

Policy Control

Policy Number	3005 (previously 106)
Policy Title	Grade Appeals
Policy Owner / Responsible Offices	Vice President, Academic
Approval Authority	Academic Council
Applies To	All domestic and international students registered in a program at IBU; available to all past, current, and prospective domestic and international students
Approval Date	January 25, 2021
Effective Date	September 2021
Review Date/s	August 30, 2023 (1st review); August 28, 2025 (2nd review)
Revision Date/s	September 11, 2026
Revision Implementation Date/s	-

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

All students have the right to a fair assessment of their course activities, assignments, and tests, based on the learning outcomes and evaluation criteria published in the course outline. This policy outlines the procedures a student must follow to demonstrate that they have not been fairly assessed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students are provided with a transparent, fair, and consistent process for requesting a review of an academic grade when they believe that the grade assigned does not accurately reflect their performance.

The policy is intended to:

- Provide students with a structured and equitable mechanism to address concerns related to grading decisions.
- Ensure that grade appeals are considered solely on academic grounds, specifically the correct application of published evaluation criteria and the accuracy of grade calculations.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities in the grade appeal process.
- Maintain confidence in the University's assessment practices by ensuring consistency, accountability, and adherence to institutional academic standards.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

A student may disagree with a grade issued for a single assessment (e.g., exam, written report, etc.) in a course. A grade can be appealed if there are sufficient grounds, such as a misapplication of evaluation criteria or a perceived calculation error. Such a request must be made to the instructor in writing (via IBU email) within five (5) business days of the instructor issuing the grade.

3.1 GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Grade Appeal requests that fall under the following categories are often considered to have sufficient Grounds for Appeal:

- a) There was an error in calculating or recording a student's grade.
- b) An assessment was not graded according to stated evaluation criteria or guidelines found in the course outline.
- c) There was procedural unfairness and/or a departure from approved policy.
- d) Bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest resulted in an inaccurate grade.
- e) Extenuating circumstances whereby the student was functionally limited in their ability to complete an assessment.

3.2 INSUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

The following requests are considered *insufficient* to process a Grade Appeal request, and may be dismissed outright (please note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- a) Attempting to overturn an Academic Integrity Sanction.
- b) A general disagreement with an Academic Judgement.
- c) Dissatisfaction with the instructor's teaching style and/or the difficulty of the course.
- d) Complaints that do not address a graded assessment.
- e) An inability to access assignments and course content on the Student Portal due to a block imposed by the university.
- f) An appeal request for no other reason than to provide a grade increase to meet scholarship/visa/progression thresholds.
- g) Appeal requests made to revise the entirety of a student's grade at the end of a semester.

3.3 DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

Decisions on Grade Appeal requests lie primarily with the student's designated instructor, who is best suited to address the student's concerns surrounding their grades. The Dean's Office and Academic Council retain decision-making authority in cases where the instructor's decision requires support and/or review.

POLICY OUTCOMES

The result of a Grade Appeal can be:

- a) A grade issued by an instructor will be upheld, and the grade will remain unchanged.
- b) A grade issued by an instructor may be adjusted up or down.
- c) A reassessment or independent review may be ordered.

The operational details of addressing grade appeals, including levels of review, timelines, and the roles of individuals involved, are outlined in the *Grade Appeals Standard Operating Procedure*, which serves as the companion document to this policy.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all domestic and international students registered in a program at IBU. It governs the processes by which students may submit grade appeals, how these appeals are received, reviewed, investigated and ultimately resolved.

This policy does not cover any decisions governed by the *Academic Integrity Policy*, where a student has been sanctioned by a faculty member, the Dean's Office, or the Academic Council Sub-Committee.

5. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Grade Appeal Request:** A request by a student to review the grade issued to a specific assessment based on various reasons.
 - An **Informal Grade Appeal Request** is made when a student discusses a change of grade with their instructor. This is the student's first opportunity to appeal their grade and must be made within five (5) business days of the instructor issuing an assessment grade.
 - A **Formal Grade Appeal Request** is made if a student and instructor cannot resolve a grade dispute via an Informal Grade Appeal. A student fills out a Formal Grade Appeal Request Form to discuss a change of grade with the Dean's Office. A Formal Grade Appeal Request must be made within three (3) business days of an instructor notifying the student of their Informal Grade Appeal decision. Formal Grade Appeal Requests are documented and logged in the Grade Appeal Log by the Dean's Office.
 - A **Conclusive Grade Appeal Request** is made if a student and the Dean's Office cannot resolve a grade dispute via a Formal Grade Appeal. A student may respond to the Dean's Office in writing that they wish to request a Conclusive Grade Appeal request within three (3) business days of receiving

a written decision on their Formal Grade Appeal. Conclusive Grade Appeal Requests are processed by the Dean's Office and submitted to the Academic Council for a binding decision. A Conclusive Grade Appeal Request cannot be appealed or overturned.

