

School of Journalism and Mass Communications Grade Appeal Policy

October 2014; October 2019

The Grade Appeal policy at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications is governed by the University Senate Rules and Regulations, which limits appeals to the “improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor” (U.S.R.R. 2.3.5).

If any student believes they were not graded in accordance with grading procedure announced by the instructor, the student should first contact the instructor within 30 calendar days of the posting of the final grade to attempt to resolve the issue.

If the grade conflict remains unresolved, the student may proceed to the appeal process.

Grade appeals involving student academic misconduct should follow procedures outlined in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

Students pursuing a grade appeal must provide their written statement and rationale for pursuing an appeal within 60 calendar days of the posting of the final grade. The statement should clearly explain the way in which the course instructor failed to follow announced grading procedure. The student’s appeal will include the date, time and place of the meeting with the instructor or copies of the email exchange. A copy of the assignment(s) in question along with any rubrics or information related to the assignment should be included. A copy of the syllabus should also be included. The student will be informed that their materials will be shared with the instructor, associate dean, and the School’s Grievance Committee – a sub-committee of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee consisting of three faculty members.

Upon receipt of the written statement of appeal, the assistant dean will notify the associate dean of the appeal and furnish the materials.

The assistant dean will provide copies of the student’s materials to the instructor of the course in question. The instructor will have an opportunity to provide a response to the student’s written statement, including information related to the assignment, course and grading policies. The instructor will be informed that their written response and supplementary materials will be shared with the student, associate dean, and school’s Grievance Committee.

The instructor will provide a written response and supplementary materials to the assistant dean within 10 calendar days, who will then forward a copy of all materials to the student and associate dean.

Prior to scheduling a hearing, the associate dean will meet with the student and instructor to participate in mediation of the grade appeal unless either party waives mediation. Mediation shall be governed by USRR 6.2.3. If mediation is successful, the mediator will forward to the assistant dean and all parties a letter describing the outcome of the mediation. If mediation is not

successful, the mediator will notify the Dean, the Grievance Committee chair, the assistant dean, and the parties that mediation has terminated. If mediation is not successful, or if it is waived by either party, the Grievance Committee chair will schedule a hearing no later than 21 calendar days from the assistant dean's receipt of the appeal. The 21-day period shall be suspended during the mediation process.

The assistant dean will furnish all materials from both parties to the Grievance Committee. The committee may ask either side for additional information or clarification. Responses will be shared with all parties. The Grievance Committee chair is responsible for facilitating the hearing and providing the summary to the associate dean. The student and instructor will be invited to attend the hearing, but attendance is not required to proceed.

Each party may represent themselves or be represented by an advisor or counsel of the party's choice. Each party has a right to introduce all relevant testimony and documents if the documents have been provided with the grade appeal or response. Each party shall be entitled to question the other party's witnesses. The committee may question all witnesses. Witnesses other than the parties shall leave the hearing room when they are not testifying. The chair of the committee shall have the right to place reasonable time limits on each party's presentation. The chair of the committee shall have the authority and responsibility to keep order, rule on questions of evidence and relevance, and shall possess other reasonable powers necessary for a fair and orderly hearing. The hearing shall not be governed by the rules of evidence, but the chair of the committee may exclude information they deem irrelevant, unnecessary, or duplicative. Statements or admission made as part of the mediation process are not admissible.

The Grievance Committee will make an audiotape of the hearing but not of the deliberations of the committee. The audiotape will be available to all parties, their authorized representatives, the committee, and the dean's office of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

After the presentation of evidence and arguments, the Grievance Committee will excuse the parties and deliberate. The committee's decision will be a written recommendation to the associate dean within 7 calendar days. The committee shall base its recommendation solely upon the information presented at the hearing. The Grievance Committee will accept the assigned grade, reject the assigned grade, or recommend modification of the assigned grade. The associate dean will share the decision with the assistant dean, who will then communicate the decision to the student and instructor.

The result of a journalism school's Grievance Committee hearing could be appealed to the University Judicial Board, but only on the limited grounds listed in USRR 6.7.3.