

GRADES, CHALLENGES TO

A. General Policies on Grading

1. Grades are determined solely on the basis of the academic performance of each student according to pre-established criteria determined by the course instructor and consistent with university, college and departmental policies.
2. Grade determination is the prerogative of the instructor subject to the constraint that any successfully challenged grade will be changed through faculty action.
3. The criteria for evaluating academic performance are to be consistent with a course's goals and objectives, which have been approved by the appropriate academic authority before the course is scheduled. On the first day of class of each course the instructor is to explain in writing to the students the criteria for evaluating as well as the methods for grading student performance (examinations, papers, reports, etc.).
4. The instructor in each course shall decide what criteria and methods for evaluating students are to be applied in the specific course. These decisions of the instructor, however, must be compatible with any policies previously accepted by the faculty of a department or college with respect to particular courses, especially courses offered in sequence where the qualifications of a student to begin an advanced course depend upon performance in a previous course. The methods of conducting a course are determined by the instructor within limitations set by the classification of a course as lecture-discussion, seminar, laboratory, etc. An instructor may vary the teaching methodology to meet particular circumstances of a course (type or number of students enrolled, concentrated calendar as in summer sessions, etc.) or the instructor's own desires to innovate or experiment with different approaches.

Any method selected must be compatible with the predetermined goals and objectives of the course. While teaching methodology may change after the course has begun, grading methodology may be changed only with the consent of a majority of students in the course, taking into consideration hardships imposed upon students opposed to the change.

5. The actual evaluation and grading of academic performance is subject to the professional judgment of each instructor. Considerable personal discretion is required in these judgments - a justifiable margin of difference can exist between the evaluations made by two or more professional persons of the same academic performance.
6. Students are entitled to compare their work in the course with the criteria applied in deciding the final grade for the course. Accordingly, the course instructor is required either to return major papers and examinations to students or to make such available for students until the end of the following term. Spring Quarter materials are to be available until the end of the Autumn Quarter. For pedagogic reasons, an instructor is expected to review with the student the relative success of the student's accomplishments. The instructor is not expected to debate the grading.
7. A student may object to a grade for one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. The methods or criteria for evaluating academic performance, made explicit by the instructor at the beginning of the course, usually in a course syllabus or as subsequently modified with

the majority consent of the students, were not actually applied in determining the grade.

- b. The grade was determined or influenced by criteria other than those explained by the instructor or by criteria not relevant to academic performance.
- c. The instructor applied predetermined criteria unfairly, which may include but not be limited to the following items:
 - The instructor's evaluation of academic performance so exceeded the reasonable limits of the instructor's discretion as not to be acceptable to the instructor's peers.
 - Predetermined criteria were not explained at the beginning of the quarter or semester.

B. Policies Regarding Grade Challenge

1. All Grade Challenge Review Boards must follow the procedures listed below.
2. A challenge to a grade will be reviewed and decided by tenured faculty unless the college or school has an insufficient number of tenured faculty to staff a Review Board.
3. The student who challenges a grade bears the full burden of proof that there are sufficient grounds for changing a grade.
4. Only the final grade of a course and its means of determination may be challenged.

C. Procedures for Establishing Grade Challenge Review Boards

1. At the beginning of each academic year, the Committee on Committees will recommend to the Faculty Council, the faculty members and alternates for one Review Board for each of the following colleges: Business, Computing and Digital Media, Communication, Education, Law, Music, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Science and Health, and Theatre.
2. It will recommend two boards for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences covering the following areas: Humanities and Behavioral and Social Sciences. The Faculty Council will make all appointments to Review Boards. The dean of a college may request the establishment of additional Review Boards.
3. Each Review Board will consist of three faculty members and two alternate faculty members and one student. Faculty members may not serve on challenges in which they are involved. Involvement includes assignment of the grade in question and/or attendance or participation in the class. In either of these cases, one of the alternates will be asked to serve.
4. The student representative on the Review Boards in Business, Computing and Digital Media, Communication, Education, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Science and Health, Law, Music, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, and Theatre will be the elected Senator from the college or school. In cases where this Senator is involved in the claim; i.e., had registered for, attended or participated in the class, the SGA EVP of Academic Affairs will serve as an alternate or, if necessary, the president may appoint the alternate.
5. The Review Board will select its own chair and vice chair (to serve in the absence of the chair). The Chair of the Review Board receives all requests for hearing from the dean or chair of the affected department, sets the calendar, notifies all board members and involved parties of the dates and times of the hearings and informs students by written notice of the recommendations of the board. The

chair is responsible for adherence to the Procedures for Filing a Grade Challenge.

