

Senate Policy

Graduate Studies Appeals Process

3.9

Description:

This policy outlines the grade appeals process for Graduate Studies.

Approvals:

Revised by Graduate Studies Committee: December 2010

Approved by Academic Policy and Planning: January 2011

Approved by Academic Council: January 2011

Approval Authority: Academic Council

Signature: Archie Graham, Academic Council

Policy:

Graduate students are encouraged to seek informal resolution of problems through discussions with their course instructor, Principal Advisor, Graduate Program Director, and the Graduate Studies Officer.

A grade appeal is a written request from a student that an academic decision be changed, based on evidence supplied by the student.

A student may appeal the grade received in a course. An appeal may be filed because the student:

- a. questions the grade assigned, or
- b. believes that the method of evaluation was not valid or reasonable in the circumstances, or
- c. believes that the evaluation criteria deviated substantially from the course outline without reasonable notice, or
- d. believes that the university's published regulations governing evaluation were misapplied.

Procedure:

1. Students may appeal the grade received in a course **within the published deadlines** in the university Calendar.
2. **Step 1:** Initial Appeal to Teaching Faculty Member

Informal Stage:

- a. The student must speak directly to the teaching faculty member and attempt to resolve the matter informally before proceeding with a formal grade appeal.

Formal Stage:

- a. If the matter is not resolved informally, the student may submit a letter of appeal **within the published deadlines**, to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- b. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward a copy of the grade appeal to the teaching faculty.
- c. The teaching faculty shall respond to the student, through the Office of Graduate Studies, in writing, **within 10 working days of receiving the grade appeal**. The written response will include:
 - i. The method of evaluation in terms of course objectives for the course in question.
 - ii. The manner in which the method of evaluation was applied.
 - iii. The teaching faculty's decision on the student appeal.
- d. If the student does not accept the response and decision of the teaching faculty, or if the teaching faculty is unavailable to respond, the student may request that the Office of Graduate Studies forward the grade appeal to the appropriate Graduate Program Director (GPD) **within 10 working days of receiving the teaching faculty's response**; or, if no response was delivered, **within 20 working days of the date the student submitted the grade appeal** to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- e. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward the file to the Graduate Program Director and will give the teaching faculty notice that the appeal has been forwarded.

3. **Step 2:** Appeal to Graduate Program Director

- a. The appropriate Graduate Program Director (GPD) is the Director of the program in which the course was offered, or in the case of a shared course, the GPD of the program in which the student is enrolled.
- b. The Graduate Program Director may meet with the student and the teaching faculty separately to discuss the appeal and the teaching faculty's response.
- c. The Graduate Program Director may:
 - i. remit the work to be re-evaluated by the teaching faculty according to the appropriate evaluation methods;
 - ii. grant no relief to the student from the grade appealed;
 - iii. alter the student's grade by lowering or raising it;
 - iv. where the student agrees, initiate a procedure for re-evaluation of the student's work by another teaching faculty or by a panel of three teaching faculty;
 - v. permit the student to submit new work or to re-write a test or examination to be graded by another teaching faculty, whose

decision will be final.

- d. Where the GPD initiates a procedure for re-evaluation, the GPD shall appoint the new evaluators as soon as practicable, normally **within 5 working days of the date of the meeting**. Where a re-evaluation occurs, a written assessment of the student's work by the teaching faculty will be forwarded to the GPD as soon as practicable.
- e. The GPD will release a decision, in writing, with reasons, as soon as practicable, normally **within 15 working days of the appeal being forwarded, or 5 working days following the receipt by the GPD** of the written assessment of the student's work in the case of an alternative evaluation, or the re-examination or re-submission by the student.
- f. The decision of the GPD is final and irrevocable.

Graduate Studies Committee

Where the grade appeal is not successful and **only if there was procedural irregularity**, the student may appeal the decision to the Graduate Studies Committee by letter of appeal **within 15 working days of receiving the decision**.

Time Limits

The time limits in this policy may be extended with the consent of the parties or by the decision-maker at the relevant stage of the proceeding provided that the decision-maker is satisfied that no party will be unduly prejudiced by the extension.

Progress Evaluations:

Progress Evaluations may be appealed to the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies.