**Administrative Grade Change Policy**

I. Purpose

A. According to university policy, only the instructor(s) of record for a course may award or change grades for that course, and must do so following university policy/procedures (e.g., filling out a Change of Grade form). Under unusual circumstances, however, it may be necessary to involve others in the assignment or changing of grades.

B. Recognizing that grade determinations are an integral part of an instructor’s rights and responsibilities, administrative officers should not substitute their judgment for that of the faculty concerning the assignment of a grade without seeking the input from an academic grievance panel. Occasionally, unusual circumstances may require that other individuals are involved in the assignment of grades or changing of grades. The purpose of this policy is to establish circumstances in which university administrators may assign or make changes to assigned grades.

II. Notification

A. The instructor(s) of record and his/her/their department head/director must be notified by email anytime there is an alteration to a student’s grade that is outside of the standard grading procedure.

III. Procedural Grade Changes

A. There are some circumstances in which a grade change may occur as a result of a particular university policy or procedure. These situations do not require additional faculty input. Examples include:

* + Grade change as a result of a completed grievance process.
	+ Incompletes/research continued that extend the maximum time limit for completion automatically turn into an F letter grade.
	+ Retroactive withdrawals that are approved by the Provost’s Office.

IV. Unusual Circumstance

A. Under unusual circumstances an instructor of record may be unable or unwilling to assign grades in a timely manner, yet there is a compelling need to complete the grading process (e.g., student would be eligible to graduate, the course is a prerequisite for other courses, etc.). In these cases, there is a need for the instructor’s department head/director to assign or change grades if appropriately qualified, or to designate a qualified faculty member to evaluate the work and to assign the grade. Examples of such circumstances include:

* + Death or incapacitation of instructor
	+ Instructor permanently left the university and refuses/fails to respond
	+ When attempts to reach the instructor have failed after a reasonable time has passed. “Reasonable time” is contingent upon the circumstances. Examples of exigent circumstances include: student cannot get funding for graduate school or a particular scholarship unless they have all grades submitted; cannot begin an internship or start a job unless they show they have successfully completed a particular course. The determination that someone other than the instructor of record should assign a grade or make a grade change is also dependent upon the actions of the requesting students to notify the appropriate parties in a timely manner.
	+ Instructor is unwilling or refuses to enter an initial grade(s).

B. If an administrator other than the department head/director identifies a situation where the department head/director is needed to assign/change grades or to designate a qualified faculty member to do so, this administrator must send the head/director an electronic message stating the circumstances surrounding the request and the specific task being requested of the head/director. If the department head/director needs to designate a faculty member to assign/change grades, she/he must send that faculty member an electronic message stating the circumstances surrounding the request, and outline the specific task being asked of the faculty member.

1. In either case above, the requesting party must notify the appropriate

college dean and the registrar’s office of the circumstances surrounding the request, outline the steps being taken to remedy the situation, and secure the ability of the head/director or faculty member to physically enter grades.

C. In the circumstances outlined in section IV, letter A above, a department head/director and an appropriate college dean may request the administrator to assign or change grades on behalf of students after a reasonable length of time to allow the instructor to act. The requesting party should:

1. Send a written or electronic message briefly stating the circumstances

surrounding the request.

 a. If possible, the requesting party should provide written or electronic

documentation that the faculty member involved is not willing to or is

incapable of entering or changing the grade.

2. Include documentation, if any, for the proposed grade to be entered or for an alternation of an existing grade.

V. Appeal of a Grade Change

A. If a student feels that his/her grade has been changed unjustly, the student should utilize the grievance process. Information on the grievance process can be found under university policy [12.01 Student Academic Grievance](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uni.edu%2Fpolicies%2F1201&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNGGDgLehOaGO1ze1ArDRcAsYSqq0w).

B. If an instructor believes that a grade has been inappropriately changed, she/he has the right to file an appeal within five class days of receiving the automatic notification of a grade change from the registrar’s office. Class days refers to university class days during the regular fall and spring semesters. An appeal consists of an email to the department head/director indicating the course information, student(s) name(s) and ID number(s), the initial grade given by the faculty member, the grade change, a statement of the specific nature of the appeal, and a recommendation for resolution.

1. The department head/director shall set a meeting with the instructor(s)

within five class days of receiving the electronic appeal in attempt to informally resolve the appeal. The department head/director shall provide a written statement indicating if the parties were able to informally resolve the appeal. This statement shall be electronically distributed within 48 hours to the instructor(s), the registrar and the dean.

2. If no formal resolution is reached in this department head/director meeting, the dean of the instructor’s college shall meet with the instructor(s) within five class days in attempt to resolve the appeal. The dean shall provide a written statement indicating if the parties were able to resolve the appeal. This statement shall be electronically distributed within 48 hours to the instructor(s), the registrar, the department head/director and the provost.

3. If no formal resolution is reached in the meeting with the dean, a three member faculty committee shall be formed by the registrar, who acts as a neutral, non-voting member in this matter. The committee shall be formed within 10 class days of the report from the dean’s meeting with the instructor(s). This committee will render a final decision on the appeal.

a. The three member faculty committee shall consists of the following:

i. a faculty member chosen by the appealing instructor

ii. a department head outside of the department of the appealing

instructor but from within the instructor’s college, as chosen by the

registrar, and

iii. the chair of the faculty. (In the case of a conflict of interest between

the appealing instructor and the chair of the faculty, the chair of the

faculty senate shall sit on this appeals committee.)

b. The committee shall meet within 10 calendar days (excluding holidays) of formation to consider the appeal and render a decision. The committee will investigate and consider any information it deems necessary to make their decision. The committee shall complete its work and send a report to the parties listed below in section V, part B, number 3, letter d within 14 calendar days of the initial meeting.

c. It may be necessary, in the interest of justice, to extend a specified time limit when the parties involved in the appeals cannot be reached in a timely fashion by telephone, mail, email or other form of communication, or when the principal(s) may be absent from the campus or temporarily indisposed due to illness, accident, injury or other extenuating circumstances. Time limits may be extended in these circumstances by the registrar as appropriate.

d. The specific findings of the committee will be strictly confidential, and reported only to the student whose grade was changed, the instructor(s), the department head/director, the dean, and the registrar to ensure that the committee’s decision is acted upon in cases where the instructor(s) appeal is granted.

4. Except as disclosures are reasonably necessary in the investigation, meetings,

and final disposition of an appeal, the instructor(s), the members of hearing bodies, and others having knowledge of an appeal are expected to preserve the confidentiality of the appeal.