

School of Arts + Communication

grade dispute policy
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Grade Dispute Policy

PLU's School of Arts + Communication is dedicated to the fair and accurate appraisal of a student's coursework. When disagreements arise over grades assigned in a course, students and faculty should first follow the School's established procedure for informal grade dispute resolution. If the informal procedure is unsuccessful in resolving the dispute, students and faculty will undertake the School's formal grade dispute resolution procedure.

Informal Grade Dispute Procedures

A student who disputes a grade should discuss the reason for the grade with the faculty member who assigned the grade prior to initiating any formalized grade appeal. If no resolution is forthcoming after discussions with the faculty member, the student is encouraged to take the complaint to the chair of the department. The chair will mediate the matter between the student and faculty member.

No formal grade dispute procedure will be invoked when the magnitude of the disagreement is less than one full letter grade (i.e., disagreements over A- versus B+).

A student who has completed informal efforts at resolution, has a disagreement amounting to at least one full letter grade, and wishes to invoke the formal grade dispute procedure should understand that in the course of pursuing the dispute his or her coursework may be referred to qualified external examiners, most likely the faculty member's school or departmental colleagues. The student should understand that external referral may lead to a recommendation for lowering the grade as well as to a recommendation for raising the grade or to no change at all.

Formal Grade Dispute Procedure

Students who wish to formally contest a grade must do so within 21 days of receipt of the grade or the conclusion of the informal process whichever is later provided that the informal process was initiated during the 21 day period. Grades received in the last three weeks of a term must be contested within the first 21 days of the next full (fall/spring) semester. Grades received during Jterm must be contested within the first 21 days of the following spring semester. *Formal complaints must be filed with the dean.*

When a student files a formal grade complaint, the dean will convene a Grade Dispute Panel comprised of faculty and possibly students to mediate the dispute.

The Grade Dispute Panel may request that signed statements be submitted by the student and faculty member prior to a recommendation being made.

The Grade Panel may request the faculty member's consent that the student's coursework be referred to one or more qualified external examiners prior to a recommendation being made.

To preserve academic freedom for faculty as well as to uphold standards of fairness for faculty and students, the Grade Dispute Panel will inform the faculty member and the student of its recommendation in writing.

Decisions reached in the formal grade dispute procedures may be appealed to the provost on the following grounds:

Procedures were not properly followed or an instructor refused to comply with a decision.

The resolution of the dispute was fundamentally unfair to the student or instructor.

