

Resolution On Grading and Grade Changes

Background

There are situations, though relatively infrequent, when the grade given in a completed course needs to be changed to a “W” or expunged from the record altogether. For example, a student’s poor performance may be attributable to a debilitating condition that was only medically diagnosed after the course was graded. Another situation might be a Title IX panel ruling that a low grade was given in retaliation for a rebuffed sexual advance and that the grade be expunged from the student’s transcript. There are also situations driven by bureaucracy and student inattention, e.g., ambiguous communication between the instructor and the relevant college registrar, a no-show student who fails to officially drop and is given an F, etc.

Passage of the resolution will clarify the language in the [Faculty Handbook](#) that is concerned with grading and grade changes. It will also help maintain the integrity of the grade-changing process by stipulating that the instructor-of-record be informed of all changes to grades that she/he initially assigned.

The Resolution

Whereas the assignment of grades is at the core of the instruction process and must be conducted with utmost integrity and professionalism;

Be it resolved that the [Faculty Handbook section on grading](#) be modified as specified in the table below.

(Essential changes in red.)

Current Text	Proposed Text
<p>Only the instructor of the course has the responsibility and authority to judge the quality of a students work and assess the appropriate grade. No one can overrule instructors and require them to go against their judgment of the work.</p>	<p>Only the instructor of the course has the responsibility and authority to judge the quality of a students work and assess the appropriate letter grade. No one can overrule instructors and require them to go against their judgment of the work.</p>
<p>Grading must not be arbitrary or capricious or influenced by illegal discriminatory considerations.</p>	<p>A grade must not be arbitrary or capricious or influenced by illegal discriminatory considerations. It must not contain a punitive element for an offense against academic integrity if the student has been found innocent by a duly constituted board.</p>
<p>The evaluation of the quality of the student’s work is solely up to the instructor, but the grade must not contain a punitive element for an offense against academic integrity if the student has been found innocent of this offense by a duly constituted board.</p>	
<p>To avoid the influencing of grades by improper consideration or student pressure, a grade, once given, may only be changed if an error in the original grade is claimed by the instructor. The instructor should be willing to review the basis of an assigned grade with an inquiring student and correct the grade if an error is found.</p>	<p>To avoid the influencing of grades by improper consideration or student pressure, a grade, once given, may only be changed if an error in the original grade is claimed by the instructor. The instructor should be willing to review the basis of an assigned grade with an inquiring student and correct the grade if an error is found.</p> <p>A letter grade or incomplete can be changed to a “W” or expunged from a student’s transcript by action of the Provost if so advised by Cornell Health, the Title IX Office, or by University Counsel. The instructor of record must be informed by the registrar before the actual change is made.</p> <p>Any individual who believes that a grade change has been made improperly may communicate their concerns to the proper authorities via the Cornell Hotline. Faculty also have the option of sharing a grade-change concern with the Dean of Faculty.</p>