



ACADEMIC SENATE

POLICY NO. _____

ISSUE DATE: REVISION DATE:	POLICY: STUDENT ORIGINATED REQUESTS FOR CHANGE OF GRADE
REFERENCE:	
APPROVED: _____ President, California Maritime Academy _____ Chair, Academic Senate _____ Chair, Senate Policy Committee	

Institutional academic processes leading to the awarding of grades cannot be completely error free. Events can transpire which suggest to a student that the grade he or she was assigned for a particular course was inappropriate. The policy below outlines the procedures available to a student, should that student wish to challenge the appropriateness of a grade assigned for a specific course.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- A. **To initiate a change-of-grade request under this policy, a student must first have counseled with the instructor(s) of the course concerning the appropriateness of the grade received in the course.**

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- B. **Bases for request for change of grade, i.e., grade appeal** – *Ad hoc* **Grade Appeal Committees (GAC's)** shall be appointed by the Committee on Academic Integrity to evaluate the merit of grade appeals arising out of assertions of:
1. Instructor mistake
 2. Instructor bad faith
 3. Instructor incompetence
 4. Instructor unfairness
- C. **Burden of proof** – The student requesting a change of grade bears the burden of proof in establishing the appropriateness of any grade change requested. Thus, the responsibility for providing sufficient input to the committee to justify the change of grade requested by the student is to be borne by the student.
- D. **Initiation of a grade change request** – To initiate a grade appeal, a student must direct a formal written request for change of grade to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity. Copies of this formal request must be sent to (1) the instructor who assigned the course grade, (2) the Chair of the Department within which the course was taught, and (3) the Academic Dean.

The following information must be included in this formal written request:

1. Name of the course
2. Course section
3. Name of the course instructor(s)
4. Term during which the course was taught
5. Grade received in the course
6. A detailed description of the facts that the student feels have a direct bearing on the perceived inappropriateness of the grade assigned
7. Names of third parties capable of giving testimony detailing what they saw, heard, or experienced that relates directly to the change-of-grade request, and
8. Redress sought (i.e., the grade to which the grade assigned shall be changed).

Attachments to this formal written request for change of grade should include all documents – including course syllabus, examinations, course handouts, and student work products – which the student feels are relevant to the grade appeal process.

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- E. **Steps in the process** – Once the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity receives a formal request for change of grade, the following processes shall occur:
1. Within five working days of the receipt of a formal request for change of grade, the Academic Integrity Committee will meet and appoint an *ad hoc* **Grade Appeal Committee (GAC)**. The GAC shall consist of three members of the permanent teaching faculty and a member of the corps of cadets. The student representative shall be designated by the ASCMA. Whenever possible, one of the members of the GAC shall come from the ranks of faculty who, at some time, has taught the course within which the current grade inquiry has arisen.
 2. The Chair of the GAC will respond, in writing, to the student making the grade-change request. If the formal request received by the GAC from the Academic Integrity Committee Chair fails to include the requisite information outlined in section D above, the GAC Chair's written response to the student will affirmatively indicate any deficiencies noted. A copy of the policy on Student-Originated Requests for Change of Grade will accompany the GAC Chair's response. Once informed of the deficiencies present in his/her request, a student will be given **two weeks from the receipt of the GAC Chair's written response** to perfect the formal written request for change of grade.
 3. Upon receipt of a **complete**, formal written request for change of grade, the GAC Chair will inform the other members of this committee of the need to meet and confer on the grade change request. A quorum, not including the committee Chair, is required for the committee to evaluate a grade change request.
 4. Absent exigent circumstances, a meeting of the committee will be called within two weeks of the receipt of a complete request for grade change.
 5. The GAC Chair will notify committee members, the course instructor(s), and the student of the time scheduled for the meeting; it is the responsibility of the student to notify all witnesses appearing in support of the grade change request.
 6. A committee member may not meet and confer on a grade appeal relating to any grade he or she assigned.
 7. Either the GAC Chair or his/her designate will act as recorder for the committee during the presentation of information at any hearing convened by the committee to evaluate the merit of a change-of-grade request.

8. The student, who may be accompanied by a non-professional advisor (not a practicing attorney), will present all information in support of his/her request, first. Information presented can be in the form of documents, exhibits, first- or third-party testimony.
9. Committee members can direct questions, at any time, to the student, the instructor(s), any witness appearing on behalf of the student, or a witness appearing on behalf of the instructor(s).
10. The instructor can present information to the committee in the form of documents, exhibits, first- or third-party testimony.
11. The committee may call witnesses to assist in the evaluation of the merit of the grade change requested.
12. After both student and instructor have presented all information they, respectively, feel is pertinent to the committee's evaluation of the merit of the grade change request, the committee will close the hearing for deliberation.
13. After deliberation, and within one week of the hearing, the GAC Chair will draft a written summary of the hearing process, included within which will be the GAC's recommendation.
14. Copies of the hearing summary and committee recommendation will be forwarded to (1) the student, (2) the instructor(s), (3) the Department Chair, (4) the Dean, and (5) the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Original Summary and recommendation will be forwarded to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity. The Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity will retain the original summary and recommendation, along with all supporting documents, in a permanent committee archive.
15. Once the GAC has reached a decision that a grade shall be changed to the one requested by the student, the grade change will occur via one of the following three options:
 - a. The instructor(s) will be given the opportunity to initiate the change of grade with the Student Records Office. The instructor(s), after being informed of the decision of the committee, and absent exigent circumstances, will have one week to initiate change-of-grade procedures with the Student Records Office.

- b. If the instructor does not exercise his/her option to initiate the change of grade, the Chair of the Department within which the course was taught will have one week to initiate change-of-grade procedures with the Student Records Office.
 - c. Absent exigent circumstances, if a change of grade has not been initiated with the Student Records office by either the instructor(s) or the Department Chair during the two-week window provided by this policy, the Dean shall initiate the change-of-grade procedure with the Student Records Office.
16. The Student Records Office shall report to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity, the entity initiating the change-of-grade request. This information shall be appended to the summary report in the permanent committee archives.
- F. **Hearing process closed** – committee hearings are closed to all except committee members, the student, the instructor(s), witnesses, and student’s advisor.
 - G. **Time limit for making grade change request** – absent exigent circumstances, **a student must present a formal written request for change of grade to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity within the first six weeks of the term following the term within which the grade in question was assigned.** (Note: Instructors are required to retain evaluation instruments for just one term beyond that within which a grade was assigned.)
 - H. **Rules of procedure and equity** – if, in the opinion of the duly appointed Grade Appeal Committee, circumstances surrounding a grade change request fall outside those contemplated by the express procedures of this policy, procedures may be modified by a unanimous vote of the committee to ensure that equity be done to the student.
 - I. **Reportage** – at the end of each academic year, the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity shall report, in writing, to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, a summary of the results of all grade change requests evaluated during that academic year. The Chair of the Executive Committee of the Senate shall forward a copy of this summary to the President of the Academy.