

**School of Business (GWSB)
The George Washington University**

Process for Resolving Student Grade Grievances

The purpose of this process is to resolve student assertions of “arbitrary or capricious academic evaluation” in the form of a course grade in the School of Business and in accordance with the *GW Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities*.

- I. A student with a grade grievance shall follow the steps in the attached Flowchart of the GWSB Process to Resolve a Grade Grievance. At each point, the student should request a meeting with the appropriate faculty and administrators and discuss the grievance with the objective of reaching agreement on a remedy that is satisfactory to the student and the instructor. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of a meeting, she or he may initiate a discussion at the next level.
- II. **Documentation**. Students are responsible for providing adequate written information.
 - a. Course syllabus
 - b. Assignment or work product involved in the dispute, if applicable
 - c. Statement of student grade grievance
 - d. Instructor response to statement of student grade grievance
 - e. Timeline of the steps followed in the attached Flowchart of the GWSB Process to Resolve a Grade Grievance.
 - f. Other relevant documents that the student or instructor wishes to submit
 - g. Completed form: attached Notification of a Grade Grievance form.
- III. **Nature of grievances covered** under this process. This policy and procedure pertains to a student assertion of arbitrary or capricious assignment of course grade (a “grade grievance”). Cases of academic dishonesty are not included here (see *Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities: Code of Academic Integrity*), nor are allegations of illegal discrimination (see *Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student Grievance Procedures*).
- IV. **Materiality**. Grade disagreements of two grade levels or more may be submitted by a student to the appropriate GWSB Dean for referral to the GWSB Dean’s Council. The grade levels are, from lowest to highest, F, D-, D, D+, C-, C, C+, B-, B, B+, A-, A. For example, a student assertion that a course grade of B+ should be changed to A- is not material and will not be reviewed by the Dean’s Council, while an assertion that at B+ course grade should be an A is material.
- V. **Instructor responsibilities**. It is the responsibility of the course instructor to provide a syllabus (or course outline) to each student in a course at the beginning of the semester that clearly sets forth the instructor’s grading policy in the course. It is also the responsibility of the instructor to adhere to the grading policy stated in the syllabus, or, if changes are made, to announce and implement them in a manner that is not prejudicial to the evaluation any student receives from the course instructor. It is also the responsibility of the instructor to respond to a student’s communication of a grade grievance within a reasonable period of time (normally within 12 working days except in the summer or during academic breaks and holidays). Finally, faculty are reminded that the *Faculty Handbook* (paragraph 4-20) requires instructors to retain graded examinations and papers not returned to students for one year after the semester during which the work was submitted.
- VI. **Student responsibilities**: It is the responsibility of the student to communicate clearly with the instructor and on a timely basis about any grading issues in a course. If the student is not

clear about the syllabus, the grading policy or a grade on a student assignment or other work product, the student should immediately initiate a discussion with the instructor.

- VII. **Confidentiality.** Students, instructors and administrative officers shall maintain confidentiality about all items relating to a grade grievance.
- VIII. **Limitations:** If a student disagrees with a course grade, the student must contact the instructor to initiate a discussion within one month of the posting of the course grade at issue. If after following the process specified in the attached Flowchart the student believes his/her grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily, then s/he may file a Notification of a Grade Grievance form with the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, as appropriate. This Notification must be delivered no later than four months after the student's final course grade has been posted. A grade grievance will not be accepted after this period except under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the GWSB Dean's Council. A GWSB Dean receiving such Notification shall promptly transmit it to the Chair of the GWSB Dean's Council.
- IX. **File retention:** It shall be the responsibility of the GWSB Dean's Office to retain files regarding disputes beginning with a student's "Notification of a Grade Grievance" filing. These files shall be retained for two academic years, and then discarded. No materials will be placed in individual student files in program offices, nor will notations be made on academic transcripts. See section V above for instructor record retention requirements.
- X. **Precedence:** These policies and procedures amplify the *Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. In the event of conflicts between these documents, the *Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities* shall prevail.
- XI. **Hearings:** The Dean's Council Chair shall appoint a Grade Grievance Hearing Committee within three (3) weeks of receiving a Notification of a Grade Grievance form. This Committee shall be composed of two GWSB regular active status faculty members (the related instructor and Department Chair are ineligible to serve) and one GWSB administrative officer for the purpose of determining whether the student appeal is upheld and recommending a grade change, if warranted. The administrative officer will be the Undergraduate Dean in a case of a graduate student grievance, and the Graduate Dean in a case of an undergraduate student. Committee members will use majority vote by closed ballot to determine the resolution of the grievance. The members will complete and sign the Resolution of a Grade Grievance form and submit this to the Chair of the GWSB Dean's Council. This Chair will then transmit copies to the student, the instructor, and, if necessary the GW University Dean's Council.
- XII. **Appeals.** The Grade Grievance Hearing Committee is the final appellate body for grade grievances in GWSB. If the student believes that in some identifiable manner the procedures detailed above have not been followed by this Committee, the student may request in writing (detailing procedural violations) that the GWSB Dean's Council review the procedural aspects of the case, and the GWSB Dean's Council will do so. If the GWSB Dean's Council concludes that there have been procedural violations, this Council will constitute a new Grade Grievance Hearing Committee with different faculty members for a re-hearing.

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Notification of a Grade Grievance

Student should complete this form, attach the documentation required and submit it to the GWSB Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

I, _____, dispute the grading of _____ by
(name of student) (student's work product[s])

_____ that occurred during the _____
(name of instructor) (fall, spring, or summer)

semester of _____ in _____.
(year) (course registration number and name)

I request that the grade of _____ be changed to _____.
(original grade)

I hereby notify the Dean's Council of the School of Business that I request a hearing to resolve the dispute. I have attached required documentation.

Student Signature

Date

Dean's Signature

Date Forwarded to Dean's Council Chair

[Dean confirms that student has conferred with course Instructor, Department Chair and appropriate Dean]

Attachments

- a. Course syllabus
- b. Assignment or work product involved in the dispute, if applicable
- c. Statement of student grade grievance
- d. Instructor response to statement of student grade grievance
- e. Timeline of the steps followed in the attached Process to Resolve a Grade Grievance Flowchart
- f. Other relevant documents that the student or instructor wishes to submit

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Resolution of a Grade Grievance

Student filing "Notification of a Grade Grievance": _____

Course Instructor: _____

Course number and name: _____ Semester/year: _____

Date of "Notification of a Grade Grievance": _____

Grade Grievance Hearing Committee Signatures

_____ Faculty Member

_____ Faculty Member

_____ Administrative Officer

After due consideration of the Notification of Grade Grievance, this Committee:

_____ Accepts the agreement reached between the Student and the Instructor as final resolution of this grade grievance*: _____

_____ Accepts the Student's grade grievance request and, in the absence of the Instructor's concurrence, recommends it be communicated to the GW Dean's Council for appropriate action as provided in section II, paragraph B of the *GW Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities* and section III, paragraph C of the *GW Faculty Code*.

_____ Rejects the Student's grade grievance.

***Acceptance of this resolution**

Signature of Student initiating the grade grievance

Date

Signature of the Instructor

Date

Submit this completed form to: Chair, Dean's Council, School of Business, The George Washington University, Duquès Hall Room 660, Washington, DC 20052