

Student Challenge of Grade

Policy

It is the policy of the management of the MSEM Program to ensure that all students have access to a fair mechanism through which they can address their concerns regarding course performance as efficiently as possible. To ensure that such concerns are dealt with swiftly, the management of the MSEM Program ensures that every student has the right to challenge the final course grade.

The deadline for challenging a course final grade is defined as the end of the session/quarter after the grade was awarded and for purposes of this deadline, the summer session does not count. In order to ensure an objective investigation, any Challenge of Grade will be investigated by an ad-hoc committee constituted by the Dean of College housing the MSEM Program at Ahlia University, which will consist of three faculty members and which may include the instructor of the course. The student may appeal against the decision made by the ad-hoc committee by following the Appeal Procedure explained in Section 11.

Procedure

1. Student should seek an acceptable resolution through a discussion with the instructor of the course. This discussion must be initiated *within one month* of the posting of the course grade.
2. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, student should seek an acceptable resolution through a discussion with the Chairperson of the EMSE Program Committee.
3. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should file and submit (before the deadline for Challenging a Final Grade as defined above) a completed Challenge of Final Grade Form to the Directorate of Admission and Registration and pay any stipulated fees – this date is the start of the process.
4. Directorate of Admission and Registration will forward the Challenge of Final Grade Form to the Dean of the College housing the MSEM Program as well as the Chairperson of the EMSE Program Committee.
5. The POC (the Chairperson of the EMSE Program Committee) will submit the request to the POC at the GW EMSE-OCP Office for information and seeking approval to continue implementing this procedure.
6. Upon approval of the EMSE-OCP Office, the College Dean, in coordination with the Chairperson of the EMSE Program Committee, will appoint an ad-hoc Challenge of Grade Committee consisting of three faculty members who may include the instructor of the course to review the challenged grade.
7. The Challenge of Final Grade Committee will review the student's answers and the marking of the final exam based on the key solution or the marking rubrics provided by the instructor.
8. The committee will make a decision to raise the grade, lower the grade or keep the student grade unchanged, based on the evidence and information obtained during the review.
9. The committee will submit a summary report including its final decision to the Dean of the college and the Chairperson of the Program within one week of the date that the student submitted the Challenge of Final Grade Form.
10. The Chairperson of the Program will inform the POC at GW EMSE-OCP Office about the result of the Challenge of Grade Procedure and the committee's final decision. If required and upon approval of the EMSE-OCP Office, the student grade will be modified in GW Registrar's System.

11. The result of the Challenge of Final Grade will be also entered in ADREG system at Ahlia University and the student's record will be updated by the Dean in collaboration with the Chairperson of the Program.
12. The Chairperson of the Program will inform the student about the final result of the Challenge of Grade.

1. Student Assessment Appeals

Policy

It is the policy of the management of the MSEM Program to ensure that all students have access to a fair and efficient mechanism through which they can address their concerns regarding course performance. The Challenge of Grade Procedure is the first stage in addressing such concerns and the Student Assessment Appeals Policy and associated Procedure provide a clear approach for handling appeals against decisions made in that Procedure.

The deadline for such appeals is no later than 30 days from the day in which the student was notified of the decision and for purposes of this deadline the summer session does not count, so that appeal against decisions made at the end of the Spring-2 Session or during the Summer Session may be submitted within 30 days of the beginning of the Fall-1 Session.

It is the sole responsibility of the student to state clearly the reasons for his/her appeal and to ensure that the appeal is submitted by the deadline.

Student appeals will be investigated thoroughly by the *Student Appeals Committee* (SAC) which is a standing committee at Ahlia University and consists of the following members:

1. Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA; Chairperson)
2. The Dean of Student Affairs
3. Three faculty members appointed by the Chair to meet the requirements that they
 - Are not from the college housing the MSEM Program,
 - Have not advised or assisted the student with the appeal,
 - Have no conflict of interest with regard to the student, the course or the college.
4. A student representative appointed by the Dean of Student Affairs.

As part of its commitment to fair and transparent assessment, this policy requires that the investigation and decision made by SAC is governed by the following principles:

- The investigation should be based on mutual respect and procedural fairness for all students, faculty members and any others who may be involved.
- The committee should conduct its meetings or hearings in closed sessions and treat the appeal in strict confidentiality.
- The committee should investigate the matter on the basis of all evidence presented and obtained by the student and/or the University;
- The committee's investigation may require inspecting other documentation related to the appeal and conducting interviews with students, faculty and staff. In particular, the committee may decide to review some or all of the assessments taken by the student.
- The committee should investigate whether the university policies, processes, procedures, regulations and guidelines were implemented correctly;

- The committee should give the student a reasonable opportunity to make a case in either writing or orally in person through for example special briefings or meetings.
- The committee may allow the student to see or inspect some or all of the related documentations;
- The committee should deal with the appeal as efficiently and as fairly as possible;
- The committee's decision should be evidence-based, transparent and made within at most one month from the time of the initiation of the appeal.
- The decision made by the committee is final and binding.

