

Department of Geosciences

Grade Appeal Process

In order for a grade appeal to be considered, you the student must prove that your instructor has issued a grade in a **capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory** manner. Refer to the following definitions of these terms:

Arbitrary refers to a grading decision for which there is no sound academic reason, or a decision based solely on preference or whim;

Capricious refers to a grading decision not resulting from a reasonable and announced grading policy and procedure;

Discriminatory refers to a grading decision reflecting differential treatment based on race, religion, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.

According to university policy, unless there is capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory behavior, the professional judgment of the instructor is not a matter that can be challenged or appealed in this process. It is your responsibility as the student to prove that the grade was issued in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner.

You may only appeal after having officially received the final grade in the course.

All final grade course appeals must be initiated no later than **10 business days** immediately following the semester during which the alleged grievance occurred (fall, spring, summer), whether or not you are enrolled that semester. This policy is set forth and further explained in the Student Code of Conduct (www.gsu.edu/codeofconduct) as outlined for all Georgia State University students.

Remember that the syllabus is a contractual agreement between you and your instructor. By staying enrolled in the class, you tacitly accept the policies and terms outlined in the syllabus. Therefore, all matters having to do with Department policy or with curriculum and program requirements are not appealable, nor are any of the instructor's stated classroom policies such as attendance and behavior policies.

If you feel certain that your instructor has issued a course grade in a capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory manner, you must complete these steps:

1. Talk to your instructor about the situation. You may also request a meeting with the instructor and a mediating presence in the Department of Geosciences if you think that might be helpful such as inviting the Department Chair, Dr. Katherine Hankins (khankins@gsu.edu) or the Chair of the Appeals Committee, Dr. Dajun Dai (ddai@gsu.edu) into your discussion. Only after attempting informally to resolve the situation by meeting with the instructor should you initiate a formal grade appeal procedure;
2. If the complaint remains unsolved after meeting with the instructor, you may initiate the appeal process by submitting a written statement of grievances to the Department Chair, Chair of the Appeals Committee, and instructor who assigned the grade in question. The statement must include the following elements;
 - explain any informal attempts to resolve the issue;
 - allege and specify that you were the object of either capricious, arbitrary, or prejudicial behavior;
 - include copies of any supporting evidence to which you allude (e.g. syllabus, graded papers, tests);
 - list any witnesses by including their names, email addresses, and telephone numbers; and
 - explain the specific outcome you would like to see happen.
3. The Chair in consultation with the Appeals Committee in the Department of Geosciences will review all materials submitted with the appeal, follow up as needed, and issue a decision to the student in writing.