

University Grade Dispute Policy and Procedures

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PLU is dedicated to fair and accurate appraisal of student coursework. When a disagreement over a final grade in a course occurs, the student should first pursue informal grade dispute resolution with the course instructor. If the informal procedure is unsuccessful, students may undertake the university's formal grade dispute resolution procedure. However, no formal grade dispute procedure may be pursued when the course grade in question is less than one full letter grade (i.e., disagreements over A- versus B+). Additionally, this procedure allows for the review of student work to ensure that it is consistent with the course syllabus and/or assignment or exam grading rubric, but does not allow for disputing the content of a syllabus.

Informal Grade Dispute Procedure

Process: A student who disputes a grade must first attempt to do so through an informal grade dispute procedure. This procedure involves discussing the reason for the grade with the instructor who assigned the grade. The student must request an opportunity to discuss the grade via PLU email.

If no resolution is forthcoming after discussions with the course instructor, or if the instructor is away from campus or no longer employed at the university, the student may take the dispute to the instructor's supervisor (chair, associate dean, or dean) who will attempt to resolve the matter informally. To find the supervisor, look for the list of "[Academic Unit Heads](#)" on the Office of the Provost website.

Timeline: Students who wish to dispute a grade may start the informal process as soon as the grade in question is posted on Banner, and must do so no later than 20 business days (days during which the university is open for business) after the final grade is posted there. This timeline ensures availability of instructor records for review if needed.

While students may take up to 20 business days to initiate the informal process, they should be mindful of how the grade in question might affect their continued progress in their academic program when determining their own timeline for starting the process (for example, if the course is a prerequisite for a class they are registered to take the following term, they should launch the process as soon as possible).

If the dispute is not resolved through the informal process within 10 business days from the date the student initiated contact with the course instructor, students can initiate a formal grade dispute procedure. See process description and timelines below. Please be advised that instructors may not be available for immediate response for a host of reasons (especially during breaks between terms or while leading study away courses).

Formal Grade Dispute Procedures

Timelines: If a grade dispute is not resolved through the informal process within 10 business days from the date the student initiated contact with the faculty member requesting a discussion about the disputed grade, students can initiate a formal grade dispute procedure. The formal procedure must be initiated within 5 business days after the conclusion of the informal process. It is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty member's college dean via PLU email to begin the process within this time frame. **The college dean may dismiss a grade dispute if the stated timelines in this procedure are not followed.** To find the college dean, look for the list of "[Academic Unit Heads](#)" on the Office of the Provost website.

Student Support: Throughout the formal grade dispute process, the student may rely on a support person from the current PLU community to help them submit paperwork and/or join them in attending any meetings that should arise. While the support person may attend meetings as an observer, they may not participate in the proceedings or argue on the student's behalf.

Submitting Materials for Reviewing Dispute: The student's dispute must be submitted in writing via PLU email, with full explanation and supporting materials, to the instructor's college dean.

Within 3 business days of receiving these materials, the college dean shall request materials from the faculty member assigning the grade. The instructor who assigned the grade will be asked by the college dean to provide a copy of the course syllabus. If the disputed course grade results from a disputed grade on a specific assignment/exam in the course, the instructor will also be asked to provide to the college dean a grading rubric and/or an explanation for why they assigned the grade in question for that assignment. The college dean will provide copies of these materials to the student.

Initial Review by College Dean: After relevant materials have been provided by the student and instructor, the college dean will conduct an initial review of the case to determine whether the complaint involves an alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy or other university policies, such as those related to discrimination. Grade disputes arising over alleged violations of the university's Academic Integrity Policy are considered by an Academic Dishonesty Hearing Panel (ADHP). Issues involving discrimination are considered by the University Dispute Resolution Committee. Previous decisions, including those from ADHP or UDRC processes, will not be reconsidered through the grade dispute process.

If the college dean determines that the dispute is appropriate for the formal grade dispute procedure, they will convene a review panel.

Convening of Review Panel: After determining that the dispute is appropriate for a formal grade dispute procedure, the college dean will convene a review panel composed of three faculty: two faculty members from the same or closely related discipline as the course instructor (from the same department/unit, when possible), and a faculty member from the same college but from outside of the department/unit. The panel will receive the materials collected by the college dean as described above.

The panel may consult with subject matter experts, the instructor who assigned the final grade, and/or the student as needed.

This panel will review the case and resolve the dispute by arriving at a decision about the student's final course grade.

Communication of Decision: Following its convening, the review panel should make every effort to come to a decision regarding the student's dispute within 10 business days. The review panel will communicate their decision to the college dean, who will communicate the decision to the student and course instructor. If a change of grade is required, the college dean will facilitate that process.

Appeal to the Dean: If either the student or course instructor believes that the grade dispute process failed to follow the appropriate procedure or neglected to include relevant details, and if they believe that these procedural violations materially affected the decision of the review panel, they may file a limited written appeal with the college dean within 5 business days of the notification of the outcome of the review panel. In this limited appeal, the student or faculty member should describe the procedure that they believe was not followed and/or the relevant details not considered, as well as information they have that supports these claims.

The dean will review the written material, conduct any investigation that they believe is necessary, and, in consultation with the provost, make a decision within 5 business days as to whether material procedural error occurred. This decision of the college dean is final and not subject to further appeal.

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE
Initiate <u>informal</u> dispute with faculty member.	After final grade is posted on Banner and up to 20 business days from the date of posting.
If no resolution to informal dispute after 10 business days, initiate a <u>formal</u> dispute with the college dean.	Initiate formal dispute within the next 5 business days after conclusion of informal process.
College dean confirms case is appropriate for formal dispute policy.	Within 3 business days of receipt of formal grade dispute materials from student and faculty member.
College dean convenes review panel.	Within 3 business days of receipt of formal grade dispute materials from student and faculty member.
College dean receives recommendation from review panel, and communicates decision to the student and faculty member.	Generally, within 10 business days of receipt of decision from review panel.
Appeal of committee's decision by student or instructor.	Within 5 business days of the notification of the outcome of the review panel.