



Reference: *Education Code Section 76224, 76232;*
Title 5, Section 55025

The instructor of the course shall determine the grade to be awarded to each student. The determination of the student's grade by the instructor is final in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence. "Mistake" may include, but is not limited to, errors made by an instructor in calculating a student's grade, or clerical errors. "Fraud" may include, but is not limited to, inaccurate recording or change of a grade by any person who gains access to grade records without authorization.

The removal or change of an incorrect grade from a student's record shall only be done pursuant to Education Code Section 76232 or by an alternative method that ensures each student shall be afforded an objective and reasonable review of the requested grade change.

In matters involving a disputed course or test grade, the student should first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. Provisions shall be made to allow another faculty member to substitute for the instructor if the student has filed a discrimination complaint, if the instructor is not available, or where the District determines that it is possible there may have been gross misconduct by the original instructor.

In the case of fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, the final determination concerning removal or change of grade will be made by the college's Chief Instructional Officer.

In all cases, the instructor who first awarded the grade will be provided notice of the change.

A change of grade shall not occur as a consequence of the acceptance of additional work or re-examination beyond the specified course requirements.

A request for a change of grade shall be initiated by the affected student or by the instructor within the next regular semester following the award of the original grade. If the instructor determines that there is a valid basis for the grade change, a grade change form shall be used to notify the college's Office of Admissions and Records. If the instructor determines that there is not a valid basis for the change and denies the student's request, the instructor's decision is final.

The change of grade form must be completed by the instructor, signed by the Chief Instructional Officer, and submitted to the Office of Admissions and Records. Once the change of grade is processed, the student may view their grade on the West Hills College student portal.

Security of Grade Records

The District shall implement security measures for student records that assure no person may obtain access to student grade records without proper authorization. These measures shall be installed as part of any computerized grade data storage system.

The measures implemented by the District shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, password protection for all student grade databases, locking mechanisms for computer stations from which student grade databases can be viewed, and strict limits on the number of persons who are authorized to change student grades.

Persons authorized to change grades shall be designated by the Director of Admissions and Records. No more than five (5) District employees may be authorized to change student grades. Only regular full time employees of the District may be authorized to change grades. Student workers shall not have access to grade records, and student workers may not change grades at any time.

Any person who discovers that grades have been changed by someone other than the persons authorized to do so shall notify the designated position immediately. The designated position shall immediately take steps to lock the grade storage system entirely while an investigation is conducted.

If any student's grade record is found to have been changed without proper authorization, the college's Director of Admissions and Records will notify 1) the student; 2) the instructor who originally awarded the grade; 3) any educational institution to which the student has transferred; 4) the accreditation agency; and 5) appropriate local law enforcement authorities.

Whenever a grade is changed for any reason, corrected transcripts will be sent to any educational institution to which a student has transferred.

Any student or employee who is found to have gained access to grade recording systems without proper authorization, or who is found to have changed any grade without proper authority to do so, shall be subject to discipline in accordance with Board policies and administrative procedures.

Any person who is found to have gained access to grade recording systems without proper authorization, or who is found to have changed any grade without proper authority to do so, shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the college where the incident occurred.

Grade Grievance

Recognizing that trusting, positive relationships between students and instructors is vital to successful learning and teaching, the grade grievance procedure is intended to provide all parties with due process in the event of a disagreement or misunderstanding regarding classroom policies or grades.

The grade grievance process does not address personality, character, or styles of teaching. The process takes into account only the grading concern of the student to determine if the California Code of Education has been violated.

The final course grade that is assigned to a student is the purview of the course instructor who teaches the course. The California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 55025 Grade Changes (a), states, "In any course of instruction in a community college district for which grades are awarded, the instructor of the course shall determine the grade to be awarded each student in accordance with this article. The determination of the student's grade by the instructor shall be final in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence."

There are three (3) levels of review for grade disagreements:

1. Informal review by the faculty
2. Informal review by the respective instructional dean
3. Formal review by the grade grievance officer

Step 1: Students are encouraged to discuss, informally, any concerns they may have about their course grades with their instructor. If the course instructor is no longer employed by the District and cannot be contacted, then students must meet with the instructional dean before requesting more formal resolution of the issue.

Concerns about grades should be addressed as soon as possible but no longer than the next semester following the award of the original grade. The student must be able to document their attempt to contact the instructor as soon as possible after the grade is posted. At any point, if the student is unable to contact the course instructor, they may contact the instructional dean to seek guidance. If the instructor determines that there is not a valid basis for the change of grade, the instructor's decision, subject to the grade grievance procedure, is final.

Step 2: If the issue is not resolved after discussing concerns informally with the course instructor, the student may ask for advice or assistance from the instructional dean. If the student wishes to follow this process, they must contact the instructional dean within twenty (20) calendar days following informal discussion with the course instructor. At the discretion of the dean and the course instructor, the student may be invited to an informal meeting between the instructor, the dean, and the student.

Step 3: If the issue is still unresolved after meeting with the instructor and the dean, the student may, within thirty (30) calendar days following the meeting, file a grade grievance form with the college grade grievance officer. Students can only file a formal grade grievance for a grade of B, C, D, F, or NP. A withdrawal (W) cannot be grieved, as it is not considered to be a grade. Further, grades assigned resulting from documented academic dishonesty may not be grieved. Academic dishonesty or conduct issues are handled by the Chief Student Services Officer (CSSO) or designee.

Once the student formally submits a grade grievance form, the grade grievance officer will investigate the student's concern, including notifying the instructor and the dean when a grievance has been filed, and will inform the student of the outcome of the

grade grievance within (20) calendar days. The grade grievance officer's decision is final.

See Board Policy 3310, Records Retention and Destruction; and Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 5040, Student Records

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