

## Communication Studies Course Grade Appeal Process

(Reviewed and approved 2/26/18)

The Texas State University Student Handbook provides the following statement with regard to appealing a grade in a course ([link](#)):

### ***Change of Grade***

*An individual course grade may be changed when the involved faculty member certifies to the University Registrar that an error was made in computing the original grade. The grade change must be approved by the department chair/school director and the appropriate college dean.*

*Students who wish to protest a grade earned in a course should first discuss the grade with the instructor. If no resolution is reached, the student may appeal the grade to the department chair. If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached at this level, the student may appeal to the college dean, whose decision is final. In accordance with Texas State's records retention policies, a student's appeal for a change of grade must be filed no later than two years after the grade is issued.*

The following procedures should be used by students who would like to appeal/protest a grade that is recorded in a Communication Studies course. Students using this process should note that grade appeals must be grounded in allegations of factual error and/or evidence of inaccuracies in the application of stated course criteria, rather than in perceptions of excessive difficulty/rigor in the evaluation of a course. Documented evidence, provided by the student submitting the appeal, is key to this process.

### **Step 1: Meet with instructor to discuss grade (consult syllabus for any course-specific guidelines about grade appeals)**

In most cases, a conversation with an instructor can clarify the reasons why a grade was recorded for a course. Before submitting a formal grade appeal, students are asked to schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss the grade. When meeting, students should provide any evidence and/or justification to help clarify the reason why a grade is perceived to be inaccurate.

For cases in which the faculty member who taught the course is no longer employed by the university, please submit the appeal to the Department Chair (Dr. Erik Timmerman; [eriktimm@txstate.edu](mailto:eriktimm@txstate.edu)) who will direct the document to the appropriate faculty member who can respond.

If the informal meeting does not address the concerns, students should proceed to Step 2.

### **Step 2: Submit a written appeal to the instructor (consult syllabus for any course-specific guidelines about grade appeals).**

After meeting with the instructor, students should submit a written appeal to the instructor using [the form that is available at the end of this document](#). The appeal should be submitted as a Word document that is attached to an email.

The instructor will review the document and submit a response within the following time frames: (1) 3 weeks (15 business days) when the document is submitted when classes is in session, 30 days when submitted during winter break, and within 90 days, if submitted during the summer. In most cases, faculty will respond sooner, but additional time is needed when classes are not in session.

The faculty member's response to the student who submitted the appeal will either explain how the concern was remedied (i.e., if the grade was changed) or why the original grade will stand (referencing any course policies, inconsistencies in the appeal, etc.).

If students are not satisfied with the response/explanation at this stage, they may proceed to the next step.

### **Step 3: Submit appeal to Department Chair**

If the grade appeal is not addressed by the instructor's response to the written appeal, the student should forward both the original appeal form (the one that was submitted to the instructor) as well as the instructor's response to the Chair of the Department of Communication Studies (Dr. Erik Timmerman; [eriktimm@txstate.edu](mailto:eriktimm@txstate.edu)). The Chair will then schedule separate meetings with the student and the faculty member to discuss the concerns raised in the appeal. After meeting with both parties, the Department Chair will send a written decision stating the outcome of the appeal process.

If students are not satisfied with the response/explanation at this stage, they may proceed to the next step.

### **Step 4: Submit appeal to Dean of College of Fine Arts and Communication**

If the appeal was not resolved by the Department Chair's decision, students may submit the appeal to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication (Dr. John Fleming; [jf18@txstate.edu](mailto:jf18@txstate.edu)). If desired, students may forward all existing documents associated with the appeal to the Dean when requesting a meeting. The Dean will provide any further guidelines and will make the final decision about the outcome of the appeal.

## Department of Communication Studies Course Grade Appeal Form

<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Student Name:</b>	
<b>Student ID:</b>	
<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Course:</b>	
<b>Instructor Name:</b>	

**Please prepare a Word Document that addresses, in order, each of the following four items (usually a paragraph or two per item). Submit any relevant supporting documents with the written appeal (for example, returned assignments with instructor feedback, copies of emails, etc.)**

1. Provide a description of the relevant facts surrounding the appeal/grievance. In doing this, provide details about the topic of the disagreement, the timeline of events, and other relevant background.
2. In your previous interactions with the instructor, if any, what were the previous reasons that you were given for the disagreement? For example, if you disagree with a grade earned on assignment, what were the instructor's reasons for providing that grade?
3. What is a solution that would address your grievance? Although the instructor may not regard this solution as acceptable, please describe what you see as an outcome that would address your concerns.
4. How does the solution identified above remedy the situation in an appropriate manner? That is, why does the solution justly address the concerns that you have about the subject of the disagreement?