

GRADE APPEAL

Grading Disputes During a Semester

Faculty members and students should communicate regularly and openly about all grading issues. A student who is dissatisfied with an instructor's grading decision during a semester should discuss the issue with the instructor and attempt to resolve the matter informally. A student who believes that a grading issue has not been satisfactorily resolved should speak with the instructor's academic dean about the matter. The dean should work with both the student and the instructor to address the issue.

Students may not file a formal course grade appeal during the semester. Grading issues that remain unresolved during the semester may become the basis for a formal course grade appeal once the semester has ended and a final course grade has been assigned. The formal process may be used only for grading issues that impact the final course grade.

Grounds for a Formal Course Grade Appeal

A student may file a formal course grade appeal if the following conditions are met:

- The student has consulted with the faculty member and failed to resolve the issue;
- The grading issue at stake impacts the final course grade. (A course grade appeal may not be filed until the semester has ended and a final course grade has been assigned);
- The student believes that their final course grade was assigned contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus;
- The formal course grade appeal is filed no later than ten (10) calendar days after the start of the subsequent semester (spring for a fall course; summer for a spring course; fall for a summer course);

Filing the Formal Course Grade Appeal

A student can file a formal course grade appeal by completing the Formal Course Grade Appeal Form (https://catalog.brcc.edu/pdf/grade_appeal.pdf) and submitting it to the appropriate academic dean. The form asks the student to provide a written statement that clearly and specifically states the grounds on which the grade appeal is based. The student must explain why they believe that the assigned grade was contrary to specified procedures in the course syllabus. The student should attach supporting documentation to the form as necessary to make their case. The student must make his or her complete argument in the written statement and is not permitted to add additional accusations as the appeal progresses.

Informal Resolution

Upon receipt of a Formal Course Grade Appeal Form, the academic dean shall give the instructor a copy of the Formal Course Grade Appeal Form submitted by the student and attempt to resolve the dispute informally. This informal resolution should be initiated within ten (10) calendar days of the start of the following semester or the filing of the appeal, whichever is later.

Instructor Response

If the dispute is not resolved informally, the academic dean shall ask the faculty member to prepare a written response to the appeal. The instructor's written response should include a thorough reply to any and all issues brought forward by the student. A copy of this response will be forwarded to the academic dean and the student within ten (10) calendar days of the failure of the academic dean to resolve the issue informally.

The dean should continue to pursue an informal resolution to the dispute by meeting with the instructor and the student together. The student has the opportunity to address issues raised in the instructor's response that the student has not previously addressed.

The Faculty Grade Appeal Panel

If attempts at informal resolution of the grading dispute fail, the appeal will be forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VP). Upon review of the appeal file, the VP may elect to meet with the student and faculty member to review the case, dismiss the appeal (uphold the student's assigned grade), or appoint a Faculty Grade Appeal Panel (FGAP) to consider the case. The decision of the VP to appoint or not appoint a FGAP is final and cannot be appealed by either party.

If the VP appoints a panel, it shall consist of at least three (3) instructional faculty members, at least one of whom instructs in the same or similar discipline as the faculty member who assigned the grade. The VP will appoint one of the members to serve as the panel's chair.

The chair of the FGAP is responsible for ensuring that the grade appeal process is completed in a timely fashion. The FGAP process must be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of the VP's assignment of the case to an FGAP. The chair is also responsible for ensuring that both the student and the instructor have at least seven (7) calendar days' advance notice of the time and location for appearing before the FGAP.

Panel Review

The FGAP is responsible for determining the facts in the dispute and making a judgment on the merits of the course grade appeal. The FGAP panel shall review the materials submitted both by the student and by the instructor. They may request any other information it deems necessary, including additional instructor records and input from third parties.

Both the student and the instructor have the right to appear in person before the FGAP if they so choose. If both parties appear before the panel, they should be heard separately. If neither party requests to appear in person, the panel should complete its review based on the written materials supplied by the parties and whatever other information the panel may request. The panel's deliberations, including hearing testimony from the parties involved and third parties, shall take place in private.

The student shall present clear evidence that a grade was contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus. The instructor's grade stands unless the FGAP determines by the preponderance of the evidence that the grade was contrary to specified procedures in the course syllabus.

Once the members of the FGAP have determined that they have sufficient information to make a decision, they will vote either to grant or reject the grade appeal. A simple majority (2 votes) is sufficient to decide the issue. If the panel grants the appeal, they also determine (by majority vote) the appropriate course grade for the student. The chair shall prepare a written report stating the panel's decision and the justification for that decision, and provide it to the VP. The VP will provide copies of the report to the student, the instructor, and the dean. If the panel determines that the student's grade shall be changed, the chair will prepare and sign a Change of Grade Form and submit a copy to the academic dean, who will process the change. If applicable, the stated reason for the change of grade will be "the decision of a Faculty Grade Appeal Panel."

The decision of the FGAP is final and binding on all parties.