

BRIDGEVALLEY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

OPERATING POLICY

Effective Date	Subject	Number	Page
October 24, 2014	ACADEMIC GRADE APPEALS	D-OP-20-14	1 of 4
Supersedes/Supplements:	KV AP #VI-8		
Reference:	BridgeValley BOG Rule D-2		

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of BridgeValley Community and Technical College (College) faculty to establish, in writing, clear grading policies and standards for academic performance in their courses and to advising students of the objective criteria on which those grades are assigned. All grading policies and standards are to be fair and consistent and not arbitrary, capricious, prejudiced, or discriminatory.

PROCEDURES

The Student Grade Appeal Process provides a fair, orderly and unbiased process for students who wish to pursue a formal appeal of their final course grade. In taking such action, students shall assume the burden of proof concerning any perceived error in the grade assigned.

Should a student believe that a grade was not awarded objectively, it is the responsibility of the student to prove that the grade is incorrect or unjustified. No adverse action will be taken against a student who chooses to utilize this process.

Students may appeal grades in College courses on the following grounds, provided that they have evidence, or believe that evidence exists, to support their claims:

- a) Failure by the instructor to explain clearly the method by which grades in the course would be determined.
- b) Assignment of a course grade by substantial departure from the announced method.
- c) c. Arbitrary, capricious, prejudiced, and/or discriminatory grading.

Further, they shall follow the sequence of steps outlined in this policy with the presumption that, as a matter of rule, instructors do not assign arbitrary, capricious, prejudicial, or discriminatory grades. **The grade appeal process must be started within 15 working days of the posting of the final grade, within 2 working days for part-of-term courses.**

Before starting a formal grade appeal process, the student must discuss the final course grade, including grading practices and assignments, with the instructor who gave the final grade. The instructor and the student should make every effort to eliminate any misunderstandings over the assignment of the grade as it relates to the course syllabus. It is expected that most grade issues will be resolved at this level. This discussion must occur before the student may file a formal appeal.

If the faculty member finds in the student's favor, a grade change is submitted with signatures and the appeal process is resolved.

If a student and instructor fail to resolve the grade dispute through informal means the student may request a formal grade appeal process by initiating a formal student grade appeal.

PROCESS

Step 1: The student must notify the course faculty member in writing immediately (within 2 working days for part-of-term courses, no later than 15 working days for full-term courses) of the posting of the final grade stating that s/he wishes to discuss his/her final grade. If the course faculty member does not respond to the student's email within the specified time or if there is no resolution and the student intends to pursue a grade appeal, the student must obtain a Student Grade Appeal Form from the College website, his or her counselor, or any division office. The Student Grade Appeal Form must include all facts and supporting documentation from the student prior to presenting the form to the course faculty. The Student Grade Appeal containing the decision and the rationale must be completed, dated and signed by the course faculty member.

Step 2: If the issue is not resolved to the student's or the instructor's satisfaction at Step 1, the decision may be appealed to the department chairperson* within 10 working days of the student submission of the Student Grade Appeal Form to the faculty to arrange a meeting. The faculty member may be invited to this meeting if the department chairperson deems it appropriate. The student must attend the scheduled meeting and discuss the issue of the grade appeal with the department chairperson. Should a student fail to attend any scheduled meeting, the appeal will be nullified and no further action will be considered. The Student Grade Appeal Form, containing the decision and the rationale, must be completed, dated and signed by the department chairperson.

*If the faculty member is also the department chair, proceed to the next step.

Step 3: If the issue is not resolved to the student's or the instructor's satisfaction at Step 2, the student must contact the Academic Division Dean* within 10 working days to schedule a meeting. The student must attend the scheduled meeting and discuss the issue of the grade appeal. Should a student fail to attend any scheduled meeting, the appeal will be nullified and no further action will be considered. The Academic Division Dean will conduct an investigation of the situation. The Student Grade Appeal Form, containing the decision and the rationale must be completed, dated and signed by the Academic Division Dean.

*If the faculty member is also the Academic Division Dean, proceed to the next step.

