



## South Texas College Student Appeal of Course Grades

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Students at South Texas College have the right to appeal final course grades which they consider manifestly unjust or erroneous.

The primary responsibility for assigning grades in a course belongs to the faculty member, and in the absence of compelling evidence of discrimination, differential treatment, or procedural irregularities, the judgment of the faculty member responsible for the course must remain determinative.

No grade appeals will be accepted with the desired resolution being anything other than a change of grade. Complaints and grievances must follow the procedures outlined in South Texas College Policy #3313 – Student Grievance or Complaint. Nursing and Allied Health program progression issues must be addressed according to procedures detailed in the Nursing and Allied Health Division Handbook.

Students who file frivolous grade appeals or who deviate from the approved South Texas College grade appeal process may have their appeal summarily dismissed and face disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from South Texas College. The student is expected to follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in this document. Deviating from the approved grade appeal process includes skipping steps in the process, continuing to contact college staff regarding your appeal after the appeal process is complete, or any other activity outside the approved grade appeal process.

Group appeals will not be considered. Students must file appeals individually.

If the student fails to comply with the designated time frames, the appeal process may be terminated. If terminated, the student will not be allowed to begin the process again or to appeal outside the approved South Texas College grade appeal process.

The Office of Admissions & Records staff will explain and clarify College policies and procedures while encouraging all parties to follow the approved policies and procedures.

To appeal a grade, the following procedures must be observed:

### **Step 1**

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the appropriate faculty member no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued.

Only under conditions warranting exception will the time constraint for initiating the grade appeal process be extended. Exceptions might include unexpected call to military service, extreme health issues and severe life disruption. Exceptions to the time constraint require verifiable documentation.

1. The student is required to provide notice in writing to the faculty member that they are appealing their grade.
2. The faculty member is required to meet with the student that has initiated an appeal of course grades. If the student is not living within the service delivery area of STC, communication can be electronic. The student is required to present the South Texas College Grade Appeal form to the faculty member. Appeals submitted without using the approved form will not be heard. The burden of proof lies with the student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence that the grade should be changed.
3. The faculty member may choose to deny the appeal, approve the appeal or work with the student to reach a solution that is agreeable to both parties.



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4. If the faculty member is not currently teaching, is no longer employed at South Texas College, or the student is simply unable to reach the faculty member; the student must contact the appropriate Division Dean no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued to initiate the grade appeal process.
  - a. If the faculty member is still employed at South Texas College but not currently teaching, the Division Dean will attempt to contact the faculty member to address the issue. If they are unable to reach the faculty member, the grade appeal will be delayed until the faculty member returns to teach, as long as the faculty member returns no later than the next full (fall or spring) semester.
  - b. If the faculty member is no longer employed at South Texas College or is not scheduled to return for the next full (fall or spring) semester, the student will advance to Step 3 of the grade appeal process. If the student wishes to continue the Grade Appeal Process, it is their responsibility to contact the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date of being notified that the faculty member is no longer available.
5. Once a decision is reached by the faculty member, the faculty member will note the decision on the Grade Appeal Form, sign the form, and return the completed form to the student. The student is responsible for submitting the completed form to the Office of Admissions & Records.
  - a. The faculty member should maintain a completed Grade Appeal Form for their records.
  - b. If necessary, the faculty member must submit a signed Change of Grade form to the appropriate Department Chair/Dean within 15 calendar days. The Department Chair/Dean must forward a signed change of grade form to the Office of Admissions & Records and Records within 15 calendar days.
6. If the student appeal is denied, the student will then have 15 calendar days to initiate Step 2 of the Grade Appeal process.

### **Step 2**

If speaking with the faculty member does not resolve the issue to the student's satisfaction, it is the responsibility of the student to continue the grade appeal process by contacting the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date Step 1 is completed.

1. The student must submit the South Texas College Grade Appeal Form with the signature of the faculty member to the Office of Admissions & Records to document they completed Step 1 of the grade appeal process.
2. The student must submit their grade appeal in writing to the Office of Admissions & Records. The burden of proof lies with the student and it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence that the grade should be changed.
3. The Office of Admissions & Records will forward the written appeal to the appropriate Division Dean for review.
4. Upon receiving the grade appeal, the Division Dean will consult with the Department Chair and faculty member to attempt to resolve the dispute. The Division Dean may not initiate a grade change without consent from the faculty member.
5. Once a decision is reached, the Division Dean will notify the Office of Admissions & Records and the Office of Admissions & Records will advise the student regarding the outcome.



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- a. If the solution offered is accepted by the student, the Division Dean and faculty member will be informed in writing by the Office of Admissions & Records.
- b. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution offered by the Division Dean and faculty member, the student will then have 15 calendar days to initiate Step 3 of the Grade Appeal process.



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### **Step 3 - Final Review**

If the student does not accept the decision or solution offered by the Division Dean and faculty member from Step 2, it is the responsibility of the student to continue the grade appeal process by contacting the Office of Admissions & Records no later than 15 calendar days from the date Step 2 is completed.

1. The student must inform the Office of Admissions & Records that they wish to progress to Step 3 of the grade appeal process. The Office of Admissions & Records will then forward the written appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will request written responses from the faculty member and Division Dean.
3. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will convene the South Texas College Grade Appeal Committee. The Grade Appeal Committee consists of two faculty representatives from each of the instructional divisions. The chair of the committee will be selected from the faculty on the committee. To meet quorum, a minimum of six committee members must be present at the meeting.
4. The Grade Appeal Committee's responsibility will be:
  - a. To review the student's written appeal and evidence.
  - b. To consider all written responses addressed towards the complaint.-
  - c. To call any witnesses, if appropriate, to corroborate documentary evidence directly related to the specific grade being appealed. If summoned, the student, faculty member, Program Chair or Division Dean may decline in writing to testify
  - d. To inform the Vice President for Academic Affairs of their recommendation. The Grade Appeal Committee may recommend:
    - \* letting the grade stand
    - \* initiating a grade change by submitting a grade change form to the VP for Academic Affairs
    - \* offering a solution of having the student withdraw from the class or being dropped without consent from the faculty member, Program Chair or Division Dean.
5. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will communicate the final decision in writing, to the student, faculty member, Program Chair, Division Dean and Office of Admissions & Records. This step concludes the approved South Texas College Grade Appeal Process.