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3 **99-16**

4 August 9, 1999

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7 **Grade Appeal Procedure**

8 (This Policy Statement supersedes Policy Statement 79-17, 86-05, 86-05 Amended, and 94-07.)

9 This policy was recommended by the Academic Senate on April 22, 1999 and approved by the  
10 President on July 7, 1999.

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12 **1.000 Grade Appeal General Information**

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14 The primary authority of the instructor in the assignment of grades must be respected. An  
15 instructor's evaluation of a student's work and performance in that instructor's course must not  
16 be over-ridden merely because of a difference of opinion or evaluative judgment, provided it is  
17 formed in accordance with the generally accepted canons of the relevant discipline and of the  
18 academic institution where said course is offered. The University presumes that every instructor  
19 wants and tries to be non-prejudicial, objective, and consistent in the assignment of grades. This  
20 presumption, however, may be over-ridden by weight of evidence to the contrary.

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22 1.100. Although the University presumes that grades assigned are correct, the University has  
23 established this grade appeal procedure to both protect students against academic and  
24 administrative evaluations and decisions that are prejudicial, capricious, or arbitrary, and to  
25 preserve the authority of instructors to evaluate student work in a non-prejudicial, objective, and  
26 consistent way. This procedure, available equally to undergraduate and graduate students, also  
27 preserves the rights of instructors to appeal grade appeals committee findings as outlined below,  
28 and in its entirety constitutes the only grade appeal procedure at California State University,  
29 Long Beach.

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31 1.200. The burden of proof rests upon the student submitting the appeal. Therefore, the student  
32 must prepare a file which includes: (1) a written statement clearly presenting the basis for the  
33 grade appeal; (2) a completed Grade Appeal form obtained from the College in which the course  
34 was offered; (3) and any supporting documentation such as the class syllabus, exams, papers,  
35 assignments or other corroborating documents.

36  
37 1.300. Only final grades may be appealed. Students who believe that individual exams and/or  
38 assignments demonstrate evidence of prejudicial, capricious, or arbitrary grading and that those  
39 grades had direct bearing on the final grade should include them in the grade appeal file as  
40 supporting documentation.

41  
42 1.400. If a Grade Appeals Committee decides to change a grade, the Committee need not grant  
43 the student's suggested grade but should assign a grade that is appropriate to the work  
44 submitted. The new grade shall not be lower than the original grade.

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46 1.410. A Grade Appeal Committee's decision to change a grade shall not be implemented until  
47 the appeal process has been concluded according to the procedure(s) outlined in this document.

48  
49 1.500. Timelines for filing an appeal and subsequent decisions specified in this Policy Statement  
50 refer to instructional days during the regular Fall and Spring semesters.

51  
52 1.600. All grade appeal information, whether written or oral, is confidential.

54 1.700. The appellant may seek the assistance of an advisor in the preparation of the appeal file.  
55 If Department and/or College Committee procedures permit oral arguments, the advisor may  
56 accompany the appellant to the Departmental and/or College hearing and be privy to all  
57 confidential information relevant to the case.  
58

59 1.800. The original file, with all documentation, recommendations, final decisions, etc.,  
60 (including a copy of the grade change, if relevant) shall be kept by the Dean of the College  
61 involved. One complete duplicate set of all documentation is to be kept in the Office of the Vice-  
62 President for Academic Affairs, for a period of not less than five years. All other duplicate  
63 materials shall be destroyed within thirty [30] instructional days of the final decision.  
64

65 1.810. Each College Dean and the Chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall  
66 provide a written report at the end of each academic year to the President and the Academic  
67 Senate on the number of cases heard and the disposition of each case.  
68

69 1.900. If the student's appeal is compounded (or accompanied) by an allegation of unlawful  
70 discrimination as defined by Federal and State laws, the student has the right to access the  
71 university's internal Unlawful Discrimination process and the processes available through the  
72 U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and the State of California Fair Employment  
73 and Housing Commission. However, grades may be changed only through the grade appeal  
74 process.  
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## 76 **2.000 Grade Appeals Committees**

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78 Departments/Programs shall form a Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee, as  
79 needed. If Department/Program faculty members are unable to serve in sufficient number to  
80 form a grade appeals committee, the Chair of the Faculty Council of the relevant College shall  
81 appoint the required number of Grade Appeals Committee members from the ranks of College  
82 faculty. A Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall have a provision to include at  
83 least one student member.  
84