Procedure

1. The student must submit a completed Appeal Form to the Office of the Deanship of Students Affairs and pay any required fees – this date is the start of the process.
2. The POC (the Chairperson of the EMSE Program Committee) will be informed about the appeal request. The POC will submit the request to the POC at the GW EMSE-OCP Office for information and seeking approval to continue implementing this procedure.
3. Upon approval of the EMSE-OCP Office, the Dean of Student Affairs will submit the Appeal Form to the Chairperson of the Student Appeals Committee (SAC) who will check that the Appeal Form meets the requirement for statement of reasons and for timely submission. If it does, the Chairperson of SAC must appoint three faculty members to SAC according to the criteria stated in the Policy on Students Assessment Appeals and request the Dean of Students Affairs to nominate the student representative.
4. Once members are appointed, the Chairperson convenes the SAC meeting to consider the appeal and start the investigation. SAC may inspect other related documents and conduct briefings and interviews with students, faculty and staff. In particular, SAC may decide to review some or all of the assessments taken by the student.
5. The SAC must make a clear decision, which will be final and binding, and will be either to dismiss the appeal or to uphold the appeal and make a change to the grade.
6. The SAC Chairperson must enter a summarized report of its findings and decision in the ADREG System and notify the Deanship of Students Affairs that the student, the Dean of the College housing the MSEM Program and the Chairperson of the Program may be informed.
7. The office of the Deanship of Students Affairs must notify the student of the outcome and also notify the Dean of the College housing the MSEM Program and the Chairperson of the Program the result of the appeal for implementation of any necessary modifications or actions.
8. The Chairperson of the MSEM Program will inform the POC at GW EMSE-OCP Office about the result of the appeal and the final decision made by SAC. If required and upon approval of the EMSE-OCP Office, the student grade will be modified in GW Registrar's System and the student's record in AdReg System will be updated accordingly.

2. Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty

Policy

High ethical and moral standards as well as academic integrity are core values of both GW and Ahlia University. In a small number of cases there are students who are tempted to gain an unfair advantage in their assessments. This behavior is considered unacceptable.

Academic misconduct or dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate

authorization, and the fabrication of information. Examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Cheating** - intentionally or knowingly using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; engaging in unauthorized collaboration in any academic exercise; copying from another student's examination; submitting work for an in-class examination that has been prepared in advance; representing material prepared by another as one's own work; submitting the same or substantially the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors; violating rules governing administration of examinations; violating any rules relating to academic conduct of a course or program.
2. **Plagiarism** - intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; or failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.
3. **Collusion** is an act, involving two or more students, to deceive or mislead the University by submitting identical assignments or other pieces of work and presenting it as individual efforts.
4. **Personation** consists of one or more individuals preparing assignments for another student, or taking the place of another student in an examination.

The management of the MSEM Program (at the EMSE-OCP Office as well as at Alia University) acknowledges its role in the development of the MSEM students including academic integrity and in this regard the management is committed to providing on-going education to students regarding the importance of academic integrity and at the same time enforcing a zero tolerance policy towards such academic misconduct and dishonesty. The regulations related to academic misconduct including application of fair and proportionate penalties which have been developed from those at the University of Bahrain as per the requirements of the HEC.

Procedure

1. High ethical and moral standards as well as academic integrity are core values of both GW and Ahlia University and communicated to MSEM students, along with the consequences of infringement(s), by various means including, e.g, the induction events and the Student Guidebook.
2. Academic integrity and ethics in research are covered in the syllabus of the compulsory course EMSE 6992 - research methods in EM.
3. The University has formal and transparent procedures for reporting and managing cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct and these are explained to students in the Guidelines and Procedures for Supervising and Examining MSEM Students Research, the Invigilation and Final Examination Administration Regulations as well as the Student Guidebook for GW MSEM Program.

