

ATTACHMENT B

Grade Appeal Process for Graduate Students (Proposed)

The Graduate School of the University of Arkansas recognizes that there may be occasions when a graduate student questions the fairness or accuracy of a grade. Situations that may result in an appeal include those where an instructor's policy was not applied consistently to all students, the instructor's actions differed substantially from announced policy or the syllabus, or that a policy was not announced. All grievances concerning course grades must be filed within one calendar year after the end of the term in which the grade is assigned. In such cases, the following process shall apply.

The student should first discuss the matter with the instructor involved, doing so as soon as possible after receiving the grade. If the student chooses to pursue an appeal, the student shall take the appeal in written form to the appropriate department or program chairperson of the program in which the course was instructed. The appeal should present the basis of the appeal with evidence the student may have to support the appeal. If that person determines the case has no merit, that person will inform the student and the instructor within five working days of having received the appeal from the student, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. If that person believes the complaint may have merit, that person will discuss it with the instructor. The instructor will have five working days from the date of that discussion (or as soon thereafter as is practicable) to decide whether to change the grade. In the case that the department or unit chairperson is the instructor, the student should submit an appeal in written form to the appropriate dean of the college in which the course was instructed.

If the matter remains unresolved, the department/program chair/head/director will, within 15 working days after receiving the original written approval (or as soon thereafter as is practicable), refer it to an *ad hoc* committee composed of programmatic or departmental faculty. This committee will be appointed by the department or program chairperson and will have at least three faculty with graduate faculty status representing the program or department in which the course was instructed. In the case where there are fewer than three faculty within the program or department to serve on the committee, graduate faculty members from a closely related discipline will be appointed to serve. In the case where the department or unit chairperson is the instructor of the appeal, the *ad hoc* committee will be appointed by the appropriate dean of the college in which the course was instructed. The instructor whose grade is being challenged shall not serve on this *ad hoc* committee. The committee will examine available written information on the dispute, will be available to meet with the student and with the instructor, and will meet with others as it sees fit. The committee will have a maximum of 20 working days (or as soon thereafter as is practicable), from the date that the committee received the appeal, to deliberate and make a recommendation as follows.

If by majority vote, the *ad hoc* faculty committee determines, through its inquiries and deliberations, that the grade should not be changed, the committee shall communicate this conclusion to the student, the faculty member, and the chairperson. This will end the appeal unless the student can demonstrate a violation of University policy in the original assessment of

the grade or in the deliberation by the *ad hoc* committee. In such cases, the graduate student will have access to the Graduate Student Grievance policy.

If, by a majority vote, the ad hoc faculty committee determines that the grade should be changed, the committee will request that the instructor make the change and provide the instructor with a written explanation. Should the instructor decline, he or she must provide to the *ad hoc* faculty committee a written explanation for refusing to do so within five working days of receiving the request from the committee (or as soon thereafter as is practicable).

If the *ad hoc* faculty committee, after considering the instructor's written explanation, concludes it would be inappropriate to allow the original grade to stand, it may then recommend to the department chairperson, or dean in the case where the department chairperson is the faculty whose grade is being challenged that the grade be changed. That individual (department chair or dean) will provide the instructor with a copy of the recommendation and will ask the instructor to implement it. If the instructor continues to decline, the chairperson or dean is then obligated to change the grade, notifying the instructor and the student of this action. Only the chairperson or dean has the authority to effect a grade change over the objection of the instructor who assigned the original grade, and only after the foregoing procedures have been followed. The final decision on the appeal must be made within 45 days of the student submitting it to the department/program chair/head/director (or as soon thereafter as is practicable). The instructor may appeal the decision to the academic dean or if the instructor is that person, to the Provost.