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University of Colorado Museum & Field Studies Graduate Program Policy on Grade Appeals

One of the fundamental responsibilities of every faculty member in the Museum and Field Studies Graduate Program is to evaluate the academic performance of our students fairly and conscientiously. The grades our students earn form part of their permanent academic records, and can have far-reaching impacts on their future success in a variety of endeavors. As individual faculty members, and collectively as a Museum, it is our duty to ensure that these grades are an accurate assessment of performance.

We take the prerogative of faculty members to assign grades very seriously, and we are extremely reluctant to interfere in this basic aspect of our academic lives. At the same time, both the courts and the AAUP have recognized the need for a well-designed appeals process to provide remedies on those rare occasions when grades are assigned in an arbitrary or capricious manner, or when grading is improperly influenced by prejudice or emotion.

University of Colorado Museum & Field Studies Graduate Program Grade Appeal Process

The following shall be the official policy of University of Colorado Museum & Field Studies (MFS) Graduate Program for all MFS courses.

When a student believes that a grade has been improperly assigned, and discussions between the instructor and the student have not led to any resolution of the problem,

1. The student shall have the option of making a formal written appeal to the Museum Director. The appeal must specify the remedy desired by the student, and it must be submitted within 45 days of the end of the academic term in which the course was taken.
2. The Director will meet (together or separately) with the student and with the instructor who taught the course. If the Director is unable to broker a solution mutually acceptable to both student and instructor, then
3. The Director shall appoint an ad hoc Grade Appeals Committee, which will review the dispute. This Committee shall consist of at least three impartial faculty members competent in the subject matter of the course in question. The Director will provide the Committee with the student's written appeal and a written response from the instructor.
4. Within 45 days, the Committee will submit a report and recommendation to the Director, and the Director will recommend to the instructor either (1) that the originally assigned grade stand; or (2) that a new grade be assigned.
5. In cases where the instructor or the student does not wish to accept the recommendation of his/her colleagues, the Director shall forward the written materials associated with the appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.