



**John K. Bennett**

Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation Initiatives  
Inworks Director  
Professor of Computer Science and Engineering

Campus Box 137  
1380 Lawrence St. | Denver, CO 80204  
o 303 315 0047 | f 303 315 2112 jkb@ucdenver.edu  
<http://www.inworks.org>

**Date: May 22, 2017**

**To: Inworks Faculty and Students**

**Re: Inworks Policy on Grade Appeals**

One of the fundamental responsibilities of every faculty member is to evaluate the academic performance of our students fairly, consistently and conscientiously. The grades that our students earn form part of their permanent academic records, and can have far-reaching impacts on their future endeavors. As individual faculty members, and collectively as an academic program, it is our duty to ensure that these grades represent an accurate assessment of performance.

I take the prerogative of faculty members to assign grades very seriously, and I am extremely reluctant to interfere in this basic aspect of our academic lives. At the same time, both the courts and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) have recognized the need for a well-designed appeals process to provide remedies on those rare occasions when a student appeals a final grade, asserting that this final grade was assigned in an unprofessional manner, or that grading may have been improperly influenced by prejudice or other inappropriate factors. This process is provided below.

Inworks Grade Appeal Process

The following shall be the official policy of Inworks, which shall apply to all grade appeals of Inworks courses (IWKS courses and courses taught by Inworks faculty), whether at the graduate or undergraduate level.

- 1) Individual faculty members have primary authority and responsibility to assign grades, and are charged with carrying out those responsibilities in a professional manner. The Director's office has the authority and responsibility to deal with changes of grades in special and unusual cases such as those that might involve unprofessional faculty conduct in assigning the grade. **Students should be aware that no one can require an instructor to change a properly assigned course grade.** Issues of disagreement about whether, for example, a given assignment was worth a B or an A are decided solely by the individual instructor in charge.

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- 2) When a student believes that a course grade has been improperly or unprofessionally assigned, and discussions between the instructor and the student have not led to a resolution, the student shall have the option of making a formal written appeal. The appeal must detail the basis for the appeal, and should state the specific remedy desired by the student. Any relevant written documentation should be included with the appeal. The appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the academic term in which the course was taken. The instructor will be provided the opportunity to respond in writing to the student's appeal.
- 3) The Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation Initiatives (AVC) will annually designate an Inworks faculty member to handle appeals. In cases where the designated faculty member is also the involved instructor, the designated faculty member will notify the AVC, who will appoint another faculty member to perform the duties of the designated faculty member as called for in this policy. In cases where the AVC is the involved instructor, the AVC will appoint a non-involved senior faculty member to perform the appeal review duties of the AVC as called for in this policy.
- 4) The designated faculty member will meet (together or separately) with the student and with the instructor who taught the course. If the designated faculty member is unable to secure a solution mutually acceptable to both student and instructor, then the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. The designated faculty member will assemble 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. Members of this committee need not be Inworks faculty. The designated faculty member will provide the Committee with the student's appeal, a written response from the faculty member, and such other materials as may be considered relevant.
  - b. Within 30 days, the Committee will submit a report and recommendation to the designated faculty member. The designated faculty member, after considering the Committee's report, will recommend to the instructor either (1) that the originally assigned grade stand; or (2) that a revised final grade be assigned.
  - c. In cases where the instructor or student does not agree with the Committee's recommendation, the designated faculty member will forward the written materials associated with the appeal, together with the recommendation of the Committee and the recommendation of the designated faculty member, to the AVC, who will make the final decision on the student's grade appeal within 30 days. There is no appeal of the decision of the Associate Vice Chancellor.