



Grade Appeal Policy

Approved by Academic Policy Committee on August 12, 2018

One of the most essential assets of our higher education system is the imaginative and resourceful atmosphere encouraged by the existence of academic freedom on campus. As part of such freedom, faculty members have accepted the responsibility, in concert with their colleagues, to design and approve the curriculum. They have selected instructional materials, elucidated course goals, and determined the method of evaluation of student performance in their classes. Therefore, faculty should be afforded the highest degree of autonomy possible in instruction, including grading.

As an institution, Marymount Manhattan College asserts that grades earned by a student reflect the quality of their academic performance, as judged by the instructor of the course; in the spirit of academic freedom, the course instructor should have sole responsibility for determining all academic grades.

The institution recognizes that, though rare, a student may feel that their work has been graded unfairly, or that their grade is based on some standard other than academic performance in the course in question. In such cases, the Grade Appeal Policy offers the student a vehicle by which to seek clarification and/or resolution. Only instructors have the authority to change a grade unless a review and change of grade determination occurs through the Academic Review Committee.

Steps for the Grade Appeal Process

Step 1

Student appeals to Course Instructor

A student who questions their final grade in a course (or the process by which it was determined) is responsible for seeking initial clarification and/or a resolution by communicating directly with the course instructor within 30 business days of final grade submission. Once such a request is made, it is the responsibility of the course instructor to make a good faith effort to meet with the student within 30 business days of the request at a mutually agreed-upon time and place, or to arrange for a telephone or email correspondence in lieu of an in-person meeting.

In cases where:

- the student is unable to see their posted grades because of a hold on their records, the student will have the right to communicate with their instructor within 30 business days of the release of the hold.

- the student cannot reach the instructor, the student can speak directly with the Department or Division Chair, whom they must contact within 35 business days of final grade submission for the course in question.
- the course instructor and the Department Chair are the same person, the student may request a meeting with the Division Chair.
- the course instructor and the Division Chair are the same person, the student may proceed directly to Step 3, as described below.

Step 2

Student appeals to Department or Division Chair

A student may request a formal review by the Department or Division Chair supervising the department in which the course was taught when, having met with or completed an email exchange with their course instructor, the student still believes that the grade is unfair, and can provide evidence to support that claim. The student must request in writing a review by the Department or Division Chair within seven business days of the conclusion of the conversation between the student and the course instructor. The request for a review must include a written statement asserting the basis for the appeal and a summary of efforts made thus far to seek to clarify or resolve the grade in question. The Department or Division Chair must make a good faith effort to meet with the student within seven business days of the request at a mutually agreed-upon time and place, or to arrange for a telephone or email correspondence in lieu of an in-person meeting. The Department or Division Chair will gather all pertinent facts from all parties and will communicate a decision in writing to the student within seven business days after the conclusion of the investigation.

Step 3

Student appeals to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

A student may not move to Step 3 without having completed Steps 1 and 2 except in cases wherein the course instructor, the Department Chair and the Division Chair are the same person. Upon having communicated with the course instructor and/or the Department or Division Chair without satisfactory resolution, the student may request a review by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. For review by the Associate Dean, the student must make a request in writing within seven business days of the notice of decision by the Department or Division Chair. The faculty member will receive a copy of this documentation. To request a review of a grade, the student must demonstrate in a statement that accompanies the request, by clear and convincing evidence, that their final grade was entirely or in part calculated in a manner inconsistent with the grading procedures as described in the syllabus for the course. The request must include a summary of efforts made thus far to seek to clarify or resolve the grade in question. The Associate Dean will gather all pertinent facts from all parties concerned, including the student, the course instructor and the Department or Division Chair with whom the student had previously communicated. The Associate Dean will attempt to resolve the dispute and will notify the student, the faculty member, and the Department or Division Chair of their decision within seven business days of the conclusion of their investigation.

Step 4

Student requests review by Academic Review Committee

If the student is still dissatisfied after all previous stages of appeal, and feels that their case has merit, and can provide evidence of their claims, the student may request a review by the College's Academic Review Committee by submitting in writing such a request to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within seven business days of the Associate Dean's decision notification. To request an appeal of a grade, the student must demonstrate in a statement that accompanies the request, by clear and convincing evidence, that their final grade was entirely or in part calculated in a manner inconsistent with the grading procedures as described in the syllabus for the course. It will be the responsibility of the Associate Dean to ask the Chair of the Academic Review Committee to hold a formal review of the case as soon as possible thereafter but no later than fifteen business days into the following semester (excluding January and Summer sessions.)

Step 5

Review by the Academic Review Committee

The Academic Review Committee, consisting of five voting members of the faculty*, must review all facts gathered by the Associate Dean and may choose, if appropriate, to review testimony from each party involved. The manner in which the formal grade dispute review is conducted remains at the discretion of the Committee. The Committee reserves the right to request documents from any parties involved or to request those involved in the case be interviewed by the Committee.

If the Academic Review Committee reaches the conclusion that a mistake or incorrect determination in the grade was made or that the student was graded improperly and all prior attempts at negotiation have been unsuccessful, the Committee may decide the case has merit and arrange for the recalculation of the grade, if necessary.

All final decisions rendered by the Academic Review Committee will be made in writing within seven business days of the conclusion of the review to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA).

Step 6

Notification by the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Within thirty business days of receipt of the decision of the Academic Review Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will communicate the decision in writing to the student, the faculty member involved in the case, the Department or Division Chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In the case of a recommendation of the grade change, the VPAA will issue a memorandum to the Registrar. The decision of the Committee is considered final and no further appeals will be considered. Neither the student nor the faculty member will receive information about vote deliberation.

***Academic Review Committee Membership**

The Academic Review Committee consists of five voting members of the faculty. An alternate member will be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs if a committee member needs to recuse him/herself due to conflict of interest or is not available for a deliberation. In each case, all members participating in this process are expected to maintain the highest level of discretion and confidentiality regarding all proceedings and findings.