

College of Communication and Fine Arts
Undergraduate Grade Appeal Procedure

It is important to distinguish grounds for a grade appeal from concerns related to the quality of instruction. A successful grade appeal must be based on clear evidence that the student's performance meets the grading standards outlined in the course syllabus and warrants a different final grade.

Concerns regarding instructional methods, course design, or teaching effectiveness should be communicated to the instructor or department; however, such concerns do not normally justify a change in grade on their own. For a grade appeal to be successful, the student must demonstrate not that they *could have* earned a higher grade under different circumstances, but that they did earn a higher grade according to the stated course requirements and grading criteria.

In all cases involving a disputed grade, the burden of proof rests with the student. If the issue is not resolved at the student–instructor level, the student must submit a written appeal that includes:

- A copy of the course syllabus
- Copies of relevant graded work (e.g., exams, quizzes, assignments, projects)
- Any written explanation provided by the instructor regarding the assigned grade, if available

These materials must support the claim that the final grade was not assigned in accordance with the syllabus.

Step 1: Instructor Consultation

The student should first consult with the course instructor in an effort to resolve the grade dispute. This consultation must occur no later than two weeks into the beginning of the subsequent fall or spring semester.

Step 2: Department-Level Appeal

If the matter is not resolved in Step 1, the student may submit a written appeal to the Chair of the department within the College of Communication and Fine Arts in which the course was offered. This appeal must be submitted by the end of the third week of the subsequent semester.

The written petition must include the supporting materials described above. The department chair will review the appeal and provide a written response to the student within two weeks of receiving the petition.

Step 3: College-Level Appeal

If the issue remains unresolved, the student may submit a written appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs of the College of Communication and Fine Arts. This appeal must be submitted within one week of receiving the department chair's written response.

The Associate Dean may consult with relevant faculty, administrators, or committees as needed. A written response will be provided within two weeks of receipt of the appeal.

Step 4: University-Level Appeal

If the grade dispute is not resolved through the previous steps, the student may submit a final appeal to the Undergraduate Grade Appeals Committee through the Office of Academic Affairs.

Deadlines for submission are:

- March 15 for grades awarded during the previous fall semester
- October 15 for grades awarded during the previous spring or summer semesters

Additional Information

Students are encouraged to consult the University of Memphis Undergraduate Catalog for the most current and detailed information regarding grade appeals.