85 2.100. Each College and the University shall have a standing Grade Appeals Committee which  
86 shall have provision to include at least one student member.  
87

88 2.200. Committee members, at any level, shall not participate in any way in an appeal of a  
89 grade decision in which they have been involved personally. Such participation includes  
90 assignment of the grade in question, and involvement in the work of, or grading in, the class in  
91 which the grade in question was assigned.  
92

93 2.210. The appellant, and the instructor involved in any particular appeal, shall each have  
94 one peremptory challenge to remove a committee member from service for that particular  
95 appeal. Department and College grade appeal procedures shall provide for replacement of such  
96 challenged members.  
97

98 2.300. A Grade Appeals Committee deliberating an appeal  $\text{\textcircled{D}}$  at any stage of the process  $\text{\textcircled{D}}$  shall  
99 consider all information submitted and may, if necessary, obtain clarification in writing from the  
100 student, the instructor, and/or committees at other levels of the process. The Committee may  
101 request information to help it understand the basis for assignment of the grade. If either party  
102 does not supply appropriate grade appeal information within a reasonable time (see 2.500) when  
103 requested by a committee, then that committee may base its decision on the corresponding  
104 information supplied by the other party.  
105

106 2.400. Committees shall consider only information available to all parties. All parties to an  
107 appeal shall be notified by the Committee Chair in writing of all responses and deadlines at all  
108 points of the appeal process and shall have full opportunity to comment in writing.  
109

110 2.500. Distribution of materials submitted in an appeal shall allow reasonable time for response  
111 by the involved parties before committees render their decision. "Reasonable time" for rebuttals  
112 and rejoinders shall generally be understood to be ten [10] instructional days from receipt of a  
113 response.  
114

115 2.600. After making its determination, the Committee hearing the appeal shall prepare a written  
116 statement of its decision, including an explanation of its reasoning and a response to the specific  
117 issues upon which the appeal is based. The decision statement shall be placed in the appeal file  
118 and a copy of the statement shall be sent to all parties involved.  
119

120 2.700. Committee Chairs shall provide a written report to their Dean at the end of each semester  
121 detailing the number and disposition of cases heard.  
122

### 123 **3.000 Preliminary Phase of the Grade Appeals Process: Initiation of Grade Appeals** 124

125 Students who believe they have received a final course grade that reflects prejudicial,  
126 capricious, or arbitrary grading of their academic performance must make this belief known to  
127 the instructor(s), either orally or in writing, before they begin the formal appeal process. If  
128 students and instructors are not able to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of both parties,  
129 the formal process may then be initiated. In the event an instructor is not available to  
130 participate, the Department/Program Chair in the discipline/program may appoint another  
131 instructor whose areas of expertise most closely approximates that of the instructor of record to  
132 represent the interests of the latter.  
133

134 3.100. The formal process begins with the preparation of a grade appeal file (see paragraph  
135 1.200 above). The file must include:

136 (1) a written statement describing the reasons for the appeal and the recommendation for a  
137 new grade;

138 (2) a Grade Appeal form obtained from the appropriate College office and fully completed;  
139 and

140 (3) supporting documents (see paragraph 1.200 above) that show evidence of the alleged  
141 improper grading.  
142

143 3.110. The written statement describing the reasons for the appeal should be addressed to  
144 the Department/Program Chair of the discipline in which the course resides (although a Program  
145 is ordinarily administered by a Director or Coordinator, the title Chair also applies to this position  
146 throughout this document).  
147

148 3.120. An appeal must be initiated within the regular semester immediately following the  
149 semester or special session in which the course was completed. As long as a student has filed a  
150 written notification of the appeal with the appropriate Department/Program Chair within the  
151 required semester, action on the appeal may continue during subsequent semesters.  
152

153 3.200. After receiving the student's grade appeal file (see 3.100 above), the  
154 Department/Program Chair will consult with both the student and the instructor(s) involved to  
155 attempt a resolution to the grade appeal.  
156

157 3.210. If the instructor of record refuses to participate, the Department Chair shall insert a  
158 written statement to that effect in the appeal file.  
159

160 3.220. If a student is appealing a grade assigned by the Department Chair, the College Dean  
161 or designee shall perform all functions of the Chair in the appeals process.  
162

163 3.300 First Phase of the Appeals Process: Appeal to the Department/Program Grade Appeals  
164 Committee Should consultation fail to resolve the appeal and should the student choose to  
165 continue the process, the student must request that the Chair forward the appeal to the  
166 Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee.

