Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
Memorandum of Action

MOA – 18/11
Revision to Undergraduate Catalog-Course Grade Appeals Student’s Deadline

Name of Council(s)/Committee(s):
Professional Concerns Committee

Approval Date:
10 October 2018

Implementation Date:
Upon Administrative Approval

RECOMMENDATION:
The Professional Concerns Committee recommends changing the Grade Appeal student's deadline from 60 to 20 business days.

Robert Eversole, Chair, Professional Concerns Committee

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Approved by the Faculty Senate on December 6, 2018

Richard A. Gershon, WMU Faculty Senate President
2/6/2019

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Jennifer P. Bott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Other Action

Comments:

Edward B. Montgomery, WMU President
3/21/19
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RATIONALE
The current deadline to submit a written grade appeal to a department chair is 60 business days from the time grades post while the current deadline to submit a written program dismissal appeal to a department chair is 20 business days. The Office of the Ombudsman proposes the deadline for both appeal processes be the same, 20 business days. The current deadline of 60 business days for the grade appeal process is too cumbersome and this perspective has been shared by department chairs as well. Allowing students 60 days to initiate a grade appeal creates a backlog of appeals, particularly for spring grade appeals, as the deadline stretches into the summer II. Students who are serious about appealing a grade and have a legitimate basis for appeal should do so within 20 business days. It is the recommendation of the Ombudsman that the deadline for both appeal processes be consistent.

RECOMMENDATION
The Professional Concerns Committee recommends changing the Grade Appeal student’s deadline from 60 to 20 business days.

CURRENT POLICY (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough)

UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG 2018-19
Course Grade and Program Dismissal Appeals
Course Grade Appeals
This section applies when a student wants to appeal a final grade that has been recorded by the Registrar on the student’s academic record. Appeal panels are assembled from the faculty under the authority of and by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or designate. Throughout this process, the Office of the Ombudsman is available to students and instructors for assistance on procedures and clarification of the rights of all parties.

The accepted bases of course grade appeal are:
A. Grades were calculated or the program dismissal decision was made in a manner inconsistent with University policy, the syllabus, or changes to the syllabus.
B. The grade(s) was/were erroneously calculated.
C. Grading/performance standards were arbitrarily or unequally applied.
D. The instructor failed to assign or remove an Incomplete or to initiate a grade change as agreed upon with the student.
E. Late withdrawal from class(es), after grades have been assigned, due to genuine hardship. (Students appealing on this basis should proceed by contacting the Ombuds Office and following the procedures for hardship determination.)

A grade appeal cannot be made in response to a grade penalty assessed as a result of an official finding of responsibility for academic integrity violation(s). Such a finding will have been made through the procedures provided in the academic integrity policy.

The steps to be taken in appealing a grade are:
1. *Informal meeting with the instructor*: A student is encouraged to begin the appeal process by meeting with the instructor who assigned the grade. Such meetings often help students
understand the grading practices of instructors and often lead to resolution of differences over grades.

2. **Written appeal and conference with the academic unit chair/director**: A grade appeal must be in writing, in hard copy, and must be submitted to the academic unit chair/director. This appeal must be received by the academic unit chair/director within 20 business days of the last day of the semester or session in which the grade was recorded on a student's record. The Provost or designate may grant an extension should a genuine hardship arise (i.e., illness, death in the immediate family). The letter must identify the basis of the appeal and must state in detail why the student believes the grade should be changed. Following a conference with the student, the chair/director must respond in writing to the student with a copy to the instructor, their dean, and the Grade and Program Dismissal Appeals Committee (GAPDAC) within 20 business days. In this letter, the chair/director should confirm the meeting with the student, recap their discussion, and state whether the student has an appeal which meets the established criteria (A, B, C, or D above). If the situation appears to meet the criteria for appeal, the chair/unit director may recommend that the instructor reevaluate the student's work. *The chair/director cannot change the student’s grade without the instructor’s agreement.*

**NOTE:** Grade appeals or other complaints based on charges of discrimination or sexual harassment should be taken to the Office of Institutional Equity or other office, pursuant to other University policies and procedures.

3. **Appeal to committee**: After the chair has completed the response to the student's appeal, the student may appeal to the Grade and Program Dismissal Appeals Committee (GAPDAC). This appeal must be initiated within 20 business days completion of step 2. If the student has requested a meeting with the academic unit chair/director and has not been granted such a meeting within 40 business days of the student's request, the student may then initiate an appeal to GAPDAC. The student will initiate an appeal through the Office of the Ombudsman. When the Ombuds receives an appeal, the Provost or designate will schedule a meeting of GAPDAC using procedures determined by the Professional Concerns Committee (PCC) of the Faculty Senate. The GAPDAC will consist of three members drawn from a pool of faculty established for this purpose. In a grade appeal, both the student(s) and the instructor should provide a written statement describing the situation under consideration. An appearance to provide additional information at the appeal by either the instructor or student(s) may be requested by the appeals committee. *A GAPDAC can effectuate a grade change by majority vote.* The decision of the hearing panel is final and not subject to appeal.

4. **Instructor unavailable to assign grade**: Circumstances may arise which may prevent an instructor from assigning a grade in a timely manner. In such instances, the academic unit chair/director will make reasonable efforts to contact and ask the instructor to supply a grade. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the instructor's academic chair/director will appoint another qualified faculty member to assign the grade.