



Truckee Meadows Community College

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services

OFFICIAL GRADE APPEAL

Instructions

The purpose of the Grade Appeal Policy is to provide the student with a safeguard against receiving an unfair final grade, while respecting the academic responsibility of the instructor. Thus, this procedure recognizes that:

- Every student has a right to receive a grade assigned upon a fair and unprejudiced evaluation based on a method that is neither arbitrary nor capricious; and,
- Instructors have the right to assign a grade based on any method that is professionally acceptable, submitted in writing to all students, and applied equally.

Instructors have the responsibility to provide careful evaluation and timely assignment of appropriate grades. Course and project grading methods should be explained to students at the beginning of the term. The judgment of the instructor of record is authoritative, and the final grades assigned are correct.

A grade appeal shall be confined to charges of unfair action toward an individual student and may not involve a challenge of an instructor's grading standard. A student has a right to expect thoughtful and clearly defined approaches to course and project grading, but it must be recognized that varied standards and individual approaches to grading are valid. The grade appeal considers whether a grade was determined in a fair and appropriate manner; it does not attempt to grade or re-grade individual assignments or projects. It is incumbent on the student to substantiate the claim that his or her final grade represents unfair treatment, compared to the standard applied to other students. Only the final grade in a course or project may be appealed. In the absence of compelling reasons, such as clerical error, prejudice, or capriciousness, the grade assigned by the instructor of record is to be considered final.

In a grade appeal, the presence of one or more of the following will be considered as the only legitimate grounds for an appeal.

Arbitrariness

- The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise professional judgment.

Prejudice

- The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student's academic performance.

Error

- The instructor made a mistake in fact or the instructor refused to correct a clerical or administrative error made in the process of transmitting a grade to the Office of Admissions and Records.

Personal Hardship

- Verifiable incapacity, illness, or injury which prevents the student from returning to school for the remainder of the semester (Attach a copy of your medical documentation from your doctor) or
- Death of student, spouse, child, parent or legal guardian (Attach a copy of the death certificate) or

- Induction into the U.S. Armed Forces (Attach a copy of your military orders)

It is important for students to understand that it is the student's responsibility to prove that the final course grade is improper based on one of the criteria listed above.

This grade appeal procedure applies only when a student initiates a grade appeal and not when the instructor decides to change a grade on his or her own initiative. This procedure does not cover instances where students have been assigned grades based on academic dishonesty or academic misconduct. Also excluded from this procedure are grade appeals alleging discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of TMCC's Sexual Harassment Policy, which shall be referred to the appropriate office at TMCC.

The Grade Appeal Procedure strives to resolve a disagreement between student and instructor concerning the assignment of a grade in a collegial manner. The intent is to provide a mechanism for the informal discussion of differences of opinion, and for the formal adjudication by faculty only when necessary. In all instances, students who believe that an appropriate grade has not been assigned must first seek to resolve the matter informally with the instructor of record. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the student must present his or her case in a timely fashion in the procedure outlined below. A student who wishes to appeal the grade must do so within 90 days of the official ending date of the class.

Steps of Student Grade Appeal Procedure

1. Whatever the nature of the grade appeal, the student must make an effort to discuss the matter with the faculty member of record. This may be done through a scheduled meeting, phone conversation, or in writing. The faculty member is expected to discuss the matter with the student in a timely manner, provide a clarifying response to the student's inquiry, and, if appropriate, adjust the disputed academic decision or grade. During periods of regular instruction, faculty should attempt to acknowledge or fully respond to a student's inquiry within ten (10) academic days after it is received.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the faculty member's response, or if a timely response (within 10 academic days during periods of regular instruction and 15 work days during other periods) is not received, the student shall attempt to discuss the potential complaint with the chair or program coordinator of the appropriate academic department or school in which the academic decision was made or the course taught.
3. If, after the above outlined pre-complaint efforts are exhausted, a student chooses to bring a formal complaint, the student must file the formal complaint through the appropriate instructional dean in which the academic decision was made or the course taught.
4. The student must complete a TMCC Official Grade Appeal Form, which is available through the Admissions and Records office and the TMCC Website. A written statement of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the grade appeal must be attached to the Appeal Form. This statement must be clear, complete, accurate, and truthful, and **may not exceed two (2) pages**. Students appealing a grade should be able to provide all tests, papers and other evidence they may have to support their appeal. The complaint must be justified based on at least one of the four conditions listed above that form the basis for a grade appeal.
5. When properly completed, the Appeal Form is submitted to the appropriate instructional dean. The appeal will be returned to the student without processing if: a) the Appeal Form is incomplete, b) the appeal is not filed within 90 days of the official ending date of the class, c) the student has not initiated pre-complaint efforts with the faculty member, or d) the complaint describes issues or concerns that fall outside of the grounds listed above for a grade appeal.
6. The dean will forward a copy of the Appeal Form to the faculty member. The faculty member must provide a written response to the appeal within 10 academic days of the date it is received. The faculty member shall immediately inform the dean of circumstances that might prevent a timely reply.

7. A copy of the faculty response, along with a copy of the Appeal Form, will be sent to the appropriate department chair/program coordinator. The department chair/program coordinator will assess the appeal and provide a written recommendation with regard to dispensation of the appeal. The chair/coordinator may call a meeting with the student and the faculty member in an effort to mediate the dispute. Typically, this meeting will be arranged within three weeks after the dean has been notified of the complaint, or as soon as the schedules of all participants permit. If possible, the chair/coordinator will propose a solution. Any solution to which the student and faculty member agree should be placed in writing and communicated to the dean and all interested parties. The chair/coordinator will provide a written response to the student appeal to the dean within five (10) academic days after the meeting or within 10 days of receiving the appeal if no meeting is held.
8. The dean will provide a final assessment of the student appeal by evaluating all written responses. If the dean finds that a grade was improperly given a grade change card will be filed on behalf of the student. The dean will inform the student in writing as to the decision of the appeal. The dean's decision is final.



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NOTE: READ ALL DIRECTIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THIS FORM.

Student Information

Name		Student ID		
Address		City	State	Zip Code
Home Telephone	Cell Number	Email		

Course Information

Faculty Member Name		
Course Title	Course Number	Section
Semester Taken	Grade You Received	Grade You Feel You Deserve

Efforts to Resolve this Complaint

You must attempt to resolve this matter with the instructor of the course and if not satisfied with the department chair/program coordinator prior to completing this form.

Have you already attempted to resolve this matter with the faculty member/chair/coordinator?

Yes

Date of discussion with the faculty member
Results of the Discussion

No

Explain Why

Reason for Grade Appeal

At least one condition **must** apply to your complaint:

Arbitrariness: The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise professional judgment.

Prejudice: The grade awarded was motivated by ill will, and is not indicative of the student's academic performance.

Error: The instructor made a mistake in fact or the instructor refused to correct a clerical or administrative error made in the process of transmitting a grade to the Office of Admissions and Records.

Personal Hardship: Verifiable incapacity, illness, or injury which prevents the student from returning to school for the remainder of the semester (attach a copy of your medical documentation from your doctor) or death of student, spouse, child, parent or legal guardian (attach a copy of the death certificate) or induction into the U.S. Armed Forces (attach a copy of your military orders).

Attach a description of the facts and circumstances that led to the filing of this grade appeal. This statement must be clear, complete, accurate, and truthful, and **may not exceed two pages**. Students appealing a grade should provide **copies** of all tests, papers and other evidence they may have to support their appeal. **Only** copies of your work will be accepted—**do not submit originals**.

I hereby certify that this appeal contains a complete, accurate and truthful statement of the facts in this matter.

Student Signature

Date

Responses to Appeal

Instructor

Written Response to Appeal			
Approval	Approve	Deny	Signature
			Date

Chair/Coordinator

Written Response to Appeal			
Approval	Approve	Deny	Signature
			Date

Dean

Written Response to Appeal			
Approval	Approve	Deny	Signature
			Date
Date student notified of final decision			