters related to capricious grading will be considered by the appeals committee). In turn, the instructor/course coordinator should prepare a written explanation of the disputed grade for the Director.

Step 3: If the Division has a standing student appeal or grievance committee, that committee will consider the student's case. If the Division has no such standing committee, the Director may establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose. The committee will use its discretion based on the nature of the case as to whether personal interviews with the instructor and student are needed; however, if only one part is interviewed, the other also must be interviewed. The committee may recommend:

- a. that the grade stand;
- b. that the instructor re-evaluate the evidence; or,
- c. other remedies, which, under the circumstances of the particular case, seem more likely to produce an equitable resolution.

Committee recommendations, along with copies of the written material provided by the instructor and student will be presented to the appropriate Division Director. He or she will then communicate the recommendation to both the student and the instructor. If the recommendation is either B or C above, and the instructor/course coordinator declines to comply with the recommendation, the Director may recommend to the Dean of the School that the Registrar be asked to alter the course grade on the student's permanent record. In this case, the instructor/course coordinator will be advised of his right to appeal to the Dean.

Step 4: If the result of the Divisional review is a recommendation that the original grade stand, the student may appeal in writing (providing the original and any other additional information the student deems appropriate) to the Dean of the School. On the other hand, if the result of the Divisional review is that the original grade not stand, the instructor/course coordinator may appeal to the Dena. The Dean may:

- a. accept the results of the Divisional review and confirm that the grade be allowed to stand;
- b. ask the Division to reconsider the case citing errors, inconsistencies, omissions, etc., which may have influenced the divisional recommendations; or,
- c. take personal responsibility as academic head of the School for asking the Registrar to alter the course grade on the student's permanent record.

The decision of the Dean will be communicated in writing to the student, the instructor, and the Division Director.

Step 5: If the result of the Dean's review is that the original grade stand, the student may appeal to the Provost. An appeal to the Provost must be made in writing within ten days of notification of the Dean's decision. The decision of the Provost will serve as the final step in the appeal process.

ALL APPEALS TO THE DEAN, EITHER BY STUDENT, INSTRUCTOR, OR DIVISION DIRECTOR, AS WELL AS THE DEAN'S DECISION, MAY BE HANDLED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATE DEAN'S OFFICE.

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