College of Science and Technology Grade Appeals Committee Policies and Procedures

It is in the best interest of the College of Science and Technology (CST) to foster a spirit of justice and fairness among students, faculty, and administrators. Toward this end, the College has established the system of appeals described below. This system is intended to afford students an appropriate opportunity to appeal certain academic decisions or academic actions of faculty, administrators, or other College employees on either procedural or substantive grounds.

The CST recognizes that it is often difficult to bring such matters to the attention of University faculty or administrators. The mechanisms that have been created are meant to facilitate the handling of these matters. All matters discussed by and before the Committee will be kept confidential.

I. Functions
The College of Science and Technology Grade Appeals Committee (CSTGAC) is a standing committee of the college that serves to provide a mechanism for the protection of student and faculty rights in academic matters not resolved at the departmental level. Committee decisions on appeals, that are fully documented by evidence (e.g., course syllabi, examinations, term papers, the instructor’s permanent record, etc.), will be delivered to the Dean within the designated time frame. The Dean will make the final decision regarding the appeal (see Procedures). The scope of the CSTGAC is outlined below.

A. Types of Appeals
1. The CSTGAC will hear Academic Appeals of Final Course Grades resulting from a faculty member’s
   a) Alleged deviation from the course syllabus clearly resulting in a punitive consequence
   b) Alleged errors in grading procedures
   c) Alleged lowering of grades for non-academic reason
2. The CSTGAC will not hear the following appeals:
   a) Any appeals NOT covered under Section A.1 (above)
   b) Charges against a student for violations of the University Honor Code.
   c) Admission to a course without first completing the designated pre-requisite requirements (e.g., courses, tests, or assignments).
   d) Appropriate transfer of courses taken outside of the College of Science and Technology and/or AASU, which is determined by appropriate program coordinators and faculty.
3. Student complaints outside the purview of the committee: Students having complaints outside the purview of the committee may lodge complaints to the Dean or Associate Dean of the College of Science and Technology. Please contact the College of Science and Technology at
912-344-3330 to set up an appointment. Such complaints are resolved in one of the following ways:

a) The Dean/Associate Dean may act directly upon the complaint and communicate the resolution directly to the student;
b) The Dean/Associate Dean may refer the complaint to another University entity under whose jurisdiction the complaint falls.

II. CSTGAC Committee Composition
A. At a minimum, the CSTGAC will be comprised of one faculty member from each department in the CST. A quorum, is necessary to render a recommendation to the Dean.
B. Appointments will be for two academic years.
C. The Chair of CSTGAC will be the Associate Dean of the CST. The Associate Dean will serve as the hearing officer and will serve as the tie breaking vote if needed.
D. All votes are by a simple majority.

III. Procedures
A. The CSTGAC will meet as needed when appeals are petitioned in writing as described below.
B. Minutes of each meeting will be recorded and securely maintained in the Dean’s office of the committee chair. Minutes will remain confidential to the extent limited by state law.
C. Student Procedure and Responsibilities:
   1. The following is the protocol that the student must follow to resolve a grievance prior to filing his or her formal appeal to the Dean’s office. Failure to comply with this sequence will delay the appeal process.
   2. In accordance with University policy, an admissions or academic appeal must be initiated no later than midterm of the semester after the admissions decision was rendered or the final course grade was posted.
   3. Step-by-Step Student Procedure
      a) A student with concerns about any aspect of his or her courses is expected to communicate this feedback directly to his or her instructor(s).
      b) If a student is not successful in resolving the problem following consultation with the instructor, he or she should then meet with the Department Head and the instructor who will make every effort with the student to solve the problem at this level in a timely manner. When the Department Head notifies the student of the decision, he or she will also inform the student of the formal procedure for appeal. The decision and notification should be in written form with all supporting evidence supplied. If the student wishes to proceed with a formal appeal to the College level, the Department Head will also give this information in the form of a memorandum of understanding, to the Associate Dean for use in the formal procedure.
c) Once a student has met with the Department Head and the situation has not been resolved, the student then may make a formal appeal to the CSTGAC. This appeal must come to the Committee in a written form, with the form found at this link attached to the top of the documents no later than midterm of the subsequent semester of the issue at hand: [http://www.armstrong.edu/Science_and_Technology/dean_s_office/cst_student_services](http://www.armstrong.edu/Science_and_Technology/dean_s_office/cst_student_services)

