



Kutztown University Policy ACA-047

Grade Appeal

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for redress of grievance between a student and faculty member concerning a final grade in a course taken at Kutztown University.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all students.

C. Key words and phrases:

GAB – stands for Grade Appeal Board

AAUP– American Association of University Professors

D. Policy & Procedure(s)

I. Introduction

A. Overview

This Grade Appeal Policy provides a process for redress of a grievance between a student and a faculty member concerning a final grade in a course taken at Kutztown University. The policy addresses issues of academic fairness related to grade substantiation. It does not deal with matters involving behavioral conduct. The Grade Appeal Board (GAB) hears cases germane to final course grades, and not to grades on individual tests or assignments. No grade where a penalty for academic honesty has been assessed can be appealed under the University's Grade Appeal Policy; however, a student who is found not responsible for violating the Academic Honesty Policy, but who nevertheless feels that he or she has been penalized for it, can appeal the grade separately under the University's Grade Appeal Policy.

Two important points to be kept in mind concerning the application of this policy are: (1) all uses of the word "grade" in this policy refer to the *final* grade in a course; (2) the GAB may consider approving changes only to P (pass) or W (withdraw). Any requests for changes to specific letter grades, for example, a change from a D to a C, would not be considered by the GAB.

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All grade change appeals shall be initiated in a timely fashion. If a grade change appeal is not resolved during the preliminary steps of this procedure, and the student wishes to pursue this further, the student may file a Grade Appeal Petition (see Section II.C.). This petition must be filed no later than the end of the ninth week of the next regular semester following the semester when the grade being appealed was given.

The GAB shall have the authority to make exceptions to delay or modify timelines set forth in the policy based on extenuating, verifiable, medical, and/or personal or family emergencies of the student requesting the appeal.

B. Composition and Procedures of the Board

At the beginning of each academic year there will be established a GAB. This board will consist of five tenured faculty members elected through the Senate Office -- one from each of the colleges of the University and one at-large -- and up to two student representatives. The board will elect its own chairperson, who must be a faculty member, will engage in periodic review and revision of policy, and will set its own operating procedures (within the guidelines stated in this document). A copy of the GAB policy and procedures adopted will be submitted to the Academic Standards and Policies Committee for review, and to the University Senate and Representative Council for approval. These approved policies and procedures will then be taken to Administrative Council for approval. Approved policy and procedures will be posted in the Policy Register (www.kutztown.edu/admin/AdminServ/policy/alpha.aspx) and cited in *The Key*, and will remain in force until revised or replaced by a subsequent document.

All five faculty members of the board shall be voting members, including the chair. All members of the committee will recuse themselves from involvement in any case where prior personal contact with a party might create potential bias. In this event, the GAB chair shall assign a substitute. A quorum must be reached to hold a vote on a case. At least three (3) favorable votes must be received at the consideration stage for a hearing to be called. At least four (4) favorable votes must be received for the GAB to recommend an administrative change of grade.

The GAB should be so constituted that at least two (2) faculty members will continue serving from one year to the next.

II. Grade Change Appeal Conditions and Procedures

A. Preliminary Steps

In both the preliminary steps outlined here and in the step involving the GAB, the only issue under consideration will be whether or not the student can present evidence that his or her final grade reflects unsubstantiated academic evaluation by the faculty member. In pursuing a grade appeal, the student will proceed as follows:

1. The student shall first discuss the matter with the faculty member directly involved in an attempt to resolve the matter.

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2. If there is no resolution with the faculty member, the student must next discuss the matter with the chairperson of the faculty member's department, or, if the department chairperson is the person who gave the grade, with the dean of the respective college, who shall attempt to resolve the matter after consideration of the evidence.
3. If there is no resolution through the department chairperson, the student must then discuss the matter with the dean of the respective college, who shall attempt to resolve the matter after consideration of the evidence.

B. Possible Grade Change Actions

During the preliminary steps (II.A.), a grade change can be made through regular University channels that permit faculty to change a grade.

Even after the appeal has reached the GAB, if the faculty member decides that a grade change is in order, the faculty member may affect said change through the usual University channels. At this point, the student may choose to withdraw or continue the appeal.