Step 4: If the issue is not resolved to the student's or the instructor's satisfaction at Step 3, the student must send a copy of the Student Grade Appeal Form to the Office of the Registrar (Registrar) within 10 working days to schedule a meeting. After meeting with the student and discussion with faculty, the Registrar will review the appeal to determine if the student has appropriate grounds for appeal based on the statements in the syllabus and other instructor documents. If warranted, the Registrar will convene the Grade Appeals Committee, which is a recommending body and a subcommittee of the Academic Board, to convene a hearing. If not, the Chief Academic Officer makes the determination that the grade stands. The student will be notified in writing of the Chief Academic Officer's decision.

Grade Appeals Committee: The Grade Appeals Committee is convened by the Registrar after Step 4 when the grade is still in dispute and the Registrar determines that the student has grounds for an appeal. The Grade Appeal Committee will be made up of five (5) faculty members, one (1) student, and the Registrar (or designee), who will be a non-voting member,

except in the event of a tie. Both the faculty member and student involved in the appeal will have an opportunity to be heard before the Grade Appeals Committee, and any employee involved in Steps 1-3 may be asked to comment before the Committee. The participants will be informed, in writing, of the Committee's recommendation within two (2) working days after the hearing.

The faculty member must abide by the recommendation of the Committee and will submit any grade change deemed necessary to the Office of the Registrar.

Selection of the Grade Appeals Committee:

- Six (6) faculty members selected from among the membership of Academic Board (not to include the instructor of the course of the disputed grade), plus one faculty member appointed by the Registrar from the same area of study or from an associated field in which the dispute is involved.
- Two students selected by the Student Government Association. All students must be in good standing at the college and cannot be on probation.
- The instructor and the student each will each strike one faculty and one student and from the committee, leaving a committee of the Registrar (ex-officio, non-voting), one (1) student and five (5) faculty members

Conduct of the Meeting:

- 1) **Meeting:** Once convened, the Grade Appeals Committee shall consider the facts and circumstances of the grade appeal. The student and the faculty member will provide validation of the specifics of the appeal and will only be present during the period of testimony.
- 2) **Student's Case:** The student shall present his/her case without interruption, including the presentation of factual evidence.
- 3) **Faculty Member's Case:** The faculty member shall present his/her case without interruption, including the presentation of factual evidence providing validation of the specifics of the appeal.
- 4) **Committee Questioning:** Members of the Appeals Committee shall have the right to direct questions to either party or to request additional information.

When testimony has been completed, the members of the Appeal Committee shall enter into deliberations which will be conducted in private and shall remain confidential.

- 1) The Grade Appeals Committee shall consider only evidence presented during the hearing when making its decision or any additional evidence as requested by the Committee.
- 2) The Committee shall then reach a decision on the merits of the student's grade appeal within two (2) working days of the conclusion of the hearing.
- 3) The decision of the Committee must be a simple majority. The vote on the decision shall be by secret ballot.
- 4) The Committee's decision shall be to support the existing grade or to recommend a change. If a change of grade is recommend, the Chief Academic Officer will assign the appropriate grade. The Committee may provide any recommendation as needed to either the faculty member and/or the student.
- 5) The Committee or the Chief Academic Officer shall provide the Registrar with a written decision on the grade appeal. The Registrar shall provide a letter relating the Committee's decision to all parties concerned within two (2) College days of the conclusion of the hearing.
- 6) The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the decision of the Committee be implemented within two (2) working days of the conclusion of the hearing.

Approved by: Cabinet **Date:** 10/24/2014



GRADE APPEAL

Grade grid with 'B' in the first cell and empty cells for 'C', 'D', 'F', 'I', 'P', 'S', 'W', 'X', 'Z'.

Name: Last First Middle Initial

Course Information: Term CRN Subject Code Course Number Course Name

Grade Information: Original Grade Requested Grade

Please read the following statements and check the appropriate boxes to acknowledge that you understand:

- 6 bullet points regarding appeal requirements and consequences, each with a checkbox.

Reason for Grade Appeal: [Blank lines for text entry]

Student Signature: Date:

Instructor Signature: Approved Denied Date:

Department Chair Signature: Approved Denied Date:

Division Dean Signature: Approved Denied Date:

Chief Academic Officer Signature: Approved Denied Date:

Registrar Signature: Date: