REALC Grade Dispute Policy

Course instructors evaluate students’ performance through careful consideration of information accumulated over the entire semester. It is the responsibility of each student to fulfill their course’s academic requirements according to the guidelines set out in the syllabus. Students have a right to receive a grade that is not in error, and is based on an evaluation procedure that is neither arbitrary nor capricious. Instructors have a right to establish standards for their courses, and a responsibility to follow an evaluation procedure that is explained at the beginning of the semester and applied equally to all students.

Course instructors have expertise in the course topic and are best able to evaluate student performance and whether students have met expected standards in the course. A grade appeal must establish that the grade received was either in error, was arbitrary, or was capricious. An appeal may address only the final grade of a course and not those applied to individual assignments. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate that the grade was factually in error, was assigned arbitrarily, or was given capriciously.

Error
The instructor made a mistake in fact.

Arbitrary
The grade was given according to standards that were not in keeping with professional standards, or differed greatly from those announced at the beginning of the semester.

Capricious
The grade was motivated by prejudice towards the student, does not reflect the student’s performance, or is inconsistent with grades given to students whose performance was equivalent.

Procedure:

1. Appeals must be initiated no later than one week after the beginning of the academic semester after the class. The student should first meet with the instructor to discuss the matter, bringing all relevant documentation.

2. If the matter is unresolved after this meeting, the student should contact the department chair in writing. This statement should include the name of the instructor, the course, and a clear description of the student’s claim. The statement should also list the student’s efforts to resolve the matter and the results of those efforts. Finally, it should describe the redress the student seeks. The department chair will discuss the matter with the instructor, and the chair will inform the student of the decision.

Students should be aware that the result of the chair’s discussion with the instructor may conclude with the instructor’s decision to change the grade, or not to change the grade.