

Right of Challenge Expired May 27, 1997

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Because class attendance and course grade are demonstrably and positively related, the University expects students to attend *all* class sessions of courses in which they are enrolled. Each instructor has the *responsibility* to determine specific attendance policies for each course taught, including the role that attendance plays in calculation of final grades and the extent to which work missed due to non-attendance can be made up. On the *first day of class*, each instructor will make available to each student a written statement of the specific attendance policy for that class. The University encourages instructors not to make attendance a disproportionately weighted component of the final grade. The University expects instructors to be reasonable in accommodating students whose absence from class resulted from: (1) participation in University-sanctioned activities and programs; (2) personal illness; or (3) family and/or other compelling circumstances. Instructors have the right to request documentation verifying the basis of any absences resulting from the above factors. Any student who believes that his or her final grade for a course has been reduced unfairly because of attendance factors has the right to appeal that grade under the process outlined below.

Appeal Process for Attendance-Related Grade Reductions:

The process of grade appeal based upon attendance factors is intended to render a timely and peer-based judgement and is outlined as follows:

- (1) The student should first attempt to resolve the grade conflict with the instructor on an informal basis. If satisfactory resolution is not reached, formal appeal should be initiated as outlined in (2) below.
- (2) The student initiates the formal appeal process as follows:
 - (a) The student writes a formal letter to the instructor (or to the appropriate department head if the instructor is no longer on campus) requesting a re-evaluation of his or her grade. The letter should include the following information: student's name and social security number; the course code, number, and section; the year and semester the course was taken; the instructor's name; and a clear statement of the grade change request and reasons which justify the request. This formal letter must be initiated no later than the end of the first semester after the grade in question is received (excluding summer semester).
 - (b) The instructor (or the appropriate department head if the instructor is no longer on campus) must respond to the formal appeal within ten (10) school days of receipt of the formal letter:
 - (i) If it is determined that the student's request is justified, the instructor (or department head, as appropriate) will prepare a Grade Change Authorization and submit it to the department head, who will forward it to the Records

Office. If the grade change is in a course taken for graduate credit, the department head must also notify the Graduate College.

- (ii) If it is determined by the instructor (or department head, as appropriate) that the student's request is *not* justified, the instructor (or department head) will write a formal response to the student justifying his or her decision.
- (c) Should the student desire to continue the appeal process, he or she may request a formal hearing before the SMSU Attendance Appeal Board (AAB)¹ as follows:
 - (i) The student will submit to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs a completed AAB Request for Hearing Form (including a release of information on grades awarded on examinations and assignments, and attendance data, for the specific course in question); the student's formal letter to the instructor (or department head, as appropriate); and the instructor's (or department head's) response.
 - (ii) Upon receipt of the specified documentation, the AAB will determine if the grade reduction is attendance related and potentially unreasonable and/or at variance with the instructor's stated attendance policy. If it is so determined, the AAB will convene a hearing *at the earliest possible date* based upon the schedules of the involved parties. The hearing will be conducted in an attempt to determine the facts associated with the appeal and the intent is that a recommendation will be rendered by the end of the semester in which the appeal was filed.
 - (iii) The AAB is advisory only. The Board will forward all documentation and its recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Based upon those data, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will make a ruling to the extent that: (1) the grade should be changed including the new grade to be awarded; or (2) the grade should not be changed.

¹ The Attendance Appeal Board will consist of five members as follows: The Board Chair will be the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. The Vice President for Student Affairs will also select one faculty member from among those serving on the Faculty Student Judicial Commission and three students from among those serving as Justices on the Campus Judicial Board.