



Bemidji State University	
Student Handbook	
Policies and Procedures	
Section	Academic Policies
Policy	Grade Challenges

Grade Challenges

A student may submit two kinds of challenge to a grade. A student's bringing to the attention of the instructor a clerical error in entering a grade on the student's record is not a "challenge" in the sense used here, and the policies and procedures for "grade challenge" do not apply.

A. A student may challenge the final grade in a course on the grounds that:

1. The methods or criteria for evaluating academic performance as stated by the instructor at the beginning of the course were not actually applied in determining the final grade, and/or
2. The instructor applied predetermined criteria unfairly: the evaluation of academic performance so exceeded the reasonable limits of the instructor's discretion as not to be acceptable to the instructor's peers.

B. A student may challenge a final grade or a grade on a component of a course on the grounds that the instructor made the grade unjustly low as a penalty for alleged violation of academic integrity.

C. Policies Regarding a Grade Challenge

1. Procedures for challenging a grade should meet the ordinary criteria of due process.
2. The student who challenges a grade bears the full burden of proving that there are sufficient grounds for changing a grade.

D. Procedures for Challenging a Grade

1. Explanation to the instructor.

- a. A student who is considering a grade challenge must discuss the grade with the instructor before the end of the following regular semester (Second Semester and summer session challenges must be made before the end of the First Semester) The instructor is expected to discuss the grading with the student. If the instructor is not at the university during the following regular semester after the grade was issued, and the instructor does not respond to documented inquiries via email or telephone, the student may proceed to challenge the grade by speaking to the department chair. Upon receipt of the student's request, the department chair must immediately contact the instructor regarding the grade challenge. The instructor must respond to the department chair within one month if the challenge takes place during the academic year or within two weeks of the beginning of fall semester if the challenge occurs during the summer.
- b. The instructor or the department chair should document the discussion with the student and their determination regarding the grade challenge. A copy of that documentation should be forwarded to the dean of the college.
- c. The instructor may, on his or her own authority, change the grade that is questioned. The department chair, after meeting the requirements outlined in subpart a. above, may seek out documentation that will allow for a determination regarding the grade challenge. Once the chairperson has made a determination, he or she may change the grade on his or her own authority. This should be done only in unusual circumstances. The instructor or department chair should submit the change of grade form to Records, and submit to the dean a copy of it along with a written explanation for the grade change

2. Submission of written challenge.

Beyond his or her explanation to the instructor, the student may challenge a grade by submitting a written statement before the end of the following regular semester, giving in detail the reasons for the challenge. By the end of the semester, the student must submit two copies of the challenge to the dean of the college in which the course was offered and the University Registrar. The University Registrar will meet with the student to outline the review process. After meeting with the Registrar, should the student desired continued review of the grade challenge, the University Registrar will forward one copy of the grade challenge to the Grade Challenge Review Board and one copy to the instructor. The University Registrar will also request any documentation from the dean of the college regarding the outcome of the student's discussion with the instructor regarding the grade challenge or the resolution of an alleged violation of academic integrity.

E. Procedures for Review

1. Grade Challenges will be heard by the university Grade Challenge Review Board.
2. Annually, at the end of spring semester, the faculty association will insure that the names of five faculty members from the Student Programs and Admissions Committee (SPA Committee) have been forwarded to the Records Office. The Grade Challenge Review Board will be comprised of three faculty members, selected from the pool of faculty designated to serve on the SPA Committee. No member of the Grade Challenge Review Board hearing a given case can be the instructor whose grade is being challenged.
3. The Grade Challenge Review Board will select its own chair and determine its own procedures for handling student grade challenges. The review procedures will meet the ordinary criteria of due process.
4. Decisions of the Grade Challenge Review Board are to be determined by a majority vote.
5. Normally, within two weeks after accepting the student's challenge, the Grade Challenge Review Board is to reach one of the three following decisions:
 - a. Challenge affirmed and settled by consent. The Grade Challenge Review Board devises conciliation mutually acceptable to the student and the instructor who gave the grade. Should the acceptable conciliation involve a change of grade, the instructor will submit a change of grade card to the dean of the college in which the course was taught.
 - b. Challenge affirmed and the Grade Challenge Review Board recommends a change of grade to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will notify the instructor and the dean of the college in which the course was taught.
 - c. Challenge denied; original grade stands.
6. The decision recommended by the Grade Challenge Review Board is to be communicated in writing by the Board chair directly to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will implement the recommendation by notifying the dean, the instructor, and the student.
7. Decisions by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs on academic grade challenges are final and binding on all parties.

F. These policies and procedures will be reviewed during the Spring semester of each year by the deans and the Faculty Association, in the expectation that necessary and desirable revisions will be proposed to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Revised: 12/13/2011