d) This written appeal form is to be submitted to the Dean's office and goes to the Associate Dean (Chair of the CSTGAC) only after resolution at the department level has failed. The student must clearly state the action which he or she has already taken to resolve the problem in addition to what he or she feels is the issue causing the problem itself.

e) Exceptions to the above cited timeline include registration for a course for which the course grade being appealed is a prerequisite. Item 2 above must be initiated by the student by the first day of the subsequent semester for which a course grade is being appealed. The appeal process will be expedited so as to avoid negatively impacting the student's academic standing or financial aid. The student must sign a form acknowledging that he or she will be dropped from a course if prerequisite(s) are not met following the academic appeal.

D. Hearing Procedures

1. The CSTGAC expects faculty members and students to act in good faith and in accordance with the principle of direct communication in order to resolve misunderstandings, disagreements, and grievances. The CSTGAC, therefore, serves to resolve such issues appropriately brought before the committee.

2. The Chair of the CSTGAC will inform the committee members of an impending appeal, and the faculty member will receive a copy of the appeal. The faculty member and the respondent will have five (5) business days from the official date of notification to submit, if desired, any information related to the case for clarification.

3. The CSTGAC after receiving all relevant materials, will convene. The CSTGAC will interview the faculty member and the student separately to ask questions, clarify issues and present any additional information.

4. After careful consideration of all available documentation and the interview, the Committee will make its decision. A majority vote of the committee hearing the case is required to reject the appeal. The recommendation of the Committee will be recorded in the form of a written letter to the CST Dean no later than the last week of the semester.

5. The CST Dean will review the recommendation of the CSTGAC. The Dean will provide written notification to the student, the faculty
member or staff member, and other interested parties deemed appropriate, of his or her decision.

6. If the student is dissatisfied with the Dean's decision and wishes to appeal further, he or she must file a written request for review by the Provost stating the basis for the review and the resolution sought by the student within ten (10) business days. Acting as the University President's representative, the Provost shall make a final decision on the matter within ten (10) business days of receipt of the student's request for review. Copies of the Provost written decision and the rationale shall be sent to the Dean of the College of Science and Technology, the Committee Chair, the student, the faculty involved, and any other interested parties deemed appropriate by the Provost.

E. Responsibilities of All Parties

1. The student and the faculty/staff member will be granted the opportunity to present his or her own documented evidence and perspective in writing and during the interview, if the case is sent to the CSTGAC.

2. All documentation for each case shall be available for examination by the members of the CSTGAC a minimum of five (5) days in advance of the meeting.

3. Although the members of the CSTGAC have access to the records and particulars of all cases which come before them at their meetings, it is the responsibility of those members to keep all information confidential and that this information not be discussed outside of the meeting room.

4. The Appeals Bylaws will be published by the Dean's Office of the College of Science and Technology and disseminated to all the faculty and students of the College. It is the responsibility of each member of the College to be familiar with the system.

5. Neither the student nor faculty/staff member may attempt to influence a case through contact or discussion with any member of the CSTGAC. Should any member of the CSTGAC be contacted by an appellant or respondent in an effort to influence his or her decision, that member is obligated to report such contact to the CSTGAC Chair immediately.

6. Members of the CSTGAC shall make their decisions and recommendations on the basis of evidence. Any member of the CSTGAC who has a vested interest or involvement in an appeal shall disqualify himself or herself from participation in said appeal.