



### Student Originated Requests for Change in Grade

<b>Policy Number:</b>	AA-03-020 (Replaces Academic Senate Policy 546)
<b>Policy Administrator:</b>	Provost
<b>Policy Initiator:</b>	T. Messer, Academic Senate; S. Kreta AVP
<b>Authority:</b>	Executive Order 1037: Grading Symbols, Minimum Standards Governing the Assignment of Grades, Policies on the Repetition of Courses, Policies on Academic Renewal and Grade Appeals
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 7, 2002
<b>Revised Date:</b>	February, 24, 2015
<b>Approved:</b>	President Thomas A. Cropper
<b>Approval Signature:</b>	/s/

**Purpose:**

In accordance with Executive Order 1037, the campus has the responsibility for enforcing academic standards established by the CSU. This policy addresses due process on grade appeals.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all enrollments of new and continuing students at Cal Maritime.

**Accountability:**

The Academic departments and the Office of the Registrar are responsible for administering and enforcing this policy.

**Policy:**

It is the policy of the California State University Maritime Academy to allow students the opportunity to challenge the appropriateness of a grade assigned for a specific course or assessment. Institutional academic processes involving assessments and/or 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 or assessment was inappropriate.

## **Procedure:**

### **A. Requirement to consult with instructor or assessor**

To initiate a change of grade request, a student must first have consulted with the instructor(s) of the course concerning the appropriateness of the grade received in the course. In the case of STCW assessments, the student must first consult with the assessor who witnessed and evaluated the STCW skill, as well as the instructor of record.

### **B. Basis for requesting a change of grade, i.e., grade appeal**

The Committee on Academic Integrity will evaluate the merit of grade appeals arising out of assertions of:

1. Instructor mistake (i.e. A mathematical or recording error)
2. Instructor bad faith (i.e. Instructor did not follow syllabus or policy, etc.)
3. Instructor incompetence (i.e. The instructor is not qualified to evaluate)
4. Instructor unfairness (i.e. The student was treated differently than other students)

### **C. Timeline**

Appeals of fall semester grades must be submitted within the first two weeks of the following spring semester. Appeals of spring semester and summer term grades must be submitted within the first two weeks of the following fall semester. For unique academic assignments not meeting regular grading schedules, grade appeals must be submitted within two weeks of the date the grade was posted. Grade appeals will generally not be heard during the summer term. (Note: Instructors are required to retain evaluation instruments for just one semester beyond that within which a grade was assigned.)

### **D. Grade appeals for courses which are prerequisites**

If the grade appeal involves a course which is a pre-requisite for a course in the semester during which the grade appeal is heard, and the recorded, contested grade is preventing the student from enrolling the “follow-on” course(s), the student shall be allowed to provisionally enroll in such “follow-on” course(s). Should the student’s grade appeal be unsuccessful, and result in the pre-requisites for courses taken with provisional enrollment not being met, the student shall receive a grade of “W” for the “follow-on” course(s) and shall be dropped from the course(s), and receive no academic credit nor STCW competency for the course, regardless of whether the follow-on course was completed or not. The Committee shall notify the Registrar of such circumstances, and facilitate the student’s provisional enrollment in such “follow-on” courses.

### **E. Burden of proof**

The student requesting a change of grade bears the burden of proof in establishing first that the assigned grade is inappropriate, and second, the appropriateness of the grade 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.

### **F. Initiation of a grade change request**

To initiate a change of grade request, 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 assessor and/or 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, the cover sheet of which shall be the form at the end of this policy:

1. The full name of the course as it appears in the course catalog
2. The catalog course number
3. The course section and four-digit CSU course number
4. The course syllabus under which the course was taught
5. The name of the course instructor(s) and/or assessor who issued the grade
6. The term during which the course or assessment was offered
7. The grade received in the course or assessment
8. A detailed description of the facts which the student feels have a direct bearing on the perceived inappropriateness of the grade assigned
9. The names of third parties capable of giving testimony detailing what they saw, heard, or experienced that relates directly to the change of grade request
10. The redress or remedy sought, such as the grade desired, with a fully supported explanation as to why the proposed remedy is appropriate
11. Any courses in which the student intends to provisionally enroll

Attached to this formal written request for change of grade the student should include all documents, such as examinations, course handouts, and any other course materials the student feels are pertinent to his or her case. Such supporting documentation need only be submitted with the original request for change of grade to the Chair of the AIC, and not to the assessor, Department Chair, or Dean.

#### **G. Steps in the process**

Once a formal request for change of grade is received by the Chair of the Committee on Academic Integrity, the following processes shall occur:

1. The Chair will respond, in writing, to the student making the grade change request. If the formal request received by the committee Chair fails to include the information outlined in section “F” above, the 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 Chair’s response. Once informed of the deficiencies present in his/her request, a student will be given two weeks from receipt of the Chair’s written response to perfect the formal written request for change of grade.
2. Upon receipt of complete, formal written request for change of grade, the committee Chair will inform the other members of the 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 the grade change request.
3. Absent exigent circumstances, a meeting of the committee will be called within two weeks of the receipt of a complete request for grade change.
4. The Chair will notify committee members, the course instructor and/or assessor, and the student of the time scheduled for a meeting. It is the responsibility of the student to notify all witnesses appearing in support of the grade change request.
5. If a committee member is the assessor or instructor of record for the case at hand, he or she shall be recused, and replaced with an alternate committee member. Ideally, at least one committee member hearing the case should have taught the course at issue, but this is not a requirement.
6. Should the student have reason to believe any member of the committee is incapable of rendering an impartial decision, the student shall immediately notify the Chair of the committee, and provide complete support for his or her concern. The Chair, at his or her sole discretion, may elect to replace the disputed committee member with another committee member.