167 3.310 The Department/Program Chair shall forward the appeal to the Department/Program  
168 Grade Appeals Committee, and may include a written recommendation based upon the first,  
169 consultative, step in the process (outlined in 3.200 above). The instructor must also be informed  
170 that the formal grade appeals process has been initiated, and shall be given copies of all  
171 materials forwarded to the Grade Appeals Committee.  
172

173 3.320 The instructor may write a response to the student's appeal and a rationale to be  
174 considered by the Grade Appeals Committee. A copy of such a response must also be provided  
175 to the student.  
176

177 3.330 An appeal may be terminated at any point by a letter from the appellant withdrawing  
178 the appeal.  
179

180 3.400. The Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall consider the appeal, adhering  
181 to the principles and guidelines of paragraphs 1.000, 1.800, 2.300, 2.400, and 2.500 above. In  
182 all but extraordinary circumstances, a Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall  
183 reach its decision within the semester in which it receives the appeal.  
184

185 3.500. If the appeal is supported by the Committee, the Committee will then determine a grade  
186 for the student based upon the evidence included in the appeal file (exams, papers,  
187 assignments, etc.).  
188

189 3.510. The Committee shall communicate its decision and rationale as specified in paragraph  
190 2.600 above, and shall also provide a copy to the Department/Program Chair. If, within ten [10]  
191 instructional days of the receipt of the Committee's decision, the instructor does not either file a  
192 grade change or file an appeal of the Committee's finding, the Department/Program Chair shall  
193 authorize a grade change by filing the appropriate grade-change forms. If the  
194 Department/Program Chair does not effect the change within ten [10] instructional days of  
195 notification, the Chair of the Department/Program Grade Appeal Committee can sign in lieu of  
196 the instructor or the Department/Program Chair and the College Dean will change the grade.  
197

198 3.520. If, within ten [10] instructional days, either the instructor, or the student files in  
199 writing an appeal of the Department/Program Committee's finding, the Committee Chair shall,  
200 within (10) instructional days, forward the file (including the Committee's decision and rationale)  
201 to the College Grade Appeals Committee.  
202

203 3.600. If the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee rejects the appeal, it shall  
204 communicate its decision and its rationale as provided in paragraph 2.600 above, providing a  
205 copy also to the Department/Program Chair. If, within ten [10] instructional days, the student  
206 does not request further review of the appeal, the grade appeal process is terminated.  
207

208 3.610. If, within ten [10] instructional days, the student communicates in writing her/his wish  
209 to continue the appeal process, the Committee Chair shall, within ten [10] instructional days,  
210 forward the file (including the Committee's decision and rationale) to the College Grade Appeals  
211 Committee.  
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213 **4.000 Second Phase of the Appeals Process: Appeal to the College Grade Appeals  
Committee**

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An appeal of a Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee decision, by either the instructor or the student, begins with a written letter of appeal to have that decision reviewed. This letter of appeal should be directed to the appropriate College Grade Appeal Committee (also called College Committee in this document) by way of the Department/Program Chair. The Department/Program Chair must then inform the instructor, student and College Dean, in writing, that an appeal has been filed and the Dean must immediately inform the appropriate College Grade Appeals Committee, in writing, that an appeal has been lodged. The Chair of the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee must immediately forward the appeal file, including the Committee's decision and rationale, to the College Dean who must immediately inform the College Grade Appeals Committee that the grade appeal file has been received and is ready for review. The College Grade Appeals Committee shall normally render its review decision within 20 instructional days of receipt of the grade appeal file.

4.100. The College Grade Appeals Committee shall review the grade appeal file, the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee's decision and rationale, and any rebuttal to that decision and rationale provided by the appellant, in the light of paragraphs 1.000 through 3.600 above. During its review it may consider  $\bar{U}$  and act upon  $\bar{U}$  matters of both procedure and substance.

4.200. As a result of its review, the College Grade Appeals Committee may confirm the decision of the Department Committee, or it may recommend re-consideration.

4.210. If the College Grade Appeals Committee confirms the decision of the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee, and if neither the instructor nor the student requests further review, then the grade appeal process ends. All parties, including the Department/Program Chair and the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee, must be informed of the College Grade Appeals Committee's decision in writing. If a grade change has been recommended by the Department/Program Committee but held in abeyance pending the appeal, the Department/Program Chair shall, within ten [10] instructional days, authorize the grade change by filing the appropriate form. In the event that the Department/Program Chair does not effect the change within ten [10] instructional days of notification, the Chair of the College Grade Appeal Committee can sign in lieu of the instructor or the Department/Program/Chair and the College Dean will change the grade.

