



Student Advocacy Resource Centre

Final Grade Appeal FAQ

1. What kinds of grades can be appealed?

Only the final grade of a course may be formally appealed after the final marks for the course have been input into the Registrar's system. If you are trying to have a final grade appeal conversation during the semester or before this time, the instructor is not required to address these concerns at any other time of the semester. However, sometimes instructors choose to address an assignment grade and have this conversation with a student at other times during a semester, so it may be possible to talk about it ahead of time.

2. What is the process to appeal a final grade in a course?

Level 1: Instructor Level; have an informal conversation about an assignment possibly not included in the calculation or a potential miscalculation of the final course grade.

Level 2: Chair Level; submit a 'Final Grade Review' form, based on your academic work, to the Registrar's office, with the grounds of alleged unfair assessment of academic work.

Level 3: Dean Level; submit a 'Final Grade Appeal' form and details regarding your specific grounds for a final grade appeal (the grounds at this level are VERY specific. See the Academic Regulations section of the current MRU Academic Calendar for further details.)

3. Where do I go to appeal my final course grade?

This depends on what level of the appeal process you're at. Although there are forms to fill out at the Registrar's office, you may also want to email or phone the key contacts at each level and keep a record for yourself on the correspondence in case anything arises as part of the process that delays you receiving a response on your appeal.

4. What forms do I need to fill out?

See the answer for question # 2 for the names of forms you need to file at the Registrar's office. There is no form to file at the instructor level of a final grade appeal.

5. Should I submit a document as part of my appeal?

That's completely your choice. Our office recommends that you do submit a document, but submitting is not a necessity in every situation. If you choose to do so, focus on highlighting the opportunities you had for a higher grade. Review your final exam and take notes right after you leave the department office. Cite evidence of where you could receive additional marks. Did the textbook/lecture notes have more information supporting a possible higher grade for your submitted academic work? If yes, include the details in the document you submit. It's completely up to you to build an argument, based on the evidence (using your academic work submitted & any other supporting documents). You are the expert on what's included in your submitted academic work.



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6. What is the deadline to appeal a final grade and where do I find it in the current Academic Calendar?

Students who want to appeal their final course grade must initiate a final grade appeal no later than 20 business days from the last day of the final exam period, in the semester the grade was awarded in. *The Holiday break over Christmas and New Year does not count towards this.* It's good practice to start an appeal as soon as is possible within the 20 business day timeline. This information is found in the current academic calendar, but the specific appeal deadline date for each semester is not included in the important dates section (the Academic Schedule) of the current Academic calendar.

7. What is considered in determining whether or not a final grade appeal warrants a different grade?

The key aspects considered involve only your academic work submitted for grading during the semester. If there are several assignments that were weighted more heavily, you may want to focus on these in a final grade appeal situation, as a change in grade on a more heavily weighted assignment, would be more likely to bump up your final grade. It's up to you to provide examples from your submitted course work, demonstrating where you see additional marks might exist, that were not awarded.

8. What kinds of outcomes have students experienced in doing final grade appeals in past? Students have experienced a decrease in grade, a higher grade, and sometimes the final grade stays the same. All of these outcomes are possible. It's hard to determine the success of a final grade appeal from the on-set, but you have the right to initiate the final grade appeal, within the 20 business day deadline previously mentioned. You have the right to supervised access (self-review) of your final exam within 15 days of receiving your final grades; however, reviewing the final examination is at the sole discretion of the instructor (MRU 2018-19 Academic Calendar, P. 25).

9. I don't agree with the grade I received on my in-course quiz/ lab/assignment/test/midterm. It just doesn't seem fair. What can I do?

You may wish to review the IN-COURSE exam or assignment with your instructor within 15 days of receiving a grade back. As a student, you have the right to this review with your instructor for an in-course test/exam/assignment. You may lose this right if you pass this 15 day deadline, but sometimes instructors will allow you this opportunity after the 15 days. If a late request is your situation, think about making this request in a polite, respectful way.



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10. What can I do if I feel an instructor has discriminated against me through the duration of the course? Is discrimination grounds to appeal my final course grade?

