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| Title | Appeal of Final Grade |
| Policy No. | C.1.2 |
| Approval Body | Education Council |
| Policy Sponsor | Vice President, Academic & Research |
| Last Revised/Replaces | January 29, 2004 |
| Effective Date | December 13, 2016 |

Students are encouraged to consult with the Arbiter of Student Issues and/or VCC Students Union advocate throughout the Final Grade Appeal process.

Informal Resolution of a Final Grade Appeal

1. The student and relevant instructor are strongly encouraged to resolve the student’s concern about a final grade on an informal basis by discussing the concerns together prior to the student filing a formal Final Grade Appeal. The student may take concerns to the Arbiter of Student Issues or Students’ Union Advocate who may facilitate the attempt to resolve the matter on an informal basis.
2. If a resolution is reached, the instructor will pursue whatever action is agreed upon.
3. If a resolution is not reached with the instructor, the student is strongly encouraged to take concerns to the Department Leader. The Department Leader will document this discussion and communicate in writing any resolution reached.
4. If a resolution is not reached with the Department Leader, the student may initiate a formal appeal of final grade.

Grade Appeals Filed by Group of Students

5. Should a group of students have similar concerns about their final grade, they may meet as a group with the instructor and/or Department Leader as per the informal process above. However, should these meetings fail to achieve a resolution each student must individually file a Final Grade Appeal.

Submission of Final Grade Appeal Form

6. The student must fully complete a “Final Grade Appeal Form (the “Form”), available from the Registrar’s Office, and pay the required fee. The Form must be filed with the Registrar’s Office no later than ten (10) business days from the date that the grade is posted on myVCC.
7. Deans may consider an appeal after the deadline if there are compassionate or extenuating circumstances or if there is evidence that the student actively pursued an informal resolution that delayed the filing of a formal Final Grade Appeal. The student must provide a written explanation for requesting a discretionary extension of the deadline to appeal.

8. The Registrar's Office will immediately forward the Form and any supporting material to the Dean responsible for the course in which the grade is being appealed.
9. The Dean's office will confirm receipt of the Form and materials in writing to the student and encourage the student to use available resources such as the Arbiter of Student Issues and/or the Students' Union Advocate. Only fully completed Forms will be considered. If a Form is incomplete, the Dean will inform the student that the Final Grade Appeal will not proceed until a completed Form is received. The form must be completed and submitted to the Dean within 3 days of this notification.
10. The Dean will determine whether or not the grounds on which the appeal is being made fall within section 11.

If the grounds do not fall within the scope of this policy, the Dean may dismiss the appeal and will so inform the student, the instructor and the Department Leader in writing. The student may then appeal the decision of the Dean through the process outlined in section "Appealing the Decision of the Dean", below.

11. Grounds for appeal are limited to the following:
 - a. The course outline has not been followed or was not provided by the instructor;
 - b. The evaluation criteria have not been applied according to the Grading, Progression and Withdrawal Policy (C.1.1);
 - c. The evaluation criteria have not been applied in a reasonable, fair and just manner;
 - d. A procedural error related to grade calculation was made (e.g., instructor lost assignments, calculation errors); and/or
 - e. There was a violation of VCC policy or procedure that has a direct impact on the final grade.
12. The Dean will notify the instructor and the Department Leader about the appeal as soon as possible after the appeal form is received.
13. The Dean will ensure all efforts are made to complete the formal appeal process within fifteen (15) business days of the appeal being received in the Dean's office. Where this is not possible, the student will be informed of the delay and given a reasonable estimate of the revised time line.
14. The Dean will collect and review all relevant information and, if necessary, request further information from any of the parties involved.
15. The Dean must provide the student with a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Dean to discuss their case. The student may bring the Arbiter of Student Issues; the SUVCC Student Advocate; or another individual to the meeting.
16. If the grade being appealed would otherwise prevent the student from continuing with the program of studies or attending the next level of a course or program, the College will allow the student to continue with their studies during the period of the appeal process unless the student's practice, knowledge or theory base is deemed unsafe. In this instance the instructor or Department Leader will provide a written

rationale for the student academic file and provide the student with a copy.

