

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY NAME: Appeal of Final Grade	POLICY NUMBER: 2.2.3	CATEGORY: Academic
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE: Vice-President	APPROVAL AUTHORITY: Academic Council	EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2021
NEXT FULL REVIEW DATE: February 27, 2026	REVISED: August 31, 2022	REPLACES:

PURPOSE

Coquitlam College (the College) acknowledges that a student may believe that a final grade is wrong or unfair. The purpose of this policy is to establish the process by which students may request a review of their grade through a procedurally fair appeal process.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at the College and addresses appeals relating to educational decisions or circumstances that may have impacted the student's final grade.

A final grade appeal may apply to a grade received on one or more assignments, or it may be related to some other aspect of the student's educational experience that may have had an impact on the final grade.

The scope of this policy does not include:

- a. Course content, learning materials, learning resources
- b. Physical environment and facilities
- c. Professional competence of Instructors

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The College encourages open communication between Instructors and students about grading. As a result, the College encourages students, Instructors and Department Heads to attempt to resolve a concern about course assessments and/or the final grade on an informal basis before the student files a Final Grade Appeal Form.
2. The purpose of a final grade appeal is to verify the fair assessment of an individual student's skill or knowledge of the course content.
3. The outcome of the final grade appeal process may result in a grade that is lower, stays the same, or is higher than the original grade.
4. Individuals who participate in final grade appeals are expected to treat all information they receive in the course of the investigation and proceedings as confidential.

PROCEDURES

General

5. A student may consider filing an appeal of final grade if:
 - a. an informal resolution is not reached with the Instructor, or

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- b. they are unable to contact the Instructor to discuss a grade, or
 - c. they are uncomfortable discussing the matter with the Instructor, and
 - d. the specified timelines and grounds for filing a stage one final grade appeal are met.
6. Students must file a separate Final Grade Appeal Form (the Form) for each final grade they wish to appeal.
7. Should a group of students have similar concerns about their final grade, they may meet as a group with the Instructor and/or Department Head to reach an informal resolution. However, should these meetings fail to achieve a resolution each student must individually file a Final Grade Appeal.
8. Students are strongly encouraged to speak with Student Services for advice and guidance regarding the Appeal process.

Informal Resolution

9. The student and Instructor are strongly encouraged to resolve the student's concern about a final grade on an informal basis by discussing the concerns together prior to the student filing a formal Final Grade Appeal.
10. If a resolution is reached:
 - a. the Instructor will prepare a Grade Change Form
 - b. the Instructor and Department Head will approve the Form
 - c. the Instructor will inform the student of the grade change
 - d. approved form will be sent to the Office of the Registrar to initiate the grade change
 - e. the Form will be retained in the Office of the Registrar.
11. If an informal resolution is not reached, students may proceed to filing a stage one appeal of final grade.

Step One: Appeal of Final Grade

12. The student must submit a completed Form to the Office of the Registrar no later than 10 business days from the date that the grade is posted.
13. The grounds for a Stage One final grade appeal are limited to the following:
 - a. The assessment of the final grade did not include all pieces of completed work.
 - b. There was an error in the calculation of the final grade.
 - c. The assessment criteria have not been applied in a reasonable, fair and just manner.
14. An Appeal Fee of \$50 must be paid at the time the Form is submitted. If a Final Grade Appeal is successful, the Appeal Fee will be refunded.
15. An extension of the deadline may be provided in extenuating circumstances. The student must provide a written explanation for requesting a discretionary extension of the deadline to appeal. The Registrar will decide whether to accept the extension.
16. The Registrar will review the Form to confirm that it is fully completed and that the required documentation is attached. Incomplete forms will be returned to the Student along with a specified timeline for submitting the completed form; usually 5 business days. If the form is not fully completed and submitted within the specified timeline, the Form will become null and void. The Appeal Fee is non-refundable in this circumstance. If time permits, the Student may

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- submit a new Form and pay another Appeal Fee.
17. The Registrar will forward the completed Form and any supporting material to the Principal who will notify the student, Instructor and Department Head that the final grade appeal has been received.
 18. The Principal will collect and review all relevant information and, if necessary, may request further information from any of the parties involved, and/or arrange to meet with any of the parties involved to discuss their case.
 19. If the grounds for an appeal are established, the Principal will determine how the final grade appeal will be resolved. The courses of action are:
 - a. re-marking of written or recorded work as outlined below
 - b. some other process at the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with the Department Head and Instructor.
 20. The Principal will provide a written rationale to the student, Instructor and Department Head on the course of action and anticipated timelines for completing the Stage One Appeal process.
 21. The written rationale will be forwarded no later than:
 - a. January 15 for Fall semester courses
 - b. May 15 for Spring semester courses
 - c. September 15 for Summer semester courses.