No; discrimination allegations are classified as non-academic and are not dealt with as part of a final grade appeal process. You may want to book an appointment with Meaghan (Student Advocacy Resource Coordinator at SAMRU) or book a time to meet with the Human Rights & Diversity Advisor on campus, to discuss your concerns. Currently, discrimination allegations are not grounds to appeal a final grade. The grounds to appeal a final course grade vary depending on the level you're engaging at. Generally, discrimination allegations are handled in other policies (IE: Human Rights), with specific processes involved, unrelated to a final grade appeal.

11. What are the grounds to appeal a final grade?

The final grade appeal grounds are different at each level.

At Level One (Instructor Level), the grounds are:

- a) The final grade calculated was not on all work completed and as indicated in the course outline.
- b) There was an arithmetical miscalculation of the final grade

At Level Two (Chair level), the ground is:

- a) There was alleged unfair assessment of academic performance.

At Level Three (Dean level), the grounds are:

- a) There is new evidence that was previously unavailable
- b) There was an alleged procedural error in reaching the decision
- c) The findings of the previous adjudicator were allegedly not supported by the evidence

12. What can I do if I don't hear back from the Chair within 10 business days at the Level 2 stage of a final grade appeal?

Calling or emailing the Chair is one alternative to finding out the result of the appeal. If you need help figuring out who this person is; ask us in the Student Advocacy Resource Centre. You could also go to the Registrar's office to check whether or not the appeal form that you submitted originally, was returned back to the Registrar's office within the allotted time frame. You could request a copy of the decision form, and it would likely be provided to you, if it were on file with the Registrar's office at the point of your checking for it.



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13. Does my instructor have the right to penalize me for attendance in a course and count it towards my final grade? How can this be handled in a final grade appeal situation?

According to the Academic regulations section of the current MRU Calendar, instructors may set their own attendance requirements for courses, and may penalize you for absences, if these penalties are outlined in the course outline you received access to in the first 14 days of classes. It's up to you if you decide to pursue this, or whether it's worth pursuing, depending on the weighting of the attendance and penalty applied. Consider booking an appointment for correspondence review with the Student Advocacy Resource Coordinator to assess your situation in detail.

14. I talked to my instructor during the course about my disagreeing with the mark I received on my paper, but he/she wasn't interested in having a conversation about it then. Now that final marks are in, I've gone to the Chair and they are requiring me to return to the instructor to talk before anything happens at the Chair level of the process. This doesn't seem fair. What can I do?

The Chair has the discretion to take the course of action they deem to be relevant to your situation, with the evidence that you've submitted or in consulting with the instructor. Sometimes a Chair may direct a student back to the instructor. Although every student situation is unique, the instructor is considered the subject area expert, and having a conversation first with an instructor, may be necessary before proceeding further.

15. Do I have the right to appeal a final grade in a course I took 2 years ago?

In general, students don't currently have the right to appeal a final course grade from several years ago. All students are required to meet the deadlines as printed in the current Academic Calendar, unless there are other factors that prevented you from doing so, but even so, there are no guarantees this favours an appeal to proceed. Technically, students lose the right to appeal a final course grade after the appeal deadline. Talk to your SAMRU Student Advocacy Resource Coordinator for more information.

16. What if I want to appeal only one assignment in a course? Is it possible to be successful?

It is always your choice of what you wish the focus of the final grade appeal to be. If the assignment is worth 25% or more of your final course grade, this is more likely to have impact on your final mark. Sometimes when you build a logical case and provide evidence to support why your work merits a higher grade, it could be possible to be successful.



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17. What if I want to appeal a group assignment as part of my final grade appeal?

It's hard to say what kind of outcome a student might have appealing a group assignment. However, when peer reviews are involved and the work and marks of other students on a common assignment are part of the equation, it may be more difficult for an individual student to appeal when the appeal impacts the rights of other students in your group, who may or may not want to appeal their grade.

18. May I appeal a final grade in a course where I received a misconduct sanction to fail the course as a result of a misconduct allegation?

A final grade appeal is a completely separate process from a misconduct allegation or misconduct hearing. If you have an allegation of academic misconduct where you have been sanctioned to fail the course as a result, by an instructor, you may wish to take this to a misconduct board hearing. However, if you've been to a hearing and the board ruled and applied these sanctions, a final grade appeal, although possible, could be a challenge. Consider and weigh your options by consulting with a friend/family member, or book an appointment to meet with us in the Student Advocacy Resource Centre. What you choose to do here is not easy, but the choice is yours.

Prepared by: Student Advocacy Resource Centre, 2018-19

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