

# Final Grade Appeals – FAQ

## What kinds of grades can be appealed?

Only the final grade of a course may be formally appealed after the final marks for the course have been input into the Registrar's system. If you are trying to have a conversation during the semester about a specific assignment grade, the instructor is not required to address these concerns as there is only a final grade appeal process. Sometimes instructors choose to address an assignment grade and have this conversation with a student at other times during a semester, so it may be possible just know it is not mandatory.

## What is the process to appeal a final grade in a course?

Level 1: Consultation with Instructor (informal process): You are encouraged to speak to your Instructor on the merit that your final grade was not calculated on all of the work completed and as indicated in the course outline; or if you believe there was an arithmetical miscalculation of the final grade.

Level 2: Final Grade Review: Chair (formal process): You will need to submit a form called "Final Grade Review" to the Registrar's Office. Within this application, you will need to write a narrative that demonstrates that you have the grounds of a final grade appeal at the second level which is that you believe there was an alleged unfair assessment of academic performance.

Level 3: Final Grade Appeal: Dean / Final Grade Appeal Committee: You will need to submit a 'Final Grade Appeal' form to the Registrar's Office. The details regarding your specific grounds for a final grade appeal are very specific. The following grounds include: there is new evidence that was previously unavailable; or there was an alleged procedural error in reaching the decision; or the findings of the previous adjudicator were allegedly not supported by the evidence.

## Where do I go to appeal my final course grade?

This depends on what level of the appeal process you're at. Although there are forms to fill out at the Registrar's Office for levels two and three, you may also want to email the key contacts at each level and keep a record for yourself on the correspondence in case anything arises as part of the process that delays you receiving a response on your appeal. Please keep in mind that this would be in addition to the forms you are required to fill out.

## Should I submit a document as part of my appeal?

That's completely your choice. Our office recommends that you do submit a document, but submitting is not a necessity in every situation. If you choose to do so, focus on highlighting the opportunities you had for a higher grade and be sure to demonstrate the grounds you are appealing to. Cite evidence of where you could receive additional marks. Did the textbook/lecture notes have more information supporting a possible higher grade for your submitted academic work? If yes, include the details in the document you submit. It's completely up to you to build an argument, based on the evidence (using your academic work submitted & any other supporting documents).

### **What is the deadline to appeal a final grade?**

Students who want to appeal their final course grade must initiate a “Final Grade Review” application to the Registrar’s Office no later than 20 business days from the last day of the final exam period, in the semester the grade was awarded in. *The Holiday break over Christmas and New Year does not count towards this.* It’s good practice to start an appeal as soon as is possible within the 20 business day timeline.

### **How do I ensure my application is successful?**

To have the best possible outcome, it is important that you are following the grounds of each level and not create your own grounds. In a level two final grade appeal, your narrative should be objective and focused on data of an alleged unfair assessment of academic performance. This can be demonstrated through email communications, inconsistencies in grading rubrics, etc. *Feeling* as though your Professor marked you unfairly will hold no weight when your application is being assessed.

### **What can I do if I feel an instructor has discriminated against me through the duration of the course? Is discrimination grounds to appeal my final course grade?**

No; discrimination allegations are classified as non-academic and are not dealt with as part of a final grade appeal process. You may want to book an appointment with the Student Advocacy Resource Coordinator at SAMRU or book a time to meet with the Human Rights & Diversity Advisor on campus, to discuss your concerns. Currently, discrimination allegations are not grounds to appeal a final grade. The grounds to appeal a final course grade vary depending on the level you’re engaging at. Generally, discrimination allegations are handled in other policies (i.e. Human Rights), with specific processes involved, unrelated to a final grade appeal.

### **What kinds of outcomes have students experienced in doing final grade appeals in past?**

Students have experienced a decrease in grade, a higher grade, and sometimes the final grade stays the same. All of these outcomes are possible. It’s hard to determine the success of a final grade appeal from the on-set, but you have the right to initiate the final grade appeal process.

### **What if I am unhappy with the outcome I receive?**

If you receive a lower grade throughout the final grade appeal process, you cannot initiate another final grade appeal to revoke that mark. Additionally, when the final grade appeal process has been exhausted, there are no other internal platforms you can exercise to change your final grade.

### **What can I do if I don’t hear back from the Chair within 10 business days at the Level 2 stage of a final grade appeal?**

Calling or emailing the Chair is one alternative to finding out the result of the appeal. If you need help figuring out who this person is; ask us in the Student Advocacy Resource Centre. You could also go to the Registrar’s office to check whether or not the appeal form that you submitted originally, was returned back to the Registrar’s office within the allotted time frame.

### **Does my instructor have the right to penalize me for attendance in a course and count it towards my final grade? How can this be handled in a final grade appeal situation?**

According to the Academic Regulations section of the current MRU Calendar, instructors may set their own attendance requirements for courses, and may penalize you for absences, if these penalties are outlined in the course outline you received access to in the first 14 days of classes. It's up to you if you decide to pursue this, or whether it's worth pursuing, depending on the weighting of the attendance and penalty applied. Consider booking an appointment for correspondence review with the Student Advocacy Resource Coordinator to assess your situation in detail.

### **Do I have the right to appeal a final grade in a course I took 2 years ago?**

No. Students cannot appeal a final course grade from several years ago. All students are required to meet the deadlines as printed in the current Academic Calendar, unless there are other factors that prevented you from doing so, but even so, there are no guarantees this favours an appeal to proceed.

### **May I appeal a final grade in a course where I received a misconduct sanction to fail the course as a result of a misconduct allegation?**

A final grade appeal is a completely separate process from a misconduct allegation or misconduct hearing. If you have an allegation of academic misconduct where you have been sanctioned to fail the course as a result, by an instructor, you may wish to take this to a misconduct board hearing. However, if you've been to a hearing and the panel ruled and applied these sanctions, a final grade appeal, although possible, could be a challenge. Consider and weigh your options by consulting with a friend/family member, or book an appointment to meet with us in the Student Advocacy Resource Centre. What you choose to do here is not easy, but the choice is yours.

*For more information on Final Grade Appeals, please review the [2019-20 Academic Calendar](#)*