Formal Investigation

17. If the grounds are established, then the Dean will make a determination as to how the grade appeal will be resolved, and a written rationale will be provided to the student, Department Leader and instructor. The Dean may select any or all of the following course(s) of action:
 - a. Order a re-marking of written or recorded work as outlined by the process below;
 - b. Order a review of non-written or non-recorded work by the process outlined below;
 - c. Convene a Final Grade Appeal Committee, which will review any non-evaluative claims and recommend a decision to the Dean; and/or
 - d. Some other process at the discretion of the Dean, in consultation with the Department Leader and instructor.
18. In order to make this determination, the Dean may:
 - a. Ask the instructor to verify that the body of work submitted by the student is authentic, accurate and complete.
 - b. Ask the instructor to submit any additional course work completed by the student that was not returned to the student and any additional instructional materials provided to the student.
 - c. Seek any other relevant information. If the appeal requires the Dean to investigate the matter, the Dean must provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the Dean to provide further information.
19. If there is a delay past the 15 (fifteen) business day period, the Dean will inform the student of the delay and give a revised time line.

Re-marking of Written or Recorded Work

20. Evaluated student work that is written, audio-recorded, video-recorded, photographed or otherwise captured, may be re-marked provided that the work contains all the information necessary for re-marking as determined by the testing rubric and/or relevant guidelines.
21. If the re-marking of the written or recorded work is ordered, then the Dean, in consultation with the Department Leader, will appoint two independent reviewers, (i.e., who have not been involved with the student during the course being appealed), drawn from faculty members in the same or related disciplines. The reviewers will review independently the student's work to determine whether or not a change in grade is warranted.
22. Each of the independent reviewers will be provided with copies of the written or recorded work that the student has requested be reviewed.
 - a. For written work, any student names, marks, comments or notations made by the original instructor will be removed from the work; if necessary, the work will be retyped by the Dean's office. The reviewers may, at any point in the

review, request from the Dean permission to see all of the body of work relevant to the grade appeal completed by the student (also free of marks, comments and notations). However, this request would not require the reviewer to re-evaluate the additional course work. If permission is granted, the Dean will include this information in the written rationale of their final decision.

- b. For recorded work where removal of the identity of the student is impossible due to the nature of the medium (e.g., video or audio-recording) or the re-evaluation requires direct observation of the actions of the student (e.g., practical skills demonstration), the independent reviewers will continue the evaluation without requiring an attempt to hide the identity of the student.
23. The independent reviewers will review the work and arrive at an assessment within five (5) business days of receipt of the appeal material. An extension of time will be considered only if there are extenuating circumstances to warrant the extension. The reviewers will, independently and in writing, submit the reasons for the grade determination on the re-marked work and forward this to the Dean. Neither reviewer will share or discuss their findings with the other reviewer.

Re-evaluation of Non-written or Non-recorded Work

24. This section applies when evaluative elements of courses are non-written or non-recorded, or have limited written or recorded material (e.g., practical skill demonstrations, practicum placement experiences).
25. If the course, program or department has a written published protocol for handling the review of such work either throughout the course (e.g., multiple attempts to pass a practical demonstration) or after the course (e.g., final comprehensive practical exam), or by other means, this protocol is to be followed in the review of the student's work. The Dean may investigate and determine whether the protocol was followed correctly and if the protocol itself is fair and reasonable. The Dean may decide whether the student appeal should be upheld or denied based on the outcome of this review.
26. Where there is not a course, program or departmental published protocol for review of such work, the Dean may rule in favour of the student based on an investigation or may refer the matter to the Final Grade Appeal Committee who may consider all aspects of the student appeal in reaching a recommendation.

Convening a Final Grade Appeal Committee

27. The Dean may convene a Final Grade Appeal Committee to review any claims other than re-marking or re-evaluation of student work that leads to a decision. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Dean.
28. The student will be required to complete a Final Grade Appeal Committee Information Form, which will be provided by the Dean.
29. The Final Grade Appeal Committee will typically be composed of the following:
- a. The Dean as Final Grade Appeal Committee Chair ("Chair");
 - b. Two (2) faculty members or Continuing Studies instructors from a program other than the program of the appealing student (this can