- **The Dean's Office:** The institutional unit responsible for receiving, reviewing, and managing Formal Grade Appeals. It oversees compliance with procedures and ensures the quality of the process.
- **Assessment-Level Appeal:** A student request to review the grade assigned on a specific assessment. Final course grades cannot be appealed.
- **Grounds:** Valid, policy-aligned reasons that justify a formal review of a student's grade. Grounds may be *sufficient* or *insufficient*.
 - Grounds are considered **sufficient** when the appeal presents credible evidence of a grading error, misapplication of assessment criteria, procedural irregularities, or other factors.
 - Grounds are considered **insufficient** when the appeal is based solely on disagreement with the grade, lacks supporting evidence, falls outside of the policy scope, or other factors.
- **Screening:** Initial appeal reviews by the instructor or the Dean's Office to determine whether the appeal review request has sufficient grounds; may result in acceptance or rejection.
- **Academic Judgement:** A decision given by an instructor that is a measure of student performance against academic standards and requirements in a course.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Students:**
 - Submitting an Informal Grade Appeal Request to their instructor within five (5) business days of assessment's grade being posted on the Student Portal
 - Providing instructor and the Dean's Office (if necessary) sufficient grounds for their Grade Appeal Requests by submitting statements and supporting documentation.
 - Responding to faculty and the Dean's Office's requests for meetings, as necessary, to discuss their Grade Appeal Requests within three (3) business days.
 - Submitting Formal Grade Appeal Requests to the Dean's Office within three (3) business days of receiving a decision on their Informal Grade Appeal Request from their instructor (if necessary).
 - Submitting a Conclusive Grade Appeal Request to the Dean's Office within three (3) business days of receiving a decision on their Formal Grade Appeal Request (if necessary).

- **Instructors:**
 - Posting assignment grades as soon as possible.
 - Completing the Informal Grade Appeal Request process within ten (10) business days.
 - Submitting statements and any other evidence or documentation, if requested by the Dean's Office, for Formal Grade Appeal Requests.
- **The Dean's Office**
 - Act as a point of contact for matters relating to the Grade Appeals Policy and SOP
 - Requesting statements, evidence, and other case documentation from the student and faculty for Formal Grade Appeal Requests, as necessary.
 - Processing Formal Grade Appeal Requests and making a decision as per the IBU policy and SOP.
 - Preparing case summaries and case files for Conclusive Appeals to the Academic Council Sub-Committee.
 - Communicating with the Academic Council Sub-Committee members and facilitating meetings
 - Creating decision letters based on the recommendations of the Academic Council and distributing them among students, faculty, and IBU staff, as necessary.
- **Academic Council Sub-Committee (Academic Council)**
 - Acting as the highest and final instance of the Grade Appeal review procedure.
 - Reviewing the case summaries and case files in preparation for a Conclusive Grade Appeal Request review meeting.
 - Attending and participating in the review meeting, making decision motions, voting, and reaching a decision consensus.
 - Making a final decision on each case and, if necessary, devising the action plan and/or any other provisions.

7. PRINCIPLES

This policy affirms that IBU's Grade Appeal process abides by principles of fairness, transparency, consistency, and impartiality. All Academic Judgements issued during the Grade Appeals process must be respected by students, faculty, and staff at IBU. Students and faculty are encouraged to maintain lines of communication in an attempt to resolve and grade appeal requests informally.

7.1 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All Grade Appeals submitted by a student are accepted as good-faith requests to correct a grade. The framework of this policy hopes to solidify IBU's commitment to the core academic integrity principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. Students and faculty are expected to uphold these principles in their academic endeavours and are encouraged to maintain respectable communication to promote and enrich the learning process while making honest efforts to resolve any issues surrounding the submission of honest work.

7.2 NON-RETALIATION

Grade Appeal Requests are not subject to any penalties, regardless of their outcome. Any retaliation as a result of a Grade Appeal Request is strictly prohibited. No student or instructor can intimidate, harass, threaten, or otherwise retaliate due to a Grade Appeal Request or Academic Judgement. Such retaliation will be treated as a serious breach of IBU's *Student Code of Conduct Policy*. Similarly, a student will face no form of retaliation for submitting a Grade Appeal Request (whether Informal or Formal).

7.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

IBU remains committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all information collected and used under this policy. All data collected during a Grade Appeal Request is governed by the guidelines found in the IBU *Privacy Policy*.

7.4 ACCESSIBILITY

IBU recognizes that a student's academic journey takes place in settings where students with accessibility needs may face barriers that challenge the accomplishment of their educational goals. This policy upholds IBU's commitment to providing accessible and equitable solutions for students seeking valid Grade Appeals, adhering to the guidelines found in the IBU *Academic Accommodations Policy*.

8. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure continued relevance, regulatory compliance, and alignment with institutional academic practices. The standard review cycle for this policy is **every three (3) years**, or earlier if required due to regulatory change or institutional need.

9. COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

Grade appeals must be submitted in accordance with the timelines and procedures outlined in this policy. Appeals that are late, incomplete, or submitted outside the prescribed process may not be considered. Decisions regarding the admissibility of such submissions rest with the Office of the Registrar or the appropriate academic authority.

10. EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Information related to grade appeals, including volume, outcomes, and resolution timelines, may be reviewed periodically as part of the University's academic quality assurance processes to support continuous improvement of assessment practices.

11. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Formal Grade Appeal Request Form
- Academic Accommodations Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy