

**Department of Communication Studies**  
**GRADING, GRADE APPEALS, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**  
Adopted March 13, 2012

**GRADING OF STUDENT WORK**

1. **Grading Responsibility:** Responsibility for evaluating student work and assigning grades rests with the course instructor. Instructors have an obligation to grade students fairly. The process of grading relies on the instructor's professional judgment.
  - a. In the syllabus, made available at the beginning of the course, instructors must make clear the requirements for the course and the relative weight each requirement plays in the final course grade.
  - b. With each assignment, the instructor must make clear the criteria for evaluation of student work.
  
2. **Student-Instructor/Course Director Conferences on Evaluation:**
  - a. In cases where students believe they have been unfairly evaluated, their first step is to consult with the course instructor. This consultation must take place in a timely fashion, following the course policies, or, if no time limit is articulated, within two weeks of receiving a grade. During this meeting, students have the responsibility of providing specific reasons why they disagree with the instructor evaluation. Instructors have an obligation to explain their evaluation and address student concerns.
  - b. In the case of multi-section courses, students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the instructor conference may schedule a meeting with the course director. Course directors will discuss the situation with the classroom instructor and inform students of their decision and its rationale.

**GRADE APPEAL**

1. **Appeal to the Department Chair:**
  - a. When students believe that a problem with grading persists after meeting with the course instructor and/or the course director, they may petition the Department Chair within two weeks.
  - b. In writing, students should describe the circumstances of the evaluation, offer reasons for dissatisfaction with the instructor/course director meeting, and make a case for the unfairness of the grade.

- c. Students may choose to schedule a meeting with the Department Chair to discuss the matter orally. Such a meeting should be scheduled within two weeks of submitting the written material.
- d. The Chair will review the case and discuss the matter with the instructor and/or course director. The Chair will, in a timely fashion, render a written decision. Along with the decision, the Chair will explain to the student the additional avenues of appeal.

**2. Appeal to the Department Grading Appeals Committee:**

- a. If students disagree with the justification for their grade, they may file an appeal with the Department Grading Appeals Committee.
- b. Students may file with the chair of the Grading Appeals Committee a request for a grade appeal hearing. The committee chair will explain to the student the committee procedures.
  - 1) A written statement of grievance must be filed with the committee. This statement should describe the circumstances of the evaluation, the reasons for disagreement with the outcome of the instructor/course director meeting, and the reasons for disagreement with the Department Chair's decision.
  - 2) Students may just submit written material or they may also choose to schedule a meeting with the grade appeals committee. At this meeting, students may present their case and answer committee members' questions.
  - 3) The grade appeals committee will review the matter with both the instructor/course director and the Department Chair.
  - 4) In a timely fashion, the committee will render a written decision.
  - 5) This decision will be accompanied by an explanation of procedures for filing a grade appeal with the College of Arts & Sciences.

3. **Appeal to the College of Arts & Sciences:** Students who remain dissatisfied with the action of the department's Grading Appeals Committee may contact the Dean's Office in the College of Arts & Sciences and initiate action with the College Grade Appeals Committee.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND STUDENT MISCONDUCT**

1. **Instructors should have a clear policy about academic misconduct and its aftermath in their course syllabus.**

2. **Definition of Academic Dishonesty:** According to the Student Code of Conduct, Section 4.2, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. **Cheating.** Copying or attempting to copy from an academic test or examination of another student; using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices for an academic test, examination or exercise; engaging or attempting to engage the assistance of another individual in misrepresenting the academic performance of a student; or communicating information in an unauthorized manner to another person for an academic test, examination or exercise.
  - b. **Fabrication or Falsification.** Falsifying or fabricating any information or citation in any academic exercise, work, speech, test or examination. Falsification is the alteration of information, while fabrication is the invention or counterfeiting of information.
  - c. **Plagiarism.** Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations, theses, reports, speeches, drawings, laboratory notes or other academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person.
  - d. **Abuse of Academic Materials.** Destroying, defacing, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material.
  - e. **Complicity in Academic Dishonesty.** Helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
  - f. **Falsifying Grade Reports.** Changing or destroying grades, scores or markings on an examination or in an instructor's records.
  - g. **Misrepresentation to Avoid Academic Work.** Misrepresentation by fabricating an otherwise justifiable excuse such as illness, injury, accident, etc., in order to avoid or delay timely submission of academic work or to avoid or delay the taking of a test or examination.
  - h. **Other.** Academic units and members of the faculty may prescribe and give students prior notice of additional standards of conduct for academic honesty in a particular course, and violation of any such standard of conduct shall constitute misconduct under this Code of Conduct and the University Disciplinary Procedures.
3. **File Form with Dean of Students Office:** If instructors discover a case of academic dishonesty, they must file a "Misconduct Referral Form" with the Office of the Dean of Students. Whether the instructor requests action or no action from the Dean of

Students' Office, they still must file the report within two weeks. The report is essential for discovering repeated instances of student academic misconduct.

4. **Student Sanctions:** Depending upon the seriousness of the violation, instructors may impose a student sanction. This may range from lowering the grade on an assignment, failing the student on an assignment, failing the student in the course, or requesting that the Office of the Dean Students instigate an investigation that may result in penalties ranging from probation to suspension to expulsion.
5. **Student Appeals:** If students believe that an instructor's sanction for academic misconduct is unfair, they may follow the grade appeals process described above.