

Final Grade Appeals

Source: 2021-22 Academic Calendar, page 45-47

A. Introduction

The basic principles governing the hearing of student final grade appeals and grievances are as follows:

- a. Fairness will be applied to all parties in procedures and decisions;
- b. Academic decisions should be made as close as possible to the level at which the academic expertise resides;
- c. Students will have the right to consult with the Students' Association (as applicable) at any stage of the process;
- d. Sound academic decisions will not be set aside based on minor irregularities in procedures;
- e. The onus is on the student to show that a request for a final grade review has merit.
- f. The process for adjudicating a final grade appeal will be conducted in a timely manner.
- g. A final grade appeal is solely based on the academic merits of a student's work.
- h. A student must have one additional opportunity for review of a final grade assignment after consulting with an instructor.
- i. A final grade appeal based on academic merit must reside within the department in which the course is offered.
- j. In the spirit of collegiality and co-operation, students are not permitted representation by legal counsel.

B. Appeal of Final Grade/Grounds for Appeal

There are three grounds for initiating an appeal of a final grade at Levels 1 & 2:

- a. The final grade was not calculated on all of the work completed and as indicated in the course outline;
or
- b. There was an arithmetical miscalculation of the final grade; or
- c. There was an alleged unfair assessment of academic performance.

The following grounds apply to Level 3 only:

- a. There is new evidence that was previously unavailable; or

- b. There was an alleged procedural error in reaching the decision; or
- c. The findings of the previous adjudicator were allegedly not supported by the evidence.

C. Appeal of Final Grade/Appeal Process (Overview)

There are three levels of a final grade appeal. The first two levels will be adjudicated on the academic merit of a student's work. The third level of the appeal process is based solely on the process by which the academic appeal decision was reached.

Students are advised to discuss their concern with their instructor first (Level 1). If that is not feasible for whatever reason, students are to discuss their concerns with the Chair. If a student is not satisfied with the decision at Level 1, s/he can initiate the formal process Level 2 - Final Grade Review. Forms are available at the Office of the Registrar.

If a student is not satisfied with the decision at Level 2, s/he can initiate the Final Grade Appeal process by completing the appropriate form available at the Office of the Registrar. A Level 3 appeal is based on the preceding processes and not on the academic merit of a student's work. A Level 3 decision is final.

Level 1: Consultation with Instructor (informal process)

- a. The final grade was not calculated on all of the work completed and as indicated in the course outline; or
- b. There was an arithmetical miscalculation of the final grade.

Level 2: Final Grade Review: Chair (formal process)

- a. There was an alleged unfair assessment of academic performance.

Level 3: Final Grade Appeal: Dean / Final Grade Appeal Committee

D. Appeal of Final Grade / Appeal Process (Detailed)

Level 1: Consultation with Instructor

- a. A student who wishes to challenge the final grade awarded in a course should discuss the matter with the instructor before initiating a formal grade review or appeal.
- b. Should the instructor agree to a change in final grade, s/he must submit a Change of Grade form to the Office of the Registrar.

Level 2: Final Grade Review - Chair

- a. A Final Grade Review form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than 20 business days after the end of the final exam period in which the grade was awarded. (The holiday break over Christmas and New Year does not count.)

- b. If the Chair is also the instructor responsible for the course in question, the form shall be conveyed to the Dean of the faculty offering the course.
- c. The Chair (or designate) has the authority to take any action s/he feels is appropriate in adjudicating the grade appeal. The Chair must ensure that the identity of the student requesting the review remains anonymous to any third party involved in the appeal process.
- d. At the Chair's discretion, the final grade may be increased, decreased, or left unchanged.
- e. The Chair's decision must be recorded on the Final Grade Review form which will be returned to the Office of the Registrar along with additional comments or documentation (as appropriate) in a timely manner but no later than 10 business days after receiving the request for a review.
- f. The Chair is responsible for notifying the student and instructor, in writing, of the decision.

Level 3: Final Grade Appeal - Dean

- a. A student may file a Final Grade Appeal form to the Office of the Registrar in a timely manner but no later than 10 business days after a decision at Level 2.
- b. If the Dean of the Faculty was involved with a Level 1 or 2 decision, the Registrar will select another Dean to assume the responsibility for the Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee.
- c. The final grade appeal will be considered if, and only if, the Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee is satisfied that there are grounds for a Level 3 appeal.
- d. If the Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee is not satisfied that the appeal has merit, s/he may deny it.
- e. If a formal hearing is deemed necessary by the Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee, it will be convened in a timely manner but no later than 20 working days after receipt of the original notice of appeal of the Chair's decision.
- f. The Final Grade Appeal Committee has the authority to take any action it feels is appropriate in adjudicating the grade appeal.
- g. The Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee is responsible for notifying the student, Chair, and instructor, in writing, of the decision.

E. Composition of the Final Grade Appeal Committee

Each Final Grade Appeal Committee will be composed of five (5) voting members as follows:

- a. The Dean (or alternate) of the Faculty responsible for the instructor/Chair who assigned the final grade will serve as Chair, Final Appeal Committee.
- b. The Students' Association of Mount Royal University will name one student who is unfamiliar with the dispute and does not know the appellant.

c. Two faculty members will be selected by the Chair, Final Grade Appeal Committee, in consultation with the Registrar. One faculty member will be selected from within the Faculty responsible for the course and one from outside that Faculty. Both faculty members should be unfamiliar with the details of the dispute.

d. The Registrar.

F. Other Information

1. Status of Student During An Appeal Process

During the course of the grade appeal process, a student retains the right to participate in all classes until a final decision is given.

2. Access to Graded Course Work

a. Students have the right to supervised access to completed final examination papers which have been graded provided that the request is made within 15 business days after the end of the semester in which the grade was awarded.

b. Reviewing the final examination with the student is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

c. Graded coursework retained by an instructor may be destroyed one year after the end of the semester in which the work was graded.

3. Course Outlines

a. All students must be given access to a course outline no later than the second scheduled class or the Add /Drop deadline, whichever is earliest.

b. The course outline must include the percentage weight assigned to each component used to determine the final grade.

c. A final grade appeal cannot be based on a challenge to the weightings assigned to the different components of the course which comprise the final grade.