7. Either the Chair or his/her designee 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 (i.e., 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, and/or first or third party testimony.
9. Committee members can direct questions at any time to the student, the instructor/assessor and/or any witness appearing on behalf of the student, or any witness appearing on behalf of the instructor/assessor.
10. The instructor/assessor may present information to the committee in the form of documents, exhibits, and first or third party testimony.
11. The committee may call witnesses to assist in the evaluation of the merits of the grade change requested.
12. After both student and instructor/assessor have presented all information that 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 committee Chair will draft a written summary of the hearing process, included within which will be its recommendations.
  - a. The committee's recommendations may include:
    1. Changing the grade to that requested by the student,
    2. Changing the grade to something other than that requested by the student, but shall in no case recommend a lower grade than the grade originally assigned,
    3. Or any other remedy the committee sees fit to recommend.
  - b. For STCW assessments, due to the requirements of NVIC 6-97, the committee cannot assess a student as competent in a given STCW skill or competency. Thus, for STCW skills that the committee determined were inappropriately assessed, the committee shall consult with the Department Chair of the department in which the course was taught and the Director of USCG Licensing to explore possible remedies. The Director of USCG Licensing's role will be to ensure any recommended remedy does not violate the Academy's STCW approval documentation, or in any way jeopardize the institution's or involved academic program's U.S. Coast Guard status with regards to STCW and licensure.

After consultation with the relevant Department Chair and the Director of USCG Licensing, the committee's recommendations may include such remedies as:

    1. Recommending re-assessment by on-campus assessors,
    2. Recommending acceptance of an assessment performed by an off-campus, USCG approved stand-alone course or program,
    3. Or any other remedy crafted by the committee after consultation with the Director of USCG Licensing.
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 Provost. For recommendations involving STCW assessments, the Director of USCG Licensing shall also be copied. The Chair of the committee will retain the original summary and recommendation, along with all supporting documents, in a permanent committee archive.

15. Once the committee has reached a decision that a grade should be changed, or an assessment repeated, the grade change/reassessment may occur via one of the following three options:
  - a. The instructor/assessor will be given the opportunity to submit a change of grade with the Registrar's Office. For STCW assessments the instructor of record will have the opportunity to re-assess the student, if such was recommended. Any action regarding STCW re-assessment should be done in consultation with the Director of USCG Licensing.
  - b. Absent exigent circumstances, the instructor/assessor should initiate the grade change/re-assessment within one week of receipt of the committee's recommendation.
  - c. If the instructor/assessor does not exercise his/her option to initiate the change of grade and/or re-assess the student, the Chair of the Department within which the course was taught will have one week to submit the change of grade with the Registrar's Office and/or make arrangements to have the student re-assessed for STCW competency. Any action regarding STCW re-assessment should be done in consultation with the Director of USCG Licensing.
  - d. Absent exigent circumstances, if a change of grade has not been initiated with the Registrar's Office by either the instructor/assessor or the Department Chair during the two-week window provided by this policy, the Dean may initiate the change-of-grade procedure with the Registrar's Office and/or make arrangements to have the student re-assessed. Any action regarding STCW re-assessment should be done in consultation with the Director of USCG Licensing.

## Student Originated Request for Change of Grade

### Student Details

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Information

Name of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Catalog Course Number and Section (ie. NAU 101-3): \_\_\_\_\_

Four Digit Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an STCW course? Yes / No

Semester and year in which course was taken: Fall / Spring of \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor of Record: \_\_\_\_\_

STCW Assessor (if different than instructor of record): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for grade appeal (circle all that apply):

Instructor Mistake

Instructor Bad Faith

Instructor Incompetence

Instructor Unfairness

Third Parties/Witnesses you intend to call who can support your case: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please attach the following documents:

- A narrative description of the circumstances surrounding the assigned grade and why you feel it was inappropriate. You must support your claim of instructor mistake/bad faith/incompetence/unfairness. Support for the grade or remedy you propose.
- Course syllabus
- Pertinent assignments, examinations, etc.
- Any other documents which are pertinent to your grade appeal, as well as documents supporting the grade or remedy you are requesting.

**Instructor Provided with Copy of the Grade Appeal Request**

I (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_ certify I have provided the instructor of record and/or involved assessor with a copy of the grade appeal request.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Provisional Enrollment in Follow-On Courses**

If the disputed grade is the sole cause preventing you from enrolling in any follow-on courses, for which the disputed course/grade/assessment is a pre-requisite, list the follow-on courses here using the course catalog number:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List all courses (by catalog number) in which you intend to provisionally enroll:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Provisional Enrollment Agreement:**

I (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_ understand that I am being allowed to provisionally enroll in the courses listed above, and will be allowed to stay enrolled and receive a grade and credit for the above courses only if my grade appeal results in the pre-requisites for the above listed courses being met. Should my grade appeal not result in my meeting course pre-requisites, I understand I will be dis-enrolled from the courses in which I was provisionally enrolled and assigned a grade of "W", regardless of my progress, grade, or completion in the follow-on courses. A grade of "W" is an "authorized withdrawal and will not negatively impact my GPA.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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