

# GRADE APPEAL POLICY



## Background

It is important that the integrity and accuracy of ALRA's assessments of learner outcomes be maintained at the highest level possible. To this end, ALRA employs faculty whose professional training prepares them to make informed judgments regarding student performance. It also provides a grade appeal process that offers students a reasonable opportunity to appeal results of particular academic assessments.

In pursuing appeals and rendering judgments, participants are reminded of the ALRA's fundamental commitment to fairness, trustworthiness, honesty, respect, and responsibility in all academic matters.

At ALRA the process of evaluation culminates in the awarding of a final grade in each course in which a student is registered. The assumption is made that the final grade was assigned through an equitable and accountable process in terms of stated course objectives. There are, however, occasions when this process is, or is perceived to be, neither fully realized nor documented. In such a situation, a student is allowed the opportunity to obtain a formal review of his/her final grade on pre-defined legitimate grounds through a Grade Appeal ('Grade Review') procedure.

The review procedure must provide a forum wherein the integrity of the faculty – student relationship must be ensured.

ALRA's policy regarding confidentiality of records applies to the grade review procedure.

## Procedure

1. Faculty-Student Resolution
  - a) Students should first speak to the instructor of the course from which the unsatisfactory grade was assigned in order to reach a resolution, before speaking with any administrative staff.
  - b) However, if a resolution cannot be made between a student and the instructor, then the student is entitled to the opportunity to obtain a formal review of his/her final grade on pre-defined legitimate grounds through a Grade Appeal ('Grade Review') procedure led by the Principal.
2. Grounds for Formal Review
  - a) A formal review by the Principal will be held if the student has already appealed to his/her instructor regarding his/her grade(s) and if no satisfactory resolution has been met between the faculty member and student.
  - b) Student have a maximum five (5) business days after the grade has been posted to formally appeal to the Principal.
  - c) The formal grade review procedure applies to a final grade only.
  - d) In order to establish equitable and objective grounds upon which to approach the review, the Principal must be able to review data that is measurable, namely:

- I. The stated method of evaluation (in terms of course objectives) for the course in question;
  - II. The manner in which this method of evaluation was applied;
  - III. Clear and concise documentation on how the grade was assigned.
  - IV. The criteria for evaluation as detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline and/or individual assignment guidelines.
  - V. Evaluation criteria were unclear or were not specified.
  - VI. The grade was assigned on a basis other than evaluation of the student's required coursework, and/or in a manner inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline with respect to such issues as penalties for late assignments or absences.
  - VII. Extenuating personal circumstances were not adequately considered, or could not reasonably be revealed at the time the Final Grade was awarded.
  - VIII. The Final Grade was miscalculated.
  - IX. Problems such as personality conflict or harassment must either relate directly to the bases described above or dealt through other vehicles such as ALRA's Code of Conduct.
- e) If a student challenges a single item such as a test, report, essay, or paper during the term, the Principal or designate will direct with this at his/her discretion.
    - I. This may involve designating himself/herself, a faculty member, or outside expert to re-read the paper and grade it independently.
  - f) A Final Grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same as the result of an appeal.
  - g) The Final Grade Appeal process is confidential and all parties to an appeal must respect this confidentiality.
  - h) Timelines may be extended with agreement of all parties, but should be respected wherever possible.
  - i) A Final Grade appeal is distinct from a complaint about the quality or delivery of a course or program, including a complaint about teaching quality. Such a complaint can be made to the Responsible Administrator.
  - j) A Final Grade appeal cannot consider matters of pedagogy (teaching methods) or professional judgment, as long as the instructor is complying with College educational policy, any department- or program-specific educational requirements, and the approved curriculum guideline for the course.
  - k) The decision reached by the Principal or designate, in consultation with the content expert, is final.
3. Prerequisite Courses
- a) All ALRA language courses are leveled. Students must progress through the levels depending on the Versant Language test and/or a combination of the test and scores given by their instructor.
  - b) Where the course reviewed is prerequisite to a course in the subsequent semester, and where the challenged grade in the prerequisite course is "F", the student may register and attend classes in the subsequent course until the review has been completed.
  - c) If the review results in no changes to the reviewed grade, the student must withdraw from the subsequent course (unless that prerequisite is waived).
4. Application

- a) Within 14 days of the posting of final semester grades, a student wishing to appeal a grade must state in writing to the Principal or designate, the following information:
    - II. The course and grade being appealed
    - III. Reason(s) for appeal (these must relate directly to the acceptable grounds for review)
  - b) The Principal or designate should advise students who need assistance in documenting their request to seek it from a faculty member or a Student Services Director.
  - c) Immediately upon receipt of this request, the Principal or designate will advise the student to discuss his/her concerns with the faculty member teaching the course to see if the question can be settled without the formal procedure.
  - d) Once the student has indicated this has been done and still wishes to proceed, the Principal or designate will confirm that the review is to be undertaken on a formal basis.
  - e) Once the request is formalized, the Principal or designate will ensure that both student and faculty receive copies of the procedure.
5. Grade Review Decision Timeframes
- a) The Principal or designate will be responsible for writing and communicating the decision.
  - b) In documenting the Principal's decision, any constructive comments offered to the teacher/instructor will be communicated to him/her.
  - c) The Principal or designate will summarize as appropriate reasons for the decision and communicate these to the appropriate parties.
  - d) The decision of the Principal shall be rendered within ten (10) business days.

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