

HSS Policy of Change of Grade and Grade Appeal

What is the maximum timeframe for submitting a *change of grade*? (Answer: 2 years)

Policy 6.13 (Grading) states that any change of grade must be changed for “legitimate reasons by the instructor who submitted the original grade.” (6.13, VIII, A) This same paragraph goes on to establish a timeframe by which a change of grade may be submitted, which is two years after the posting of the incorrect grade. So, this establishes a maximum timeframe of two years for submitting grade changes. To align with this timeframe for a grade change, it would make sense for course records (of some kind – details will be discussed below) to be maintained for two years. But grade changes are different than grade appeals, which is our next topic. (Interestingly, Policy 6.13 does not address the situation where the instructor is no longer employed by SUU. That provision is covered by Policy 6.29, discussed further below.)

So, what about the maximum timeframe for a *grade appeal*? (Answer: 8 months)

Policy 6.19 (Grade Appeal) states that students must work through various levels of appeal (instructor first, then chair) and if a resolution is still not reached, then the student may appeal to the dean. This policy establishes a maximum timeframe by which a request for a grade appeal must reach the dean, and that timeframe is six months after the end of the course. And then, if the dean does not resolve the matter, the dean can refer the matter to the College Grade Committee, which must rule on the matter within two months of when the dean receives the grade appeal. For a grade appeal, this amounts to a grand total of no longer than eight months after the completion of the course. Thus, for the purposes of a grade appeal, the maximum timeframe for accessing course records from the instructor would be eight months. Rounding up to one year might be an easy way to remember how long to keep records.

Now, what is the policy regarding retaining student records? (Answer: grading worksheets and grade sheets = 2 years; other “records” are retained according to a schedule determined by department or college)

Policy 6.29 (Retention of Student Records by Faculty) states that “Grading worksheets and copies of grade sheets will be retained for two years in case of a grade appeal or change.” (6.29, III, B) That’s pretty clear. But grading worksheets and grade sheets are a fairly “shallow” level of course records. More on this below.

But what happens if a faculty member or instructor is no longer employed at SUU? (Answer: the department chair retains grade sheets and course records for 2 years)

Policy 6.29 goes on to state that if a faculty member is no longer employed at SUU, then “grade sheets and course records will be retained by the department chair for two years following the completion of the course.” (6.29, III, C) This is pretty clear, but introduces a distinction between “grade sheets” and “course records”. It is possible that “course records” include more detail than “grade sheets”. Luckily, the policy provides guidance in this respect: the last paragraph in Policy 6.29 establishes some flexibility with respect to what counts as course “records” (broadly construed) by stating: “SUU reserves the right to maintain only those records it considers useful and to set retention schedules for various categories of those records.” (6.29, III, D) Based on this wording, I believe that this refers to both the records kept

by instructors and those kept by the chair if the instructor is no longer employed at SUU.
 Okay... but...

What, exactly, counts as course “records”? (Answer: departments/colleges establish categories)

The wording (above) suggests to me that “records” can refer to various categories of course records, including (potentially) the distinct categories of: (i) grading worksheets (e.g., spreadsheets or other computational documents), (ii) grade sheets (e.g., final grade submissions – which are now electronic rather than printed, so this might not be applicable), and (iii) student course work not returned to the student (e.g., assignments, exams, papers, etc.). The important part, I think, is that the policy states that a deliberate “retention schedule” is established by each academic unit (department or college) for each category of record.

So, the department chair or dean (in consultation with his/her colleagues) might establish that records in categories (i) and (ii) should be maintained for two years after the completion of the course. These would represent “shallow” records. Meanwhile, records in category (iii) should be kept for one year after the completion of the course. These represent “deep” records and include more detailed information about assignments, exams, and other course requirements (including student work not returned to students). Given that materials involved with categories (i) and (ii) would be far less voluminous (when thinking about print materials), I think one year retention schedule for category (iii) makes sense. On the basis of the grade appeal policy (6.19), I think it would be safe to say that detailed course records (including student course work) should be maintained for at least eight months after the end of the course. Rounding up to one year would be a convenient way to establish a retention schedule for these materials. Of course, each department (or each college) should probably have a written statement (somewhere) regarding the retention schedules are for each category of “records” related to courses.

Categories of Course Records:

Retention Schedule:	Type of Records:	Examples:	Purpose:
2 years	“shallow” records = categories (i) and (ii)	grading worksheets, grade sheets, other computational documents	Documentation for “grade changes” (max time = 2 years)
1 year	“deep” records = category (iii)	all “shallow” records and also: student work not returned to students (assignments, exams, reports, papers, etc.), as well as instructor copies of the exams, assignments)	Documentation for “grade appeal” (max time = 8 months)

In the event that a faculty member or instructor is no longer employed by SUU, the department chair should retain the course records according to the retention schedule above. When it comes to course records stored in Canvas, it makes sense to retain materials on the same schedule (at a minimum). And in the event of a faculty member or instructor who is no longer employed at SUU and the course was offered using Canvas, it is recommended that department chairs and college deans be given access to Canvas materials.