

Algoma University

Grade Appeals Policy

Normally an official appeal should be preceded by an informal attempt by the student to resolve the issue by discussing it with the faculty member. If that is not feasible or acceptable for either party, (in which case it is desirable that reasons be given in writing), or if such attempt is unsuccessful, the student may proceed to stage two of the informal process. In this stage, the divisional chair is contacted by the student; s/he will then attempt mediation involving a meeting with the student, the faculty member and him/herself. It is recommended that the student, the divisional chair, and the faculty member keep records of the informal contacts made.

If at this point the student is not satisfied with the outcome, s/he may initiate a formal appeal. A formal appeal comprises a written statement by the student detailing the ground for the appeal and what would constitute a satisfactory outcome from his/her point of view. Such a statement must be given to the Divisional Chair of the department involved, and to the Dean.

At their discretion and in communication with each other, the Divisional Chair and the Dean negotiate further mediation between the student and faculty member. This may involve bringing the parties together face to face. If such mediation is deemed unacceptable or futile by either or both parties, a written rationale must be provided to the Dean and Divisional Chair.

Failing a successful mediation attempt, or in the case of refusal of such an attempt, the appeal is sent to the Appeals Committee by the Dean with a record of the mediation attempt or the reasons for the refusal of said mediation.

Initiating an Appeal:

A student may initiate an appeal under any of the aspects of the above terms of reference at any time before or within 60 days of the release of an official report of grades for the course involved.

Informal Resolution

Stage One

Informal attempt must be made by the student to resolve the issue by discussing it with the faculty member. Student and faculty member ought to review the grading procedures and the student's grades in individual assignments, exams and essays. If this review is not feasible or acceptable to either party, the student may proceed directly to stage two. It is recommended that both the student and the faculty member keep records of the informal contacts made.

Stage Two

If the student and the faculty member cannot come to a satisfactory solution, either party may take this dispute to the divisional chair. The Divisional Chair ought to try to resolve the dispute in any way that s/he feels is appropriate to the satisfaction of both parties. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, a formal appeal may be initiated within 30 days of the informal meeting/attempt. It is recommended that the student, Divisional Chair, and the faculty member keep records of this informal contact. A meeting between student, faculty member and divisional chair is mandatory before proceeding to stage three.

Formal Resolution

Stage Three

If satisfactory results are not met in either of the above-mentioned stages of the review process, the student may initiate a formal appeals process. A formal appeal comprises a written statement by the student detailing the grounds for the appeal and what would constitute a satisfactory outcome from his/her point of view. Such a statement ought to be given to both the Divisional Chair of the department involved, and to the Dean.

Stage Four

At this point, the Dean (in consultation with the divisional chair) may attempt further mediation between the student and the faculty member. This mediation would involve bringing the parties together face to face. If such a meeting is deemed unacceptable or futile, by any of the parties involved, the Dean must give written reasons for this failure to meet.

Failing a successful mediation attempt, or in the case of refusal of such an attempt, the appeal is sent to the Appeals Committee by the Dean with a record of the mediation attempt, or the reason for the refusal of said mediation. Strict adherence to these stages of initiating an appeal is mandatory.

Appeals Committee Procedure

The Appeals Committee will meet and:

- 1) Ensure Stages One and Two and Three have been completed. If they have not, the appeal will be suspended until Stages One and Two and Three have been completed.
- 2) Ensure that both parties have a copy of this by-law
- 3) Examine the formal statement of the student and satisfy itself that it falls within the guidelines and timeframe as indicated above; that is not frivolous; and that the recommended mediation attempts were made, or cogent reasons were given for these not having been made.
- 4) Provide the faculty member with a copy of the written appeal statement of the student.
- 5) Gather whatever other relevant information it may deemed necessary.
- 6) If deemed necessary, hold a meeting, or meetings, with both the student and the faculty member separately and/or present together, to afford them the opportunity to answer each other's claims. If no prior meeting between faculty and student has been held, it is imperative to hold one at this point; if such is deemed unacceptable or futile by either or both parties they must give written reasons for this. Failure to do meet this requirement cannot halt proceedings, but may affect the outcome.
- 7) Obtain comparative materials from other students in the class and utilize external examiners as required at the discretion of the Committee.
- 8) Arrive at a final internal decision and report it to the Dean. The Dean will implement the decision, and through the Coordinating Committee, may report to Senate concerning the case, keeping the names of the parties involved confidential.
- 9) May make general recommendations geared to precluding situations that could otherwise lead to future appeals