

Appeals Process

Appeals are petitions to change a decision rendered about an academic matter. Students may request an academic appeal for several reasons including a perceived violation of university policy, failure to follow published course policies, a lack of consistency within the student's course section, or a dispute over the factual accuracy of graded work. The following are not reasons that qualify matters for academic appeal: a disagreement with published course policies, differences in classroom policies or grading schemes in different courses or between different sections of the same course, or a grade's impact on a student's academic progress, or eligibility for financial assistance or veteran's benefits. A student's status does not change while an appeal is under consideration. If a student was dismissed, he or she remains dismissed. If he or she is in academic probation or suspension, the probation or suspension stands. Students may appeal decisions related to their academic performance (i.e., grades) in the following manner:

- A. Within two weeks after a student experiences the problem, he/she should contact the instructor involved and discuss the situation. If still dissatisfied, the student should proceed to step b.
- B. Provide the Dean and/or Program Director with a written statement that identifies the course and instructor, describe the problem, request specific actions, and give evidence to support the appeal within 30 days of the original appeal to the instructor. Students should include copies of all relevant documents: papers, tests, etc. The Dean and/or Program Director reviews the material and rules on the request. Should the Dean and/or Program Director be the instructor of record of the course under appeal, the Director of Graduate Studies for Academic Affairs will name an alternate to hear the appeal. A student may appeal the decision of the Dean or Program Director or assigned alternate under only specific circumstances, as outlined in step c.
- C. Students may appeal the ruling of a Dean based on the discovery of new evidence previously unavailable or a significant irregularity in the procedural process which could affect the outcome of the finding by the Dean. The appeal must take place within 30 days of the decision by the Dean. Undergraduate students appeal to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA). Graduate students appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). General dissatisfaction with the decision of the Dean or assigned alternate is not sufficient grounds to appeal the decision to the AVPAA or DGS. In those cases, the student must provide the AVPAA or DGS with a written statement that identifies the course and instructor, describe the problem, describe the appeal to the Dean, describe the new evidence or the perceived irregularity, and provide evidence to support the appeal. Students should include copies of all relevant documents: papers, tests, etc. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs or Director of Graduate Studies reviews the material and rules on the request. Should the AVPAA or DGS be the instructor of record of the course under appeal, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will name an alternate to hear the appeal. A student may appeal the decision of the AVPAA or DGS or assigned alternate under specific circumstances, as outlined in step d.
- D. Students may appeal the decision of the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs or Director of Graduate Studies if he or she believes there has been a significant irregularity

in the procedural process or if new evidence comes to light that may change the outcome of the appeal. General dissatisfaction with the decision is not sufficient grounds to appeal the decision of the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs or Director of Graduate Studies. Students may appeal the decision to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. To appeal the decision, the student must request from the Vice President for Academic Affairs a hearing by an impartial committee of three within 30 days of the decision by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs or Director of Graduate Studies. Appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, this committee includes two students, one enrolled in the same division as the student who initiates the appeal and one from another division, and a faculty chairperson. The committee reviews the evidence, interviews, if necessary, those individuals involved, and recommends in writing a course of action to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs considers the recommendation of the committee and rules on the appeal. That ruling is final and binding.

Exceptions

Absent Faculty

In a case where the instructor is absent or is no longer employed by the university, the appeal shall begin directly with the School Dean in which the course was taken.

Additional preliminary levels of appeal

In some programs, students may have additional levels of appeal available to them prior to reaching the Dean. Additional preliminary levels of appeal appear on the course syllabi and may include other university officials such as a division chair or program director. Once an appeal reaches the level of Dean, all appeals must follow the sequence stated in this section.

[Reviewed by Graduate Council: 01.13.2010]