

## Bemidji State University Policies

<b>Policy Name:</b> Academic Grade Challenge Policy	<b>Effective Date:</b> 12/13/2011
<b>Policy Owner:</b> AVP of Academic Affairs/Registrar	Last Review: 5/1/2020
	Next Review: 9/1/2022

### Policy Statement

Bemidji State University policy states that students may challenge the final grade on a course if 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 if the instructor applied predetermined criteria unfairly; and/or if 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.

### Scope and Purpose of Policy

The scope of this policy includes all students who completed a course in the previous semester of enrollment. The purpose of this policy is to provide students guidelines for grade challenges in an organized, procedural manner.

### Definitions

Grade -rating or mark given to the student by the instructor indicating the quality of the work done in the course.

Grade Challenge- to call to question or dispute the final grade assigned to the student work completed for a course by the instructor.

Grade Challenge Review Board – A subcommittee of the Student Programs and Admissions Committee comprised of three (3) faculty members whom review and consider the information submitted from all parties (student, faculty member and dean) and make recommendations to the Provost regarding the resolution of the grade challenge.

### Procedures

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

- I. The first level of review is with the instructor of the course. A student who is considering a grade challenge must first 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)

- a. The instructor is expected to discuss the grading with the student.
  - b. If the instructor is not at the university during the following regular semester after the grade was issued, and/or the instructor does not respond to documented inquiries via email or telephone, the student may proceed to challenge the grade at the departmental level. A reasonable amount of time must be given to the instructor to respond, generally within two-weeks during the academic year or within two-weeks upon the beginning of fall or spring semesters after winter or summer breaks.
  - c. The instructor may, on his or her own authority, change the grade that is questioned.
- II. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response the second level of review is with the instructor's department.
- a. The student should schedule a meeting with the department chair to request a departmental review.
  - b. Upon receipt of the student's request, the department chair must immediately contact the instructor regarding the grade challenge.
  - c. 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.
  - d. If the instructor and department chair cannot come to an agreement regarding the grade challenge that is satisfactory to the student the department chair will confer with their department regarding the grade challenge. Once the department has made a determination, the department chair may change the grade based upon the will of the department. Grade changes initiated by the department should only be performed when faculty are unavailable beyond the timeline noted above or are unresponsive.
  - e. The department chair should document the discussion with the student, instructor and department and submit any determination with written explanation to the University Registrar. When appropriate, the instructor or department chair should submit a grade change form to the Records Office.
- III. If the student is not satisfied with the department's decision the student may enter the third level of review with the Grade Challenge Review Board. By the end of the semester, the student must submit two copies of the challenge to 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 requesting a response if the instructor so desires to provide a response. The University Registrar will also contact the appropriate dean and department chair to give them an opportunity to submit comments or relevant documentation. In the event it is discovered that during the grade challenge process that the student has misrepresented the facts, omitted information that the Grade Challenge Review Board (Dean or Provost) would find helpful in determining the validity of the grade challenge or otherwise commits acts that are in violation of the other university policies directly related to the grade challenge (ex. Academic Integrity Policy), the

student may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension from the university.

### **Procedures for Review by the Grade Challenge Review Board**

- a. Grade Challenges will be heard by the university Grade Challenge Review Board.
- b. Annually, at the end of spring semester, the faculty association will insure ensure 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Decisions of the Grade Challenge Review Board are to be determined by a majority vote.
- e. Normally, within two weeks after accepting the student's challenge, the Grade Challenge Review Board is to reach one of the three following decisions:
  - i. 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 Records Office.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. Challenge denied; original grade stands.
- f. 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 make a final determination and notify the dean, the department, the instructor, and the student.
- g. Decisions by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs on academic grade challenges are final and binding on all parties.
- h. 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.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for this policy is to provide students and those involved (including faculty) in the grading process a manner in which to review disputed grades assigned for course work completed.

**Supporting References**

There are no supporting references.