4.220. If an appellant communicates in writing her/his wish to continue the appeal process, the College Committee Chair shall, within ten [10] instructional days, forward the file (including the College Committee's decision and rationale) to the University Grade Appeals Committee.

4.230. If the College Grade Appeals Committee recommends re-consideration, it shall put in writing its rationale (which may involve matters of procedure or substance), and any recommendations it may have (which may include recommendations of substance, or of procedure, or also of a re-constituted Department/Program Committee, or may include other recommendations toward realizing a fair evaluation of the matters at issue). The grade appeal file, including the rationale and recommendations of the College Committee, is returned to the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee for re-consideration. Copies of its recommendations are to be supplied to all parties, including the Department/Program Chair.

4.300. When a grade appeal decision has been returned for re-consideration, the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall review the rationale and recommendations of the College Grade Appeals Committee. It shall undertake to remedy procedural faults identified by the College Committee. It shall consider anew the substance of the grade appeal, with due attention to whatever recommendations have been advanced by the College Committee. The Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall render a new decision on

267 the appeal, which may be a reiteration of its original decision or may be a different decision  
268 (which may, but need not be, in agreement with the College Committee's recommendations).  
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270 4.310. The Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall, in any but extraordinary  
271 circumstances, render its re-consideration within 20 instructional days of receipt of the grade  
272 appeal file.  
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274 4.320. Upon reaching its decision, the Department/Program Grade Appeals Committee shall  
275 report in writing its response to all procedural faults identified by the College Committee, and  
276 shall again put in writing its rationale for its decision on the substance of the grade appeal.  
277 These reports shall be forwarded with the grade appeals file to the College Grade Appeals  
278 Committee and copies shall be supplied to all parties, including the Department/Program Chair.  
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280 4.400. The College Grade Appeals Committee shall review the re-considered decision of the  
281 Department/Program Committee. It may seek clarification from the Department/Program  
282 Committee (see paragraph 2.500 above). It shall either disagree with or confirm the decision of  
283 the Department/Program Committee and all parties must be informed in writing of this decision.  
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285 4.410. If within ten (10) instructional days following notification of the College Committee's  
286 decision, an appellant communicates in writing her/his wish to continue the appeal process, the  
287 Committee Chair shall forward the file (including the Committee's decision and rationale) to the  
288 University Grade Appeals Committee.  
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290 4.420. If a grade change is recommended by the Committee and the change is not appealed  
291 by either appellant (in compliance with 4.410 above), the College Grade Appeals Committee  
292 Chair shall, within ten [10] instructional days of the College Committee's action, inform the  
293 College Dean, in writing, of its decision and the College Dean will change the grade as  
294 determined by the Committee.  
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### 296 **5.000 Third Phase of the Appeals Process: Appeal to the University Grade Appeals** 297 **Committee** 298

299 The University Grade Appeals Committee shall function as the final level Grade Appeals  
300 Committee. The University Grade Appeals Committee may communicate with the appellant, and  
301 Department/Program and College Grade Appeals Committees as needed.  
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303 5.100. The University Grade Appeals Committee shall normally render its decision within 20  
304 instructional days of receipt of the Grade appeal file.  
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306 5.200. The University Grade Appeals Committee shall review the grade appeals file, the lower  
307 level Committees' decisions and rationales, and any rebuttals to those decisions and rationales  
308 provided by the appellant, in the light of paragraphs 1.000 through 3.600 above. It may consider  
309 both matters of procedure and substance. The Committee may seek further clarification from  
310 either lower level Committee or the appellant as needed. The University Committee shall either  
311 disagree with or confirm the decision of the College Grade Appeals Committee.  
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313 5.210 In the event that a grade change is authorized by the University Grade Appeals  
314 Committee, the Chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall ensure that the  
315 appropriate change-of-grade form is properly signed by the University Provost and filed with the  
316 Office of Enrollment Services.  
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318 5.220 The Chair of the University Grade Appeals Committee shall inform all parties to the  
319 grade appeal, in writing, of the Committee's decision.  
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321           5.230. The rendering of the Committee's decision, notification of all parties of the decision,  
322 and effecting a grade change where authorized by the Committee, completes the appeal process.  
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325 **EFFECTIVE: Fall 1999**