6. The boards will serve until the beginning of the Autumn Quarter of the academic year.
7. A quorum of the Review Board consists of three members of the board. Challenges will be upheld by a vote of three or more of the four member board. All members are voting members.
8. The members of the Review Board are expected to disqualify themselves should a conflict of interest arise.

D. Procedures for Filing a Grade Challenge

In order to provide a forum for the fair resolution of academic disputes involving individual students and appropriateness of course grades, the following procedures have been developed and will be applied to all cases involving DePaul University students.

1. A student who is considering a grade challenge must discuss the grade with the instructor before the end of the following regular term. (Spring and Summer Quarter challenges must be made before the end of the Autumn Quarter. Law students challenging a Fall semester grade have a deadline of March 1 of the following Spring semester. Law students challenging a Summer/Spring semester grade have a deadline of October 1 of the following Fall semester.) The instructor is expected to explain the reason for the grade to the student. Only if the instructor is not at the university during the following regular term after the grade was issued, may the student proceed to challenge the grade without meeting with the instructor.
2. If, after the discussion with the faculty member, the student still disputes the final grade, the student may continue their challenge by submitting a written request for a hearing to the office of dean of the college or school in which the course was offered within the term following the award of the disputed grade. Since the following burden of proof rests upon the student, it is important that the student include a clear and coherent statement (typed) with the reason for the appeal, together with any supporting documents the student may wish to include. Students may request that copies of supporting documents in possession of the faculty members be forwarded to the chair of the Review Board. All challenges will be thoroughly and fairly reviewed.
3. The dean of the college or school shall forward a copy of the request to the chair of the Review Board, the involved faculty person and the student. This must be signed and dated by the dean or chair of the affected department.
4. Once filed, the formal challenge is automatically forwarded through all stages of the appeal process unless the Review Board determines it to be groundless or frivolous. Additionally, the student has the option to discontinue the appeal at any stage by submitting a letter stating such to the instructor and chair of the Review Board.

Both the student and instructor will be informed in writing of all committee recommendations and decisions as well as any new written information bearing on the case. Only the instructor and/or the Review Board are empowered to change a grade.

5. The Review Board chair will send a copy of the grade appeal request and relevant materials received with it to the instructor involved. The instructor will return the materials with a written response within two weeks unless circumstances warrant an extension.

The chair is responsible for monitoring the time period. A copy of the instructor's response will be forwarded to the student who has filed the challenge. If the instructor does not respond within the time period, the committee will conclude its deliberations and vote on the challenge.

6. The Review Board may, at its discretion, seek oral clarification of the written responses from the student and faculty member. If it requests this further clarification, the Review Board must meet with both the student and faculty member separately if the student requests.
7. The Review Board shall evaluate the challenge and vote to approve or deny. Decisions of the Review Board arrived at by secret ballot are to be determined by a majority vote.

Such action must be taken within two months of the date of filing. (If the grade appeal is not passed along its designated route within the times specified, the student should notify the dean of the school or college who will determine the reason for the delay.)

8. The Review Board is to reach one of the three following decisions:
 - a. Challenge affirmed and settled by consent: i.e., the Review Board conducting the review devises a conciliation mutually acceptable to the student and the instructor who gave the grade. Should the acceptable conciliation involve a change of grade, the instructor will submit a change of grade.
 - b. Challenge affirmed and the Review Board may submit a change of grade card to the dean of the college or school in which the course was taught.
In determining the student's final grade, the Review Board will take into account all evidence of the student's academic performance in the course under challenge as well as the implications for the student's grade of the instructor's actions in the case in question.
 - c. Challenge denied; original grade stands.
9. The decision reached by the Review Board is to be communicated by the chair of the Review Board in writing directly to the dean of the college or school, the instructor, and the student. The explanation for the decision will also be communicated.
10. Decisions by the Review Board are final and binding on all parties. The board's decision does not require the approval of the dean of the college or school, or the chair of the affected department.