

THE BASIS FOR GRADE APPEAL DISPUTES

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

Grade Disputes¹

Rules

The student's semester grade shall be based upon the grading rule statement contained in the Texas A&M Student Rules (section 10.1) and the grading rule contained in the course syllabus. Student rules and regulations can be accessed at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>. The grading rule shall include the calculation of grades, including weights as applicable for test, laboratory assignments, field study work, projects, paper, homework, class attendance and participation and other graded activities.

Basis of Grievance Procedures

A student who believes that his or her final grade does not reflect an appropriate evaluation may engage in an appeal process as identified by the University and College of Architecture. If a student cannot achieve resolution with the instructor or is unable to contact the instructor, then they can initiate the appeal process. This process requires that the student bring forward their appeal on the basis of one of the following three *prima facie* cases, **arbitrary**, **capricious**, or **prejudiced** as applied to the grading process, or to an individual student.

Arbitrary

An appeal based on an arbitrary evaluation must address seemingly random actions or an evaluation based upon chance, it is seen as an unreasonable act of will on the part of the instructor.

Capricious

An appeal based on a capricious evaluation must address the grading method and outcome as being impulsive and governed by no apparent reason.

Prejudice

An appeal based on a prejudicial evaluation must address a preconceived judgment, that in particular as directed towards an individual, a group, a race, a gender, or their supposed characteristics.

Grade Appeal Process

A student who chooses to engage in a grade appeal in the College of Architecture must follow the sequential steps as outlined in the [College of Architecture Grade Appeal Process](#).

¹ The Grade Disputes process has been adopted from the Texas A&M University Student Rules Spring and Summer 2002 (Revised 1995) (Approved by the College of Architecture Executive Committee, 12/16/02)

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

NOTES: *In addition to the information below, undergraduate students should go to the following website for information about the appeals process: <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/> Graduate students should contact the Office of Graduate Studies for the appeals procedures. Faculty who wish to appeal decisions made by the Department Head or Dean should contact the Dean of Faculties for information.*

STEP ONE - STUDENT DISCUSSES GRADE WITH INSTRUCTOR

The instructor of the class is the primary authority with respect to a student's proficiency and final grade in that course, **therefore, all grade appeals begin with the instructor.** A student, who believes that his or her final grade reflects an **arbitrary, capricious** and/or **prejudicial** academic evaluation, should first describe their position in writing and arrange to meet with the instructor. The instructor should respond to the student's request within seven (7) days **of notification of a potential appeal from the student.** Failing an ability to either contact the instructor or arriving at a satisfactory resolution **within this time period**, the student can appeal to the Department by following Step Two.

STEP TWO - STUDENT SUBMITS DEPARTMENTAL GRADE APPEAL FORM

If no satisfactory resolution has occurred with the primary authority or if the instructor is unavailable, the student may appeal to the Departmental Appeals Committee. A grade appeal must be initiated by completing the student portion of the Grade Appeal Form supplied by the Department. The student must identify either an **arbitrary, capricious**, and/or **prejudicial** academic evaluation and must present a written argument. In addition, the student must, in writing, describe the evidence supporting his or her chosen appeal basis and provide the Committee with a copy of the course syllabus. The student may include evidentiary material supporting the argument. All material is to be submitted to the Department ten (10) days prior to a Grade Appeal Committee meeting.

STEP THREE - DEPARTMENT GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE REVIEWS CASES

A departmental committee of three faculty will review each student appeal each semester. The Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of March (**or the next Tuesday following Spring Break, whichever case applies**) and October. Appeals for grades received **more than 180 days following the end of the semester or summer session** will not be considered. Summer grade disputes will be considered in October by this committee. Under unusual circumstances (the grade in question impacts eligibility for a scholarship, suspension status, eligibility for subsequent course work or graduation), emergency reviews will be held. In these cases, the Committee will act within ten (10) days of receipt of referral. The Committee will review the student appeal and prepare a written evaluation and recommendation, which will be submitted to the Department Head. **The Committee may interview both the student and the instructor, along with all evidentiary information provided by the student or instructor, in making its recommendation. Copies** of the completed student appeal form and the Committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the instructor, departmental office, and student.

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STEP FOUR - DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEWS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Upon receiving the Grade Appeal Form and recommendation from the Grade Appeal Committee, the Department Head will make his or her recommendation and will inform the student and instructor in writing within seven (7) days. The student or instructor may appeal the Department Head's decision (with respect to the findings and/or remedies) to the Dean of the College of Architecture ***within 7 days of the Department Head's recommendation by filing the appeal in writing.***

STEP FIVE - STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR APPEALS TO THE DEAN

The Dean ***or his or her designee*** will attempt to resolve the matter within ten (10) days of receipt of appeal. ***The Dean or his or her designee will respond in writing to the Instructor, Department Head and student within this time period. The file containing all information pertinent to the dispute must be developed at the department level and forwarded to the Dean or his or her Designee for their consideration. No additional hearings by a committee at the college level will be required unless new information becomes available, or errors-of-fact are discovered in the file. The Dean or his or her Designee will make their determination based on the information received in the file from the department.***

STEP SIX - STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR APPEALS TO UNIVERSITY

If no resolution can be reached, the Dean will notify the student, the instructor, and the Department Head in writing. Upon receipt of such notification, the student and/or instructor may file a formal appeal with the appropriate appeals panel ***at the University level***. If the student is an undergraduate, and if the final course grade appealed is based partially or entirely on scholastic dishonesty, the appeal is made to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel. All other undergraduate grade appeals are made to the Academic Appeals Panel. If the student is a graduate student, the appropriate panel for all appeals is the Graduate Appeals Panel. ***To appeal to the University, the graduate student should contact the Graduate Student Ombudsperson at the Office of Graduate Studies.***

Special Note: If the student intends to involve others, including parents, or guardians, in the appeals process and grades will be discussed in their presence, a Certification of Dependency Form must be completed or already on file. In the absence of this, outsiders cannot participate in any meetings or exchanges of information where the student's grade is discussed. This is a Federal requirement and will be adhered to closely.

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE GRADE APPEAL FORM (Student Form)

NAME _____ I.D. NUMBER _____ DATE _____
INSTRUCTOR _____ COURSE _____ COURSE # _____
E-MAIL _____ TEL. _____ GRADE RECEIVED _____

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1. Is the course syllabus included? Yes No
 2. Have you contacted your primary source (instructor)? Yes No
 3. Do you have a special time consideration need? If so, explain

 4. Select appropriate box (s) that describe the basis upon which you are appealing.
 Arbitrary Capricious Prejudice
 5. Give a summary statement describing the circumstances upon which this appeal is based using the above *prima facie* cases.

_____.
 6. Describe the evidence that is in support of your appeal.

_____.
 7. Student Signature _____.

Note: Please attach a copy of the correspondence exchanged between you and the faculty member that was generated during Step One of the appeal process. **Attach any additional information needed to present your appeal as completely as possible.**

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COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE GRADE APPEAL FORM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

STUDENT _____

- March
- October
- Emergency

1. Was grading policy clearly articulated in the course syllabus (in compliance with Rule 10.1)?

- Yes No

2. Provide a summary of the Committee's findings in the space indicated below.

_____.

3. Indicate the Committee's recommendation:

- No Grade Change Grade Change
From _____ to _____

4. Signature of Committee Chair

Date