

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY GRADE APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS

Faculty members of William Carey University are responsible for assigning appropriate course grades in a fair and equitable manner based upon the requirements stated in the course syllabus. Students may appeal final course grades based upon a factual claim that a grade was incorrectly or unfairly determined. The student should first communicate any questions or concerns about the grade with the instructor and attempt to resolve the matter informally without engaging in a formal appeal.

The instructor is responsible for answering in a clear and timely manner all student requests for clarification of their grade and for cooperating with all aspects of the appeal process.

A student who is appealing a grade is responsible for providing evidence of at least one of the following conditions:

1. miscalculation on the part of the instructor in determining the final course grade;
2. a departure from the standards of evaluation stated in the course syllabus; or,
3. unfair treatment of the student by the instructor which resulted in the student being evaluated on some other basis than the student's academic performance.

A student who initiates a grade appeal must accept the burden of proof for providing evidence on which an appeal can be considered. The case for the appeal must be written in a clear, factual, and thorough manner. The student is responsible for submitting the original *Form for Grade Appeal* within the allowed time frame to initiate the appeal process. A copy of the form is attached to these instructions.

Just as a student is afforded due process in seeking a grade appeal, a student who appeals is expected to follow the procedure outlined in this document explicitly. Departing from this procedure or discussing it with any other WCU employees outside those mentioned in these instructions may invalidate the student's right to appeal.

The student initiates the appeal process by completing the first page of the appeal form and submitting the entire appeal form, with any accompanying documents, to the academic office where the student attends: Vice President for Academic Affairs (Hattiesburg Campus or Louisiana Site), Academic Dean (Tradition). The academic office that receives the appeal will forward it through each level allowed until the appeal is resolved. The appeal can end at any level by means of: (1) a decision by the university representative to grant the appeal, or (2) a decision by the student to accept the most recent ruling. The outcome must be attested in writing on the appeal form. At the conclusion of the appeal process, the appeal form and all documentation should be forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs on the Hattiesburg campus.

A grade appeal may proceed through a maximum of 4 levels, as follows.

(1) **Instructor.** The instructor is to communicate with the student to explain the grade and answer any questions the student has about the grade. Upon considering the student's basis for appeal, the instructor will either grant or deny the appeal.

(2) **Department Chair, Campus Program Director, or Dean of the School** offering the course. The dean should hear the appeal only if there is no department chair or campus program director for the course or if the instructor involved is the department chair or program director. The official conducting the appeal should communicate with the student and the instructor (either together or separately) to try to resolve the grade appeal.

(3) **Academic Appeals Committee (Undergraduate) or Graduate Academic Appeals Sub-committee of the Graduate Committee.** The appeals committee will schedule a hearing and notify the student, who may appear in order to state the appeal in person. The student may invite one additional person to attend the hearing for emotional support only. This is a university process and not a legal proceeding; therefore the guest cannot act as counsel for the student and has no right to speak at the hearing.

(4) **Vice President for Academic Affairs.** Upon receiving a student's appeal, the VPAA will review the appeal and its previous rulings and make the final ruling.

The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is the ultimate and final ruling on any grade appeal that advances to that level.

Appeal Timeline

The intent of this appeal process is to provide for a means to give reasonable consideration to students' grade appeals in a timely manner. Therefore, a grade appeal must be initiated prior to the end of the second week (10 work days) of the subsequent trimester following the term of the course grade being appealed. An appeal of a course in the spring trimester is to be initiated no later than the end of the second week of the 10-week summer term. A student who is not enrolled in any summer term may have until the end of the second week of the fall trimester to initiate an appeal. At the first two appeal levels, the response by the university representative should usually be made within 5 working days of receiving the appeal. The appeal should be conveyed to the appropriate university official at the next level within 2 working days. Hearings before an appeals committee should take place within 10 working days of receiving the appeal, with the ruling being conveyed within 3 working days following the hearing. The decision of the VPAA will be rendered within 5 working days. This timeline provides means for the resolution of a grade appeal within approximately 6 weeks.

**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
FORM FOR GRADE APPEAL**

(This page is to be completed by the student)

Student's Name: _____ Student ID # _____

(Please print)

Local Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Classification: [] Freshman [] Sophomore [] Junior [] Senior [] Graduate

Major: _____

Advisor: _____

Course for which the Grade Is Being Appealed:

Prefix: _____ Number: _____ Section: _____ Title: _____

When Taken: Trimester: _____ Year: _____

Instructor's Name:

Grade Received: _____ Grade Expected: _____

The student must attach a written and signed explanation for the basis of the grade appeal, which must give specific evidence of one of the following conditions:

1. miscalculation on the part of the instructor in determining the final course grade;
2. a departure from the standards of evaluation stated in the course syllabus; or,
3. unfair treatment of the student by the instructor which resulted in the student being evaluated on some other basis than the student's academic performance.

Student's Signature: _____ Date _____

The student is to deliver the Form for Grade Appeal, along with any accompanying documents to the academic office where enrolled: Vice President for Academic Affairs (Hattiesburg or Louisiana Site), Academic Dean (Tradition.

The chair (or counterpart) is to return this form to the appropriate academic office.

Level Three: Academic Appeals Committee (Undergraduate) or Graduate Academic Appeals Subcommittee

On this date _____ the _____ Committee conducted a hearing for the grade appeal of _____ (student's name). The student was: Present _____; Not Present _____. Name of anyone accompanying the student at the hearing: _____.

The appeal is:

Granted, _____ changing the grade to _____. Denied _____.

Committee Chair's Printed Name

Signature

Date

Student's Response (check one):

I accept the decision _____. I do not accept and appeal to the next level _____.

Student's Signature

Date

The appeals committee chair is to deliver this form to the VPAA's office on the Hattiesburg campus.

Level Four: Vice President for Academic Affairs

On this date _____ I reviewed the appeal of _____ (student's name). The appeal is:

Granted, _____ changing the grade to _____. Denied _____.

Vice President for Academic Affairs' Signature

Date

Received Completed Appeal Form in Academic Affairs Office

VPAA's Signature

Date