

Policy on Disputed Grading

With the aim of dealing with disputes over grading which are

- serious enough to require action at departmental level but
- not as serious as to raise a suspicion moral misconduct on behalf of the professor,

the Political Science Department faculty adopted the following Policy.

1. **Unfair grading.** Students of the Department have the right to file a formal complaint to the Head of the Department regarding a grade which they deem unfair or mistaken. Disputed grading means, for the aims of this document, a serious departure from the grade which the student could reasonably expect on the basis of his/her performance. Reasonableness of the expectation is a norm relying on either the established scores attached to right answers or on grading of comparable performance of other students or some other standard of similar nature.
2. **Tabling the complaint.** The complaint is to be submitted within two weeks after the grade has been announced (if the announcement is made during a holiday break, the date is the first day when the student is supposed to be back on campus). Before tabling the complaint, the student is supposed to talk to the professor who has given the grade. In order to be considered, the complaint must be specific. Thus, the student who files the complaint is expected to indicate the particular test(s), essay(s), oral exam(s) which he/she believes have been graded unfairly by the professor, and to indicate the grounds for his belief.
3. **Setting up a Complaint Committee.** If the Head of the Department judges, on the basis of the available evidence, that there is a chance for the departure of the grading from the norm to be serious, he convenes an ad hoc Complaint Committee of three. Members of the Committee are preferably such professors of the Department who did not teach the student but are broadly familiar with the topic of the course.
4. **Procedures of the Committee.** The Committee examines written performance (tests, essays, etc.). Only seminar participation is presumed to be beyond the reach of ex post reconstruction (e.g., an oral examination is not a way to test the *past performance* of the student in the seminar). Within this general rule, the Committee works out its own procedures. The report on its decision, including the reasons supporting it, will be communicated 1. to the student, 2. to the professor, and 3. to the Head of the Department. Contingent upon the student's agreement, the report is made available to the student body as well.

If the Committee decides that the grade should be revised, the professor informs the Registrar's Office.

Appendix

When the dispute is about a grade given by the Head of the Department, his role in the complaint procedure is taken over by the Director of the Doctoral program.