

Undergraduate Disputed Academic Evaluation Procedures¹

General University Policy

General university policy regarding disputed academic evaluations entitles a student to two levels of formal appeal after review by the instructor. In the interest of preserving the very important student-instructor relationship, the student and instructor should try to resolve the grade dispute by direct communication. If the issue cannot be resolved by this dialogue, the grade dispute should move beyond the instructor to the next level of review. All grade appeals must be brought no later than the end of the semester following the semester for which the student received the disputed grade. The two levels of appeal beyond the instructor are the department chair and the school's Vice Dean of Academic Affairs

Student & Instructor

Student and Instructor Appeal

Please fill out the *Disputed Academic Evaluation Form* (page 3) and attach evidence, and submit it to Julie Kim, Director of Academic Programs. Once the form is received, it will be forwarded to the instructor. The instructor will then contact the student with a response by email within two weeks of receiving the appeal form by email.

In the interest of preserving the very important student-instructor relationship, the student and instructor should try to resolve the grade dispute by direct communication once the instructor receives the *Disputed Academic Evaluation Form*.

Key Evidence

A grade dispute claim must be substantiated with documentation. A grade dispute cannot be based on a claim that the grade was "unfair." It is the student's responsibility to substantiate the grade dispute with evidence such as tests, graded papers, a syllabus, copies of exams, etc. The student must provide proof that an error in the grading process was made and that is why they deserve a higher grade.

Without proof, the grade dispute appeal is ineffective.

Level One

Department Chair

The first level, after speaking to the instructor, is by the department chair. Students must appeal in writing to the department chair within 2 weeks after receiving the instructor's written decision by email. The department chair at their discretion may review the matter personally or conduct a formal hearing through an ad hoc or standing committee. The hearing committee is appointed by the department chair and consists of five members: 1. faculty member from outside the involved department or academic unit, 2. a student, 3. a faculty member of the appealing student's choice, and 4. Two faculty members from the department or academic unit.

A written decision will be given to the student after the department chair's decision or the hearing committee decision. Normally a decision should be sent to the student's email within approximately 15 days after the hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing by email if the decision will be delayed.

What to submit

1. Disputed Academic Evaluation Form, on page 3 of this document
2. Key Evidence
3. An appeal letter explaining 1. why the grade dispute was not settled at the student and instructor level 2. Why it needs to be reviewed by the department chair.
4. Please include any and all documents related to the outcome of the student and instructor appeal.

Submit appeal to: Julie Kim, Director of Academic Programs, juliethk@usc.edu; RGL 102

Submission accepted digitally and in paper submission

Deadline: Department Chair Appeal must be received within two weeks of the decision received from the Student and Instructor Appeal process.

Level Two

Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, Sol Price School of Public Policy

If either the student or faculty member who assigned the grade wishes to appeal the decision of the chair or the hearing committee, in the next level of appeal beyond the instructor and the department chair, they must appeal in writing to the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs within 2 weeks after receiving the written decision by email. The vice dean may review the matter personally or, if a hearing has not been conducted by the department, the vice dean must conduct a hearing. The hearing committee consists of the same categories of members within the academic unit as described above in Level One.

The vice dean or committee will make a recommendation to the vice dean who will make a decision which is **final and binding**. Normally a written decision should be sent to the student within approximately 15 days after a hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing by email if the decision will be delayed.

What to submit

1. Disputed Academic Evaluation Cover Sheet Document
2. Key Evidence
3. An appeal letter explaining 1. why the grade dispute was not settled at the department chair level
2. Why it needs to be reviewed by the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs.
4. Please include any and all documents related to the outcome of the student and instructor appeal.
5. Please include any and all documents related to the outcome of the department chair appeal.

Submit appeal to: Julie Kim, Director of Academic Programs, juliethk@usc.edu, RGL 102

Submission accepted digitally and in paper submission

Deadline: Within 2 weeks after receiving the written decision from the Level One Review.

Appeal Timeline Summary

Student and Instructor Appeal

All grade appeals must be brought no later than the end of the semester date following the semester for which the student received the disputed grade.

Level One

Department Chair Appeal must be received within two weeks of the decision received from the Student and Instructor Appeal process. Normally a decision should be sent to the student's email within approximately 15 days after the hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing by email if the decision will be delayed.

Level Two

Vice Dean Appeal must be received within two weeks of the decision received from the Department Chair Appeal. Normally a decision should be sent to the student's email within approximately 15 days after the hearing. This time may be extended if necessary. The student should be informed in writing by email if the decision will be delayed.

Questions

Please contact Julie Kim

Director, Academic Programs

juliethk@usc.edu

213-740-1205

RGL 102

ⁱ Excerpted and Adjusted for the Sol Price School of Public Policy from the USC Scampus Document
<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>

Undergraduate Disputed Academic Evaluation Form

Submission Date ____ / ____ / ____

STUDENT INFORMATION

First and Last Name: _____ Student ID #: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

DISPUTED ACADEMIC EVALUATION INFORMATION

Semester: Fall Spring Summer Year: _____

Course Number: _____ Course Title: _____

Instructor Name: _____ Instructor Email: _____

What is your current grade: _____ What is the grade you are appealing for: _____

What level is this appeal in?

- Student & Instructor Appeal Level Date Submitted: ____ / ____ / ____
- Department Chair Level Date Submitted: ____ / ____ / ____
- Vice Dean Level Date Submitted: ____ / ____ / ____

REASON FOR APPEAL

- An error was made in the calculation of my grade.
- Other. Please state reason here: _____

The student must provide proof that an error in the grading process was made and that is why they deserve a higher grade.

In a separate sheet of paper, please provide the following information in a table based on the syllabus requirements. Please list all assignments for a total of 100% or the total number of points. Below is an example.

Assignment	Points Worth	Points Received	Received/ Should have Received	Explanation
i.e. Quizzes	35	35	35	n/a
i.e. Midterm	25	21	25	Instructor did not grade a question
i.e. Class participation	10	10	10	n/a
i.e. Final	30	25	25	n/a
TOTAL	100	91	95	

KEY EVIDENCE

Please provide key evidence such as tests, graded papers, a syllabus, copies of exams, etc., that substantiate your disputed academic evaluation claim. **Without proof, the grade dispute appeal is ineffective.**

Please list your evidence below and attach to this document.

1. **Please include the syllabus.**
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

SUBMISSION

Please submit this document and all evidence to Julie Kim, Director of Academic Programs, as a digital document to juliethk@usc.edu or paper submission in RGL 102.