

Academic Appeal Procedure

Grounds for Appeal

The academic appeal procedure is a process designed to address an academic situation the student perceives as unfair or unjust. It is not a process to be used when there is dissatisfaction with a grade or to obtain a grade change. For information on non-academic grievances, refer to the relevant sections of the Student Handbook.

Administrative Appeal

The student should try to resolve the situation by discussing it with the following people in the order listed below, beginning, whenever possible, with the faculty member or administrative official involved in the situation. Should a student be concerned that approaching the involved faculty member or administrative official could result in retaliation or otherwise harm his or her career at the College, the administrative appeal may begin at the next level in the list below (if the student bypasses a level, the reason for the bypass must be discussed with the administrator at the next level).

The procedure would halt at any point that satisfaction has been reached. If the administrative path for the appeal is unclear, the student should consult with the VPAA for clarification.

1. Course faculty member
2. Program coordinator or director if applicable
3. Department chair
4. Dean of the school in which the department or program resides
5. Vice President for Academic Affairs

The student may request that another student or a faculty or staff member be present to provide support when working through the administrative appeal. The third party role is to provide support for the student, not to engage in dialogue with the administrative official. The central conversation about the matter should occur between the student and the administrative official.

Administrative officials who are involved in administrative appeals are expected to seek information from the involved parties and to attempt to negotiate solutions that are satisfactory to all parties, consistent with the College's policies and procedures and with appropriate attention to academic integrity.

Formal Appeal

If, after discussion with the people listed above, the issue has not been resolved, the student may file a written appeal with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Upon receipt of the written appeal, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will contact the chair of the Faculty Assembly (for undergraduate appeals) or the Graduate Council (for graduate appeals) to select three faculty members, and the Vice President of Student Affairs to select two students to serve on an appeal panel; for undergraduate appeals the students will be undergraduates and for graduate appeals the student will be graduate students. One student and two faculty members will be from the academic school concerned; the other student and faculty member will be from other schools. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will set up the first meeting of the panel and notify the involved student and the faculty member(s).

Time Limits

An administrative appeal must be initiated by the student within one month of the end of the semester in which the incident occurred. The formal appeal must be initiated within one month of completion of the administrative appeal process. Upon receipt of the written formal appeal, the appeal panel shall be formed within one week. The appeal panel shall meet within two weeks of being formed to be presented with the appeal. A hearing that includes the student and faculty member will be scheduled as soon as practicable thereafter.

Student Responsibility

The student should clearly and concisely describe the incident and state the reason for the appeal. Any supporting materials should be given to the panel members and to the faculty member(s) through the Vice President of Academic Affairs prior to the first meeting of the panel.

Faculty

Any written documentation that the faculty member(s) wish to present to the panel should be given to the panel and the student through the Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to the first meeting of the panel.

Panel

1. At the first meeting of the panel, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the responsibilities and limits of the appeal panel and distribute any written materials from the student and the faculty member(s). The panel should then choose a chair and secretary. A hearing will take place at a subsequent meeting.
2. At the hearing, the student will present the concern. The student may ask to have a student advocate or another person present as a supporter/advisor. This request should be made prior to the meeting. Because this is a student initiated process within the College, it is not usual to have legal counsel present. If an exception is to be made, it should be arranged with the Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to the panel meeting.
3. At the hearing, the panel will give the faculty member(s) an opportunity to respond to the accusation of unfairness or injustice. The faculty member(s) may invite the department chair or dean of the school to be present for this panel meeting. If the student has arranged for legal counsel, the faculty member(s) may also have legal counsel present. Legal counsel shall not be permitted to examine or to cross-examine anyone present. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will also be present as a resource for procedural questions.
4. At the hearing, the panel will ask questions and receive clarification of the issue from the student and faculty member(s), all of whom are present for presentation and clarification.
5. Following the hearing, the panel will meet alone to discuss the issue. The primary responsibility of the panel is to determine whether an injustice was done.
6. To maintain confidentiality the panel will seek any additional information needed to arrive at a decision through the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
7. The decision will be communicated to the Vice President of Academic Affairs who will relay the final decision to the student and faculty member(s). If and only if the panel members decide there was an injustice, they may suggest options for follow-up action to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
8. Detailed minutes of the panel proceedings should be kept by the secretary and filed in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
9. All deliberations of the panel are held in confidence. Panel members and anyone present at the meeting(s) should respect this confidentiality.
10. Decisions of the panel are binding.