

FINAL GRADE APPEALS

Approval Authority	Senate
Responsible Executive	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Related Policies / Legislation	<i>University Act, s. 35.2 (5)(j)</i>

PURPOSE

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) recognizes that students have the right to be judged fairly in relation to their academic work and shall provide an appropriate process for considering student grade appeals.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Appellant: the party who appeals for an official decision to be changed.

Assigned: When the grade is available to the student on the student's record.

Day: A day between Monday and Friday inclusive of those days when UFV is officially open to the public.

Dean: Dean of the Faculty responsible for offering the course.

Evidence: Material evidence that shows that an inappropriate final grade has been assigned, i.e. assignments, exams, course syllabus.

Final grade: A mark of a student's work as recorded on the official University transcript.

Instructor: The person who is responsible for delivery of the course curriculum and the evaluation of student work.

Natural Justice and procedural fairness: The principles of natural justice concern procedural fairness and ensure a fair decision is reached by an objective decision maker.

Respondent: The party who responds to an appeal.

Senate Committee for Student Appeals: As delegated by Senate, has the responsibility for the creation of impartial tribunals to hear student appeals and for the determination of all procedures relating to the conduct of such tribunals.

Student: Any person who is enrolled in a course(s) at the University during the teaching semester for which the mark is assigned, including graduate students.

Tribunal: Consists of three members of the Senate Committee for Student Appeals for the hearing of appeals.

POLICY

This policy allows for the appeal of final grades by students who have cause to appeal, as set out herein. Students may not appeal individual items of work inclusive of examinations, quizzes, projects, assignments, practicums, or field work assessments except in the context of an appeal of the final grade. Where students have concerns about a grade for an individual item of work, students are encouraged to discuss the matter with their instructor, and to document the reason for concern.

The final grade appeal offers recourse to a student who has material evidence to show that an inappropriate final grade has been assigned. UFV recognizes the right of a student to appeal a final grade on the following grounds:

- A significant error in the assessment, evaluation, determination, and/or calculation of the final grade;
- A significant error in the assessment, evaluation, determination, and/or calculation of individual components of the course;
- Credible claims of instructor bias or discrimination;
- Failure by the instructor to follow the evaluation profile, grade assignment, and operational details as stated in the course syllabus;
- Extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control that affected the student's academic performance, or made it impossible for the student to write the final test or exam as scheduled, or to complete an item of work. Students will be expected to provide evidence to support a claim for extenuating circumstances.

This policy replaces all previous policies relating to the appeal of grade assignment.

REGULATIONS

1. Appeal of the Final Grade

1.1. Consultation with Instructor

- 1.1.1. In all cases where a student has a disagreement with a final grade assigned in a particular course, the student shall first discuss the matter with the instructor. Where the instructor is no longer employed by UFV, or does not respond, the department head or school director will provide, to the best of his or her ability, a response in the respondent's stead.
- 1.1.2. If there has been a clerical or administrative error, or if after the discussion the instructor wishes to change the grade for any other reason, the instructor may change the grade in accordance with the Change of Grade policy.

1.2. Initiation of proceeding

- 1.2.1. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the instructor, the student must submit to the Office of the Registrar a Final Grade Appeal form, along with any additional documents or other evidence to support the appeal, within 14 days from the day the student has access to the assigned final grade. No appeal should be accepted by the Office of the Registrar once the fourteen days have elapsed, with the exception only of extensions granted at the discretion of the registrar on the basis of extraordinary circumstances.

- 1.2.2. Upon receipt of the Final Grade Appeal form, the Office of the Registrar will determine whether or not the appeal falls within the scope of this policy. If it does, the Final Grade Appeal form, along with supporting documents, will be sent, within seven (7) days, to the instructor.
- 1.2.3. Within 14 days of the receipt of the Final Grade Appeal form, the instructor shall send to the Office of the Registrar a written response to the appeal, including all available assignments, exams, exam keys, course syllabus, and the final mark determination scheme related to the course work being re-evaluated. Where the respondent is no longer employed by UFV, or is not able to respond, the department head or school director will provide, to the best of his or her ability, a response in the respondent's stead.
- 1.2.4. Upon receipt of the response to the grade appeal, or sooner if possible, the Office of the Registrar will forward all appeal information to the dean or designate of the faculty in which the course is taught. In the case that an appeal is made by a graduate student, all appeal information will be forwarded to the associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, and to the dean or designate of the faculty in which the course is taught, for information. The associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies is the administrator responsible for processing the appeal.
- 1.2.5. Where the dean or associate vice-president for research, engagement, and graduate studies is the instructor in question, the registrar will appoint an alternate dean.

1.3. Facilitated Resolution

- 1.3.1. Within seven (7) days of receiving a final grade appeal form and supporting evidence, the dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate may attempt a facilitated resolution, meeting with the student and/or the instructor.
- 1.3.2. The matter may be resolved with or without change to the final grade by agreement at the resolution meeting.
- 1.3.3. Any resolution agreed upon during the resolution meeting will be documented with a letter to the student, instructor, and the Office of the Registrar.
- 1.3.4. In the event that a resolution is not agreed upon at the resolution meeting and the student wishes to proceed with the appeal, the matter will be referred by the dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate to the final grade appeals process.

1.4. Appeal of the Final Grade

- 1.4.1. The dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate will form a final grade appeals committee of three members, one of whom will be a student, and two of whom will be instructors who did not teach the course to the student who has requested the appeal. At least one instructor with expertise in the discipline or related discipline should be appointed. The dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate may appoint external faculty for the appeal, if viewed by the dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies or designate, as necessary for an impartial hearing.

- 1.4.2. The Final Grade Appeals Committee will review the grade the materials used to determine such grade and, where the Final Grade Appeals Committee deems appropriate, meet with the instructor and student.
- 1.4.3. The Committee may review and assess the work and arrive at a decision within 14 days of receipt of the appeal package and submit the decision in writing to the dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate.
- 1.4.4. The dean, associate vice-president of research, engagement, and graduate studies, or designate will provide the outcome of the grade appeal, including the reason for the grade change, if applicable, to the student and the instructor. The final grade may be revised up or down or may remain unchanged.
- 1.4.5. A copy of the decision shall also be filed with the Office of the Registrar.

2. Appeal of the Final Grade Appeal Process

- 2.1. Students may appeal the decision of the Final Grade Appeal Committee only on the basis of alleged unfairness or bias in the process of the final grade appeal.
- 2.2. A student must request an appeal within 14 days of receiving the decision of the Final Grade Appeal Committee.
- 2.3. The appeal hearing and decision shall normally take place within 60 days of the filing of the request for the appeal with the Senate Committee for Student Appeals (Committee). The appeal hearing will be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 2.4. The appeal hearing shall be conducted by an appeal tribunal (Tribunal) designated by the Committee and shall be conducted under those procedures as shall be set from time to time by the Committee.
- 2.5. The Tribunal will not attempt to evaluate the academic merits of any course grade. It will only deal with cases of alleged unfairness or bias in the process.
- 2.6. Where reasonable grounds for appeal are not evident, the Tribunal may refuse to hear the appeal.
- 2.7. The decision of the Tribunal will be final.

3. General

- 3.1. All timelines are guidelines only, with the exception of the requirement of the student to initiate appeals procedures within the fourteen days as set out in the Procedure 1.2.1 and Procedure 2.2. Parties should attempt to comply with such time frames. Failure to do so shall in no way nullify the process unless the delay is unreasonable and prejudicial.