

# *The Ethical Professor*

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## **Avoiding Grade Appeals**

*The Ethical Professor* wants to remind faculty of a few **simple steps** that can be taken to **reduce the number of grade appeals**.

Some years back, Lucy Kluckhohn-Jones, of the Ombudsperson Office, suggested some of these steps, and they still apply.

1. Refer repeatedly to the **syllabus** that you have provided to the class, and stick to that syllabus. Give adequate notice if you must modify the syllabus.
2. Explain your **grading system** clearly. The students should have no doubts about how you arrive at each grade. Stick to one system (e.g., points, percentages, letter grades). Mixing systems can create confusion. Avoid relying excessively on extra-credit assignments.
3. **Explain each assignment** carefully, and explain it more than once. Repeat due dates. Distinguish between acceptable group work and **cheating**. Give examples of when work should be done in groups and when work must be done individually.
4. Remind students that, when they enrolled, they signed on to the **Academic Code of Conduct** and the **Honor Code**. Review the Academic Code of Conduct at least once and call attention to the Student Code of Conduct posted in each classroom and also found on the web. An application exercise in class could be helpful in making real to the students the importance of acting honorably.
5. Keep accurate **records**, and encourage the students to keep their own, to minimize surprises (the eCompanion grade book can be helpful here). Keep all **exams** until the end of the following semester. Allow students to revisit their final exams when the course has ended.
6. **Talk with your students** about their work; demonstrate an awareness of their efforts and their achievements.