

## **Senate Policy Discussion and Review of Grades**

Senate has the statutory obligation to establish degrees, standards, and requirements. Instructors have academic freedom. In cases of unresolved disagreement between instructors, Chairs, and Deans, Senate has a responsibility to ensure students are treated equitably, according to Senate policy, and that the university maintains appropriate standards. Accordingly, Chairs and Deans should review grades to ensure that they conform to Senate policy, avoid arbitrary grading practices or arbitrary departure from the course outline, and represent basic principles of fairness. This policy provides a framework to encourage appropriate oversight of grading practices, to promote collegial discussions about assessment, and, in the rare cases where collegial discussions cannot settle disputes, to provide a mechanism for resolving the issue.

### **Procedures**

1. Instructors submit grades to Chairs for review. Normally, Chairs will approve the grades and forward them to the Dean for review. Normally, the Dean will approve the grades and submit them to Finance & Registration for processing.
2. In the exceptional circumstance where the Chair does not approve grades for one or more classes, the Chair, the instructor, and the Dean should meet and make every effort to reach mutual agreement to resolve the situation. The three parties may agree to strike an ad hoc committee of Faculty Council in order to help resolve the situation. Should the three parties reach an impasse the Grade Review Sub-Committee of Senate will consider the issue and assign grades for the course in question as outlined in clauses #5 and #6 of this policy. In such cases, the students in the class shall be notified within seven days that the grades have not been approved by the Chair and/or Dean, that they will be proceeding to the Grade Review Sub-Committee of Senate, and that students have the right to appear before this committee, as per clause #5. In the exceptional circumstance where the instructor has submitted grades and the Chair has approved them, but the Dean does not approve them, then the instructor, Chair, and Dean should meet and make every effort to reach mutual agreement to resolve the situation. The three parties may agree to strike an ad hoc committee of Faculty Council in order to help resolve the situation. Should the three parties reach an impasse, the Grade Review Sub-Committee of Senate will consider the issue and assign grades for the course in question as outlined in clauses #5 and #6 of this policy. In such cases, the students in the class shall be notified within seven days that the grades have not been approved by the Chair and/or Dean, that they will be proceeding to the Grade Review Sub-Committee, and that students have the right to appear before this committee, as per clause #5.
3. The Grade Review Sub-Committee of Senate shall be constituted by September of each academic year comprising eleven voting members. The Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate shall Chair the sub-committee, without vote except in the case of a tie vote. The Deans shall elect two academic Deans. Each academic Faculty

Council shall elect one member. The two students who sit on Curriculum & Academic Planning are *ex officio* members with full membership rights. The Brandon University Students' Union shall elect a third student member. The Associate Vice-President (Student Services and Enrolment Management) and University Registrar shall serve as an advisor to the committee. Should one of these members be a party to the dispute, she/he may designate a substitute.

4. The Grade review Sub-Committee of Senate shall establish its own procedures for resolving disputed class grades. In all cases, the committee shall consider the course outline established by the course instructor and all relevant Senate policies. The Committee may request that the course instructor, Chair, and/or Dean appear before the committee or respond to questions from the committee in writing. The instructor and students shall have the right to appear before the sub-committee if they choose to do so, including the right to have appropriate representation.
5. The Committee shall establish the Final Grades for the course in question. Under no circumstance will the committee change a letter grade to a lower one. The committee should only change grades when failure to do so would create injustice. Where the committee determines that failure to change grades would be unjust, the remedy should be to use the pass/fail system. Students whose grades are changed should be advised that they maintain their rights to resort to grade appeal.
6. The decision with respect to the class set of grades of the Grade review Sub-Committee of Senate is final. However, the basis of individual student appeal will remain. If a student is dissatisfied with the final grade as determined by Grade Review Sub-Committee of Senate, he or she may submit a Grade Appeal Form to the Senate Office. Normally, this must be done within 14 days of receiving the Committee's decision. The student will submit written reasons why he or she believes a change of grade is warranted. The appeal will be heard by the Senate Executive Committee following such procedures as the Committee may establish for hearing appeals. The Senate Executive Committee shall not review the course-specific decision of the Sub-Committee of Senate and shall limit its review to the individual student appeal, which will necessarily consider student performance on assignments in the class. The decision of the Senate Executive Committee is final.