

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL PROCESS
(GRADE APPEAL AND ACADEMIC REVIEW BOARD, OP 13.14)**

Two forms are placed at the end of this document. The first is for the student to document the appeal and the second is for Department Head and Dean to acknowledge the receipt of the student's appeal.

General Policies. The instructor (herein defined as one who has the responsibility for a class, special problem, or thesis) has authority in the class over all matters affecting the conduct of the class, including the assignment of grades in a fair and just manner. The authority to change a grade rests with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs after the appeal procedure has been carried out.

Appeals associated with the fairness of grades must be filed with the instructor's department head within 30 calendar days after the beginning of the next regular semester (Fall, Spring) following the term in which the grade is earned.

The grade appealed shall remain in effect until the appeal process is finally concluded.

Any associated effects (loss of eligibility or privilege of any kind) shall be invoked even though an appeal is pending or planned.

Records on grades, examination papers not returned, etc., should be retained on file for a minimum of six months.

Procedure. The following procedure is to be followed in appealing all grades. The text in maroon is the procedural section (Section C) of OP 13.14 Grade Appeal and Academic Review Board, revised in April of 2004. The complete policy can be found at <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html>

C. APPEAL PROCEDURE

1. The student is to take the complaint in writing to the instructor involved.
2. If the student does not obtain satisfaction, the student may acquire a grade appeal form from any academic dean's office or from the Registrar's Office, fill it out, and take it to the instructor's department head within 30 days after the beginning of the following regular semester (Fall, Spring). The department head shall acknowledge the receipt of the form and return the duplicate to the student. The complaint should be described fully on the grade appeal form and the nature of this complaint shall remain constant throughout the appeal process.
3. The department head will rule on the grade appeal. Either the student or the instructor may appeal this ruling to the academic dean to whom the department head reports. If appealed, the department head shall immediately forward the appeal form with a letter of recommendation to the dean. The dean will then send copies of all materials to the student's dean, if different from that of the department head's dean. Both the department head and dean's review will occur within a reasonable time and in ordinary circumstances will take no longer than two weeks for each level.
4. The dean will rule on the grade appeal. Either the student or the instructor may appeal this ruling to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The reviewing dean shall immediately forward the appeal form, a letter of recommendation, and the complete case file to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may then refer the case to the Academic Review Board within two weeks. Note: If the appeal were to arrive in the Provost Office with less than two weeks left in the spring semester, the appeal would be referred to the Academic Review Board at the beginning of the following fall semester.

5. Hearing procedure. The following guidelines are established for the direction of the Academic Review Board conducting formal hearings on academic appeals:

- a. The instructor and student shall be informed in writing by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the place and time of the hearing
- b. The instructor and student will be allowed 72 hours to prepare for the hearing. The instructor and student may request additional time by showing cause in writing to the chair. The instructor and student shall be advised that they have the right to appear with an advisor if they so choose.
- c. The majority of the hearing Board members (or their alternates) shall constitute a quorum. In the event a quorum is not present, both the student and instructor must agree to proceed with the hearing, otherwise the hearing will be rescheduled.
- d. Academic Review Board hearings are of a private, confidential nature. They are closed to the public.
- e. The instructor shall be strongly encouraged to appear in person to present his/her case to the Academic Review Board, and the instructor may call witnesses in his/her behalf. However, the instructor may elect not to appear before the Review Board. Should the instructor elect not to appear, the hearing shall be held in his/her absence. The failure of an instructor to appear must be noted without prejudice; however, the Board will act upon the evidence presented to it whether or not the faculty member is present. The student must appear in person to present his/her case and may call witnesses in his/her behalf. Both the student and the instructor must provide to the chair a list of witnesses they intend to call at least 72 hours before the hearing.

It will be left to the discretion of the Academic Review Board whether or not to permit the introduction of any particular written statement. If written evidence is to be presented against the instructor, the instructor shall be allowed to see the actual signed statements at least 72 hours before the hearing. Unsigned statements shall not be admissible as evidence.

- f. The instructor or student shall have the right to challenge any member of the Academic Review Board for good cause and request that the individual be disqualified for that hearing. This dismissal of a challenged hearing Board member shall be at the discretion of the hearing Board Chair. Should the Chair be directly involved in the case, the Chair shall excuse himself/herself and a Chair Pro Tempore shall be selected by the members of the Academic Review Board for that hearing.
- g. The instructor and student shall have an opportunity to be present during the presentation of all evidence and to challenge the admissibility of any evidence. They shall each have the opportunity to question all witnesses. The Chair of the Academic Review Board shall supervise any questioning of this nature, and, at the Chair's discretion, may strike any questions which are not relevant to the purpose of the hearing. The Board may question the instructor, the student, and any witnesses.
- h. The recommendation in each case shall be made by a majority of Academic Review Board members present and voting.
- i. Recommendations of the Board and the factual basis upon which the recommendations are made will be issued in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for a final decision. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall transmit the recommendations and the Provost's decision to the instructor and the student within 30 days of receiving the recommendations of the Board.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM

APPLICATION IS INVALID IF NOT COMPLETED IN FULL

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

I.D. Number: _____

College/School: _____ Major: _____

Class (Please circle one): FR / SO / JR / SR / GR

**Appeal notification will be sent to this address. It is up to the student to keep the current address, email address, and phone number updated with the Office of the Provost. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of appeal in not responding.*

*Current Local Address: _____

*Local Telephone Number: (662) _____ *Email address: _____

Permanent Home Address: _____

Permanent Home Telephone Number: Area Code () _____

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I hereby register formal complaint against: _____

(Name of Instructor) for what I consider prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation in

the awarding of grades in Course Number: _____, Title: _____,

Section: _____, taken during the _____

Semester, 20____, and request that the Grade Appeal Procedure be initiated.

Grade given by Instructor: _____

Grade sought by Student: _____

Signature

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In the space provided below, describe fully the nature of your complaint and give substantive evidence to demonstrate its legitimacy (add additional sheets if necessary).

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADE APPEAL FORM

Appeal of: _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

Receipt of the appeal is acknowledged, and the following action has been taken:

Date: _____
Department Head

I accept/reject the above action:

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Student)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Instructor)

(The student and instructor have two weeks from the date of the department head's decision to accept or reject the above action. (If the decision is appealed, the department head should submit a letter of recommended action to his/her dean.)

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Copy (with data attached) to _____, student's dean, if different from department head's dean.

Receipt of the appeal to the above action is acknowledged, and the following action has been taken:

Date: _____
Dean

I accept/reject the above action:

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Student)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Instructor)

(The student and instructor have two weeks from the date of the dean's decision to accept or reject the above action. If the action is appealed, the dean must furnish the complete file to the Office of the Provost, together with the dean's recommended action.)