- include one Department Head); and
 - c. Two (2) student members, with one (1) student member from a program other than the program of the student pursuing the appeal.
30. Final Grade Appeal Committee members are required to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest to the Committee for discussion and determination of suitability for the Final Grade Appeal Committee. The Dean will not participate where there is a conflict of interest and instead appoint a Dean from another area.
31. The Dean will select faculty members for the Final Grade Appeal Committee from a list provided by the Chair of the Appeals Oversight Committee of Education Council or will select faculty who have previously participated in appeal hearings. The Dean will request student representation from the Students Union of VCC.
32. The names of the Final Grade Appeal Committee members will remain confidential, and only be provided to the participants at the time of the hearing.
33. When necessary to convene, the Final Grade Appeal Committee hearing will be attended by:
- a. Members of the Final Grade Appeal Committee;
 - b. The student. The student is expected to fully participate in the hearing and answer any direct factual questions asked by the Committee;
 - c. The relevant instructor(s);
 - d. The relevant Department Leader;
 - e. The relevant Dean/Director (or delegate if not chairing the Committee);
 - f. Other persons as indicated below may attend the hearing:
 - i. a VCC Students' Union Advocate
 - ii. a support person may accompany the student, Department leader or instructor. The support person may not speak during the Committee hearing. The name of the support person must be provided to the Chair five (5) business days before the Committee meeting.
 - iii. The Arbiter of Student Issues is notified of every appeal, and will be invited to attend as an observer.
 - iv. Witnesses. The student and/or the instructor may call in witnesses to the hearing. Any witnesses will remain outside the hearing until called in by the Chair and will leave when directed by the Chair.
34. The student may request accommodations needed to fully participate in the Committee hearing (e.g., interpreter) and must inform the Chair of such requirements at least five (5) business days before the Committee hearing.
35. The student or the instructor may request one 5 minute caucus discussion with their support person.
36. The Chair will compile the student and instructor packages and distribute to the Committee attendees at least 2 business days prior to the hearing date.
37. The Final Grade Appeal Committee hearings are closed meetings and are not open to the public or VCC community members who are not involved in the case being

heard.

38. During the hearing, the Chair will ensure that due process is followed. The Chair will begin by introducing all parties in attendance and outlining the procedures to be followed. An opportunity will be provided for presentation of the issues from the student's perspective. The instructor or Department Leader will be given the same opportunity. Committee members may ask questions of the parties and any witnesses. All parties may ask questions through the Chair.
39. Members of the Committee and other employees of the College involved are required to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings.
40. Immediately after the Committee proceedings end, the members will deliberate in private and make a recommendation regarding the Appeal.
40. The recommendation is made by majority vote.
41. The Chair will summarize the recommendation of the Committee.
42. All Appeal Committee hearings will be recorded, and written and/or audio records will be maintained by Registrar's Office in the Student Academic File for at least one (1) year after the Committee date. These records will remain confidential.

Rendering a Final Decision

43. The Dean will consider all information uncovered during the course of the investigation including the results of re-marking or review by independent reviewers, and/or recommendations from the Final Grade Appeal Committee to render a final decision.
44. The Dean may
 - a. Let the original grade stand;
 - b. Substitute a new grade (up or down);
 - c. Retroactively withdraw the student from the course without academic penalty; or
 - d. Proceed with other action as appropriate.
45. The Dean will communicate the final decision, with rationale, in writing to the student with a copy to the Department Leader and Student Records in the Registrar's Office. This decision will be included in the Student Academic File.

Consequence of Failed or Successful Final Grade Appeal

46. If the student's grade appeal is successful, the grade is changed and corrected in the student academic file and transcript. If the student has been prevented from progressing in a course or program pending the appeal, the student will be allowed to proceed with the program. If not possible, other options for continuation will be provided. The student will also be refunded the fee for the Final Grade Appeal.
47. The student remains responsible for any academic, personal or financial consequences of a final grade appeal excluding the following:
 - a. If the student continues in classes which require the appealed course as a prerequisite pending the outcome of the appeal, and the appeal fails, the student will be retroactively withdrawn from the course(s)

and the course specific tuitions and related fees will be refunded.

- b. If the student fails to register for classes for which the appealed course is a prerequisite, and the appeal is successful, the student's grades will be adjusted but no other extraordinary measures will be taken (e.g., given priority course registration in the future).
- c. If the decision is to retroactively withdraw a student from the course whose final grade the student is appealing, the student will not suffer academic penalty. The student may remain responsible for tuition and other course related fees paid during the time the class was taken. Exception to this is at the sole discretion of the Dean based on medical and compassionate considerations.

Appealing the Decision of the Dean

48. A student may appeal the Dean's decision through an Appeal to Education Council on Academic Matters Policy (A.2.1). During this appeal, the same restrictions/permissions (e.g., class attendance) that apply during the Dean level of the appeal also apply during an appeal to Education Council.
49. Grounds for appeals to Education Council are limited to the following:
 - a. the prior Formal Appeal lacked due process;
 - b. there is relevant new information that was not available when the prior Formal Appeal decision was made and that may have influenced the outcome.

RELATED POLICY

Refer to C.1.2 Appeal of Final Grade Policy