

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY NO: III:00:09

DATE: September 24, 2008

SUPERSEDES POLICY NO: III:00:09

DATED: January 28, 2008

SUBJECT: Student Appeal of Grade Procedures

APPROVED: Sidney A. McPhee, President



**I. PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of this policy is to provide an avenue for student appeals of grades. Appeals should be considered only in cases in which unethical or unprofessional actions and/or inequities are alleged.

- A. The University will establish a grade appeals committee in each of the five colleges (Basic & Applied Sciences, Business, Education & Behavioral Science, Liberal Arts, and Mass Communications). These committees will make determinations in matters arising from the assignment of a grade by a faculty member. A given college committee will not hear appeals originating in courses offered in its own college but will deal with appeals from other colleges. Faculty in the Department of Academic Enrichment and Walker Library will serve, when appointed, on the committee for the College of Mass Communication.

The President, upon recommendation of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association, shall appoint all committee members and alternates. Faculty serving as members or alternates on a college committee will be drawn from departments within the college. Each college grade appeals committee will consist of four (4) faculty members and one (1) student, and also (2) alternate faculty members and one (1) alternate student member. Alternates will serve as members in cases where regular members of committees are unable to serve or be present for one or more meetings. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will serve as an ex-officio member of the committees. Secretarial and administrative support from the offices of the deans of the colleges will provide continuity to the committees' work.

- B. A student or faculty member involved with a grade appeal may discuss his/her case informally with a member of the faculty or administration except with a member of a grade appeals committee. A committee member who discusses committee deliberations with the faculty member or student concerned shall automatically disqualify himself/herself from any further proceedings of the case.

This policy does not apply to situations (including grades) involving allegations of student academic misconduct such as plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication or facilitating any such act. The Office of the Dean for Judicial Affairs implements

applicable student disciplinary procedures in these matters. The procedures can be found in the MTSU Student Rights and Responsibilities publication.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. An “appeal” is a request by a student for a determination by a grade appeals committee of an assigned grade where inequities or unethical or unprofessional actions are alleged.
- B. The term “faculty” includes any individual who is a member of the teaching staff.
- C. The use of the word “days” in this document refers specifically to normal working days.

## **III. APPEAL PROCEDURES**

### **A. Level One**

- 1. Student appeals concerning a course grade should be resolved by a conference between the student and the faculty member who assigned the grade. The appeal must occur within forty (40) days of the graduation date for each term.
- 2. In the event of an impasse between the student and the faculty member, a student with an appeal of a grade shall discuss it with the department chair within ten (10) days of the conference with the involved faculty member. The department chair shall investigate the circumstances, record his/her findings, and send a copy to the student and the faculty member within ten (10) days of the notification of impasse. Although the department chair does not have the power to change the grade, he/she will make a recommendation concerning the appeal. These findings will become a part of the appeals record.

### **B. Level Two**

- 1. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may, within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the department chair’s recommendation, refer the appeal, plus all relevant data, including stated reasons why he/she believes the appeal has thus far not been satisfied, to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs shall select a college committee to hear the appeal and transmit the appeal documents to the committee chair or to the dean of the college which houses the selected appeals committee.
- 2. Written notification of the meeting and of an opportunity to appear before the grade appeals committee will be sent by the chair to the concerned faculty member and student. A simple majority of members present constitutes a quorum. The committee will receive documents and testimony regarding the circumstances, will record its findings, and shall render a decision. Notification of the committee’s decision will be made to the student, faculty member, department chair, college dean, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Director of Records.

3. The decision of the committee hearing the appeal will be final.

\*In cases where the department chair is the person against whom the complaint is lodged, the dean in whose college the department is located shall assume the duties of the chairman in the investigation and decision-making.

### **C. Miscellaneous**

1. The number of days indicated at each level above shall be considered the maximum, but every effort should be made to expedite the process.
2. The failure of the student to proceed from one level of the appeal procedure to the next level within the prescribed time limits shall be deemed to be an acceptance of the recommendations and/or decision previously rendered. All further considerations and proceedings regarding that particular appeal shall cease at that point.
3. A grade appeal may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice.
4. All appeal proceedings shall be kept as confidential as may be appropriate at each level.
5. A grade appeals committee shall have reasonable access to all official records for information necessary to the determination of a recommendation.
6. Appeals filed after the spring graduation date will be considered in the summer ONLY under 2 circumstances:
  - a. If it affects the student's ability to graduate.
  - b. If the Vice Provost determines that there are extenuating circumstances to warrant a special hearing.

Otherwise, such appeals will be held over until the beginning of the fall semester. If an appeal is to be heard in the summer, an ad hoc committee of the chairs/available members from each grade appeals committee will hear the case. If a chair cannot attend the summer meeting, he/she will (if at all possible) endeavor to provide a replacement from his/her committee. The chair from the college in which the appeal originated shall be excused from the meeting. There will also be a student representative assigned with one alternate, each not from the college from which the appeal originates.