Processes for Deterrence of Academic Misconduct

a. **With respect to non-test/exam based assessments**

Latest versions of all textbooks should be used. Answers to questions can be downloaded using “cheatware” on a fee basis. The longer the question is in the market, the greater the risk that the question has been compromised by “cheatware.” As a matter of good practice, any questions appearing at the end of chapters should be modified to frustrate the downloading of answers using “cheatware” especially, in those limited cases, when the latest textbook version is not being used. In the employment of cases, instructors, as a matter of best practice, ought to recognize that the answers may likewise be compromised and ought to formulate new questions to frustrate students tapping into answers through “cheatware.”

b. With respect to in-class tests

Best practice mandates that instructors use multiple test versions to deter copying with minor changes in the content of questions to render difficult ability of students to identify the test version they have. Alternately, tests can be broken down into separate test components with different components being distributed in phases. Thus a three- question test with questions A, B and C would be administered in three phases with the students getting one of the three questions with a mix of each of the three distributed in the same phase. The limitation of this technique is that each question need be formulated to require the same completion time.

c. With respect to final examinations

In terms of increasing the risk of being caught cheating borne by students prone to academic misconduct, deterrence can be maximized by following the rules and regulations appertaining to invigilation (in which, inter alia, the ratio of students to invigilators should be no higher than 15:1 and in no instance should there be less than two invigilators) and by denying such students access to technologies that can misemployed in the service of cheating. In this respect, rules and regulations appertaining to final examination administration bar student access to mobile phones at all times during the period in which the final examination takes place. (See Invigilation and Final Examination Administration Regulations.)

Processes for Detection of Academic Misconduct

1. All MSEM students, course instructors and dissertation supervisors and examiners have access to the plagiarism detection software Turnitin™. To educate students and to facilitate detection of plagiarism, course instructors and supervisors require students across all levels to submit essay type assignments, individual or group project reports (be they research- or non-research based), as well as dissertations through Turnitin™. The maximum level of similarity percentage allowed is 15%. Even if similarity percentage falls at or below this limit, all text indicated by Turnitin™ to be “similar” must be verified to be correctly attributable by source. A student who does not indicate the source or indicates a false source is likewise deemed to have plagiarized and subject to sanction for the offense as detailed below. In this regard it is important to note that the University has a zero tolerance approach to plagiarism. Suspected cases of plagiarism will normally be referred by the Disciplinary Committee of the University, and penalties imposed if the allegations are upheld. These penalties range from requirement to repeat the work, award of an F grade through to more serious administration actions in the case of repeat offences.
2. As regards course work, cases of unacceptable learner practice (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, collusion or personation) are handled by the course instructor and within the EMSE Program Committee and the College housing the MSEM Program and only referred to the Dean of Student Affairs at Ahlia University (for disciplinary hearing) if considered serious or treated as a repeat offence. Typically, minor cases result in the student being required to repeat the assessment under scrutiny through to award of an F grade for the assessment concerned. In the instance of individual major assignments/projects, in this instance applicable where accounting for 20% or more of course grade, it is vital that Turnitin™ is used to detect collusion in which identical Turnitin™ scores are obtained with identical similar text being identified by Turnitin™ indicative of collusion. The typical penalty for collusion is the award of F grades for all in collusion in the instance of a first-time offence. All instances of collusion must be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs. Repeat offenders will be subject to a hearing before the Disciplinary Committee of the University.
3. Exam offences and the corresponding penalties are dealt with according to the Invigilation and Final Examination Administration Regulations under the aegis of the Deanship of Student Affairs at Ahlia

University and in conjunction with an appointed disciplinary committee. In this respect, the Deanship keeps a centralized record of all cases of exam violations in order to determine areas for enhancement in the examination and disciplinary procedures. The same penalties applicable to infraction of rules and regulations apply equally to in-class tests. Where feasible, tests applicable to multi-section courses should be conducted in single chamber according to the same rules and regulations applicable to those appertaining to final examination.

3. Review and Amendment of Assessment Regulations

Policy

The management of the MSEM Program is committed to ensuring that the assessment policies, processes, procedures, regulations and guidelines are up-to-date, current and relevant to national and international quality guidelines and academic standards and norms.

To ensure completeness, currency and compliance, the management of the MSEM Program requires that all assessment policies, processes, procedures, regulations and guidelines are monitored; that feedback regarding their effectiveness is solicited regularly from all relevant stakeholders; and that these activities contribute to review, evaluation and improvement.

Procedure

1. EMSE Program Committee must ensure that the assessment policies, processes, procedures, regulations and guidelines (APPPRG) stated in this Assessment Manual must be implemented across all MSEM courses. Sample documentation of implementation should be collected, whenever possible, stored and made available for concerned committees including the GW EMSE-OCP Board for quality monitoring and review.
2. The overall implementation of the APPPRG must be monitored regularly by the EMSE Program Committee and feedback regarding the implementation should be collected from instructors and students. Overall feedback regarding the implementation efficiency and effectiveness must be communicated to the GW EMSE-OCP Board as well as AU's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee so that enhancements can be made accordingly.
3. The EMSE Program Committee, GW EMSE-OCP Board as well as TLAC must review and evaluate the effectiveness, currency and relevancy of the APPPRG to national and international quality guidelines and academic standards and norms. This assessment manual should be revised accordingly whenever needed.