Re-marking of Written or Recorded Work

22. A student's graded work that is written, audio/video recorded, photographed, or otherwise captured, may be re-marked using the approved assessment guidelines for that course.
23. Re-marking of work will be completed by a reviewer selected by the Principal and Department Head. The independent reviewer will be an Instructor from the same or a related discipline, who has not been involved or in contact with the student throughout the duration of the course being appealed.
24. Copies of the work that the student has requested to be reviewed will be provided to the independent reviewer without any student names, marks, comments, or notations made by the original Instructor. In the re-marking of work where removing the student's identity is impossible, such as video-recorded work, no attempt will be made to hide the identity of the student.
25. The independent reviewer may, during the review process, request to see all of the student's work that is relevant to the appeal. The Principal may provide this work, free of names, grades, comments, and notations. This request does not require the independent review to re-evaluate this work. The Principal will include a written rationale for releasing additional documents in their decision.
26. The independent reviewer will submit the re-marked work, along with a written rationale for the assessed grade to the AVP/VP no later than five business days after receipt of the appeal material. Reviewers shall keep all information confidential.

Step Two: Appeal of Stage One Decision

27. A student may appeal the Principal's decision through an appeal to the Committee. The grounds for a Stage Two Appeal are limited to the following:

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- a. the Stage One appeal lacked procedural fairness;
 - b. there is relevant new information that was not available when the Stage One appeal decision was made and that may have influenced the outcome.
28. The student must submit a completed Form to the Office of the Registrar no later than 10 business days from the date the Stage One appeal decision was made.
29. An Appeal Fee of \$50 must be paid at the time the Form is submitted. If a Final Grade Appeal is successful, the Appeal Fee will be refunded.
30. An extension of the deadline may be provided in extenuating circumstances. The student must provide a written explanation for requesting a discretionary extension of the deadline to appeal. The Registrar will decide whether to accept the extension.
31. The Registrar will review the Form to confirm that it is fully completed and that the required documentation is attached. Incomplete forms will be returned to the Student along with a specified timeline for submitting the completed form; usually 5 business days. If the form is not fully completed and submitted within the specified timeline, the Form will become null and void. The Appeal Fee is non-refundable in this circumstance. If time permits, the Student may submit a new Form and pay another Appeal Fee.

Step Three: Convening a Final Grade Appeal Committee

32. The Vice-President will convene a Committee consisting of the AVP or designate as Chair, Senior Administrator and two additional members (instructors or staff) chosen by the Vice-President. The Principal will be a non-voting member. The Vice-President will seek a non-voting subject matter expert should the appeal warrant one. No member shall be from the same department as the student filing the appeal.
33. The Committee will conduct a one-time review of the relevant material, to hear from all parties involved in the appeal, and to determine a recommendation.
34. The names of Committee members will remain confidential and will only be provided to participants at the time.
35. The Chair will compile the student and Instructor information and distribute to the attendees at least 2 business days prior to the date.
36. The Committee will be attended by:
- a. Members of the Committee
 - b. The student. The student is expected to fully participate and answer any direct factual questions asked by the Committee
 - c. The relevant Instructor
 - d. The relevant Department Head
 - e. Other persons as indicated below may attend:
 - a support person may accompany the student, Instructor or Department Head. The support person may not speak to the Committee.
 - Witnesses. The student and/or the Instructor may call in witnesses to the hearing. Witnesses will remain outside until called in by the Chair and will leave when directed by the Chair.

37. The Chair will conduct the Committee in a fair and just manner, providing the student, Instructor and Department Head with equal opportunity to present the issues from their perspectives, and allowing all participants to ask and answer questions.

Rendering a Decision

38. Immediately following, Committee members will deliberate in private and make a final decision.
39. If the grounds for an appeal are established, the Committee will determine how the grade appeal will be resolved. The courses of action are:
- a. uphold the Stage One appeal decision
 - b. reverse the Stage One appeal decision and submit a new decision
40. The Chair will communicate the final decision with rationale, in writing, to the student. A copy will be sent to the Instructor, Department Head and the Registrar to be included in the student's file.
41. The decision by the Committee is final and may not be appealed.
42. The records will be kept confidential.

DEFINITIONS

Final Grade Appeal Committee: A group assigned to review and hear evidence about the Final Grade Appeal and make a recommendation about the appeal.

Final Grade: A letter, designation, or percentile indicating a degree of cumulative achievement for any educational work in a College course which may be comprised of multiple evaluative tools with variable weighting (e.g. tests, assignments, attendance requirements) recorded by the Office of the Registrar. It is assigned at the completion of a course.

Final Grade Appeal: A final grade appeal investigates a student's disagreement with the final grade assigned by an Instructor.

Student: A person who has completed an application to the College and has received a student number.

Student File: A record held by the Office of the Registrar, that contains a student's general academic information, including admission information, study permits, grades, attendance, standardized assessment reports, appeal reports and decisions, and other information from a student's time at the College.

Related Documents

- Appeal of Final Grade Form
- Grade Change Form
- Procedural Fairness Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Schools, 2007, Federation of Independent School Associations British Columbia (FISABC)