

Grade Appeal Form

Print, complete, and submit this page with your rationale and documentation.

Please read and sign below: The information I provide as part of this request for a grade appeal is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability. I also have read the *UMass Dartmouth Grade Appeal Policy* found in the catalog and reviewed the information attached to this form.

Student's signature: _____

Student's name (printed): _____

Today's date: _____ **UMassD ID#** _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

The class name, number, and section number of the class in which the grade was received (e.g., *GEO 120, section 02, Introduction to Geology*):

Instructor's name: _____

Semester class was taken (e.g., *Fall 2014*): _____

Basis for Grade Appeal (Please check all criteria that apply):

- Unequal application of grading standards or applying grading criteria to one student or some students in a manner that treats them differently.
- Unfair or unannounced alterations of assignments, grading criteria, or computational process as stated in the syllabus.
- Computation dispute about the final grade.
- Failure by the instructor to document a finding of plagiarism that affected the final grade.

Attach documentation that includes: 1. A rationale that addresses **each** criterion checked must be submitted. 2. Provide supporting documentation or information as needed. **See next page for tips on writing a sufficient rationale.**

Grade received: _____ **Expected Grade:*** _____

*Explain why you expected this grade in your rationale.

Questions about grade appeals should be directed to the Grade Appeal Facilitator.

Important Information and Tips for Grade Appeals

- A. **Can I appeal a test grade or the grade on a specific paper?** No, you can only appeal a final course or seminar grade. However, an assignment/test grade can certainly affect the overall grade; if it does, this may be part of the appeal of the final course grade once it is posted. Students should contact the instructor with questions about assignment/test grades immediately.
- B. **If you are appealing a grade in two or more classes**, you must submit a separate appeal for each final class grade.
- C. **When does the time frame for appeals begin?** The student should submit the Grade Appeal Form to the Grade Appeal Facilitator, all documentation as evidence, and any email exchanges with the course instructor or chairperson no later than **Monday of the second week of January for fall semester grade appeals**, and no later than **Monday of the last full week of May for spring semester grade appeals**.
- D. **Should correspondence with the instructor regarding the grade appeal be included?** Yes. Emails are preferred.
- E. **How long should my rationale be?** Your rationale does not need to be long—but it does need to be concise. It is critical that you explain why the situation leading to your appeal meets one or more of the criteria for grade appeals.
- F. **Should I include documents?** Yes, if they are relevant to your appeal. In your rationale, you should explain why each document you include is important. Please number document pages for easy reference. If you want the Grade Appeal Committee to examine a specific section of a document, be sure to say that, explain why that is important, and reference the page number and location on the page. Do not assume the committee members will interpret documents the same way you do without explanation. In other words, tell the committee what you want them to see and how to interpret/understand the materials you provide. Work from another student in the class may not be included without the written consent of the student.
- G. **What are examples of the grade appeal criteria?** See below for examples. If you are unsure of whether your situation meets one or more criteria for a grade appeal, you may contact your Grade Appeal Facilitator.
1. **Unequal application of grading standards:** Student can provide evidence that the instructor included grading criteria on the syllabus or assignment for the final paper, which was worth a major portion of the grade. After the papers were graded and returned, the instructor informed the class that different criteria were used—this change led to a drop in the student’s final course grade from a B to a C. *Note: if the instructor had announced the change before the paper was due in sufficient time for students to adjust their work, or if the change was minor and did not affect the overall grade, a grade appeal based on this criteria would likely not prevail.*
 2. **Unfair or unannounced alterations:** Student can provide evidence that the instructor included grading criteria on the syllabus or assignment for the final paper, which was worth a major portion of the grade. After the papers were graded and returned, the instructor informed the class that different criteria were used—this change led to a drop in the student’s final course grade from a

B to a C. *Note: if the instructor had announced the change before the paper was due in sufficient time for students to adjust their work, or if the change was minor and did not affect the overall grade, a grade appeal based on this criteria would likely not prevail.*

3. **Computation dispute:** Student can provide evidence that instructor recorded 57 points for a paper or exam that had been awarded 75 points and returned back to you. *Usually these situations can be corrected without a grade appeal if the student contacts the instructor in a timely manner.*
4. **Claim of plagiarism:** Student can provide evidence that instructor downgraded or failed an assignment or take-home exam, without providing evidence of the source of plagiarism.

H. **What are the typical reasons that grade appeals are denied?** Grade appeals typically fail because (1) the student is appealing a grade for a reason not covered by the policy, (2) the student did not provide a sufficient case for the basis of the appeal, or the student waited too long to appeal the grade. For example:

1. The student appeals an individual assignment (test, paper, etc.) grade before the course ends, or the assignment grade had no effect on the final course grade.
2. The student appeals because he/she “worked hard and deserved a better grade.” Working hard is important, but grades are not typically awarded for effort only.
3. The student does not agree with the instructor’s evaluation of a paper or a response on a test. The course instructor has the right to make subjective determinations about the submitted work based on their experience, education, and expertise.
4. The student argues that the instructor did not explain the material well, did not provide timely feedback, or was disorganized in the class. All of these may be true, but none of these reasons will warrant further consideration of the appeal.
5. The student claims that the instructor “doesn’t like me” or “wasn’t fair.” Again, both may be true. However, the first does not necessarily mean the grade was based on the instructor/student relationship. “Being unfair” may be a reason for further consideration of an appeal, but only if the claim is backed by evidence.
6. The student waited too long to submit a formal appeal.

I. **Finally, it is up to the student to provide the information needed to support the appeal.** It is sometimes helpful to say that the student has the “burden of proof” in an appeal. If the student wants other students to submit information in support of the appeal, the student is responsible for obtaining that information. The Grade Appeal Committee will not seek out information on behalf of the student other than to ask the instructor to respond to the student’s appeal and provide a syllabus.