

Formal Grade Appeals must be submitted by student to the department chairperson with all supporting materials within six (6) weeks after the start of the next regular semester.

Overview

The grade appeal procedure in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) is designed to assure students an orderly process for appeal and review of allegedly capricious grades and to assure instructors of their essential function of evaluation of student performance. Students are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

The SHSS grade appeal procedure is available only for review of allegedly capricious grading, and not for review of the judgment of instructors in assessing the quality of the students' work.

Capricious grading, as that term is used here, consists only of any of the following:

- (1) The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than the performance in the course.
- (2) The assignment of a grade to a particular student by resort to more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the course; (Note: this does not preclude instructors from setting more demanding standards for those taking undergraduate level courses for graduate credit.)
- (3) The assignment of a grade by substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards.

What students must do before initiating the formal grade appeal

Students must first discuss a course grade which they consider capricious with the instructor of the course. If anyone other than the instructor is first approached, the student should be referred to the instructor, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary. In the latter instance, the student should be referred to the chairperson of the department. If a grade appeal is made against a department chairperson, then the most senior member of the department would assume the role of chairperson for the purposes of the appeal.

If attempts to contact the instructor have been made by the student, but they have been unable to reach the instructor within two (2) weeks during the regular semester, the formal grade appeal process may be initiated. All communication will be conducted using UMKC email. Both parties are considered officially notified when the email is delivered to them via UMKC email.

If the matter cannot be resolved by consultation with the instructor, the student should confer with the appropriate departmental chairperson to review the options available to them and to discuss the procedure for a grade appeal.

If the student then wishes to pursue a grade appeal, he/she/they must present in writing all the facts and allegations as outlined below. The grade appeal form and supporting documents must be submitted to the department chairperson no later than Friday at 5:00 PM of the sixth (6) week of the next regular semester. In turn, the instructor will be asked to prepare a written explanation of the disputed grade and provide evidence

as outlined below. Neither student nor instructor may modify or submit additional materials, unless requested by the review committee.

Resorting to the following formal grade appeal procedure should be made only when the student believes the course grade was capriciously assigned, and the results of informal consultation were unsatisfactory. Neither the student nor the instructor is allowed to present their case in person on any level of the grade appeal review.

Step 1: Submission of Formal Grade Appeal Form and Supporting Documents

Must be submitted within six (6) weeks after the start of the next regular semester. Please note that review committees do not typically meet over the summer semester, so appeals related to spring grades will usually be reviewed the following fall semester.

Student initiates the formal grade appeal process by completing and emailing the [SHSS Grade Appeal Form](#) to the appropriate department chair with the following:

- Student's supporting documentation in their case (collected into one PDF file), such as course syllabus, email correspondence, grading rubrics, graded assignments, etc. Once this document is submitted, no further evidence can be added unless requested by the review committee(s).
- If the instructor does not respond to the student's request within two (2) weeks, evidence of communication attempts with the instructor must be submitted by the student.

Upon receipt of a Grade Appeal, the department chair will then request the instructor to submit the following:

- A written explanation of the disputed grade.
- Any applicable evidence to support the grading standards in the course (e.g., course syllabus, class grade rolls, individual grade records, attendance records, applicable assignment instructions, or other relevant evidence) in order for the review committee(s) to evaluate the possibility of capriciousness in grading. Once these documents are submitted, no further evidence can be added unless requested by the review committee(s).

Step 2: Department's Review

If the department has a standing student appeals or grievance committee, that committee will consider the student's case. If the department has no such standing committee, the chairperson will establish an ad hoc departmental committee for that purpose. The instructor in question shall not serve on the appeals committee. If the department has an elected representative on the Student Affairs Council, that faculty member is not eligible to serve on the department committee.

The departmental committee may recommend:

- (1) That the grade stand;
- (2) That the instructor re-evaluate the evidence of the student's performance;
- (3) Other remedies which, under the circumstances of the particular case, seem more likely to produce an equitable resolution.

Committee recommendations will be communicated to the department chair, who will relay the decision both to the student and to the instructor via UMKC email.

If the recommendation is either 2 or 3 above, and the instructor declines to comply with the recommendation, the departmental chairperson may then require the instructor to make an appropriate grade change. If, in this instance, the instructor continues to refuse to comply, the chairperson may recommend to the Dean of SHSS that the appropriate documentation for a grade change be filed with the Registrar's Office. In this case, the instructor will be advised of his/her/their right to appeal to the Dean.

Either party may appeal the department decision to the Dean of SHSS. Appeals must be initiated within ten (10) calendar days of the department decision by email to shssappeals@umkc.edu.

Step 3: Dean's Review

If the result of the departmental review is a recommendation that the original grade will stand (option 1 above), the student may appeal to the Dean of SHSS. On the other hand, if the result of the department review is that the original grade will not stand, the instructor may appeal to the Dean. Upon notification of an appeal, the department will be asked to complete a SHSS Grade Appeal Form: Department form. Upon receipt, the Dean will convene the Student Affairs Council of SHSS, which will consider the record of the departmental review and provide advice for the Dean's consideration. The Student Affairs Council will review the case and make their recommendation in writing directly to the Dean.

The Dean may:

- (1) Accept the results of the departmental review and confirm that the grade will be allowed to stand;
- (2) Ask the department to reconsider the case citing errors, inconsistencies, omissions, etc., which may have influenced the departmental recommendation;
- (3) Take personal responsibility as the chief academic officer of SHSS to file the appropriate documentation for a grade change with the Registrar's Office.

The decision of the Dean will be communicated in writing via UMKC email to the student, the instructor, the department chair, and the chair of the Student Affairs Council.

The student may appeal the Dean's decision to the Provost within ten (10) calendar days. Students must submit the UMKC Student Grade Appeal Form with their appeal to the Provost.

Step 4: Provost's Review

The Provost's decision is final.