The student may withdraw a grade appeal petition at any time by notifying the chairperson of the GAB in writing. The chairperson of the board will then notify all parties involved.

C. Filing a Grade Appeal Petition

If no resolution has been reached with the faculty member through the mediation of the department chairperson or the college dean, the student shall complete a Grade Appeal Petition. The GAB petition can be obtained from the Registrar's Office, and once completed, should be submitted to the Registrar's Office no later than the last day of the ninth (9th) week of the regular semester following the assignment of the grade under appeal. The Registrar will forward the petition to the chairperson of the GAB within three (3) class days of receipt during a regular semester.

Grade Appeal Petitions shall contain:

1. The names of the student and the faculty member involved in the appeal.
2. Signatures from those contacted in the student's attempts to resolve the issue (see Section II.A), and a signed statement from the appropriate college dean that the conflict remains unresolved (a faculty member's refusal to sign the petition shall not constitute grounds to dismiss an appeal).
3. A clear, concise and signed statement describing the grounds for the appeal.
4. A statement of the pass or withdrawal resolution requested, and a rationale for that outcome.

The GAB chairperson shall notify concerned parties (Student, Faculty, Chair, Dean, GAB Members; Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs) of the filed appeal and shall

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schedule a closed-session consideration of the appeal within ten (10) days of receiving it. The GAB chairperson's notification shall request that the student and faculty member submit a statement and any other documents no fewer than three (3) days prior to the consideration. The GAB will *not* conduct formal hearings of complaints that it deems unsubstantiated in the initial consideration.

At least three (3) favorable votes must be cast at a consideration for a hearing to be called. If the GAB concludes that there is insufficient evidence to warrant a formal hearing, it will deny the appeal, and the GAB chairperson will notify all parties of this decision.

D. Notifications

If a hearing is deemed necessary, the GAB chairperson shall notify the student and the faculty member of its time and location within three (3) class days after the consideration. The hearing shall be scheduled within ten (10) class days of the board's affirmation that a hearing is warranted, unless circumstances warrant otherwise. In the event of a hearing, the GAB chairperson shall:

1. Provide the student and the faculty member with a copy of the GAB rules and procedures for the hearing process.
2. Notify the faculty member, department chairperson, and dean that each may submit a written statement outlining issues of the case, and make requests for specific information from parties as directed by the board.
3. Provide the student and faculty member with no fewer than ten (10) days to submit all statements and materials of grade substantiation.
4. Provide GAB members with copies of submitted statements and materials no fewer than three (3) class days prior to the hearing.

III. Hearing Process

The following hearing procedures should be followed by the GAB:

A. The student and the faculty member have the right to be present during the information-gathering portion of any hearing, and both will be notified of their right to present their cases. The presence of any witnesses supportive of either party shall be the responsibility of the student and/or the faculty member. Counsel may accompany and confer but not argue the case. The student and faculty member have the right to visually inspect all non-restricted documents submitted by the other party as evidence.

B. Following the presentations of all parties involved, the GAB will meet in closed session to decide on the merits of the petition. A quorum must be reached to hold a vote on a case. At least four (4) favorable votes must be received for the GAB to recommend an administrative change of grade. The GAB chairperson will forward the board's recommendation to the Provost within three (3) class days of a final decision.

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C. In its deliberations, the GAB may consult with appropriate sources of information and/or expertise if such consultation is deemed necessary for the decision-making process. All such sources, along with the reasons for consultation, shall be included in the GAB final recommendation to the Provost.

D. The Provost or designee will notify the student and faculty member of the administrative decision no later than ten (10) class days following the GAB recommendation. If the administrative decision includes a change of grade, the Provost will direct the Registrar to make the change at the time when notifications to the student and faculty member are sent.

E. If circumstances warrant, the GAB chairperson may alter the timelines contained in this document.

IV. Evaluation of Policy

A. Evaluation of GAB Policy and Procedures shall be an on-going function of the GAB.

B. Review of GAB policy and procedures are to be reported to Senate and APSCUF for consideration no less frequently than every three (3) years.

E. Effective Date

1995

F. Approved By

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APSCUF Representative Council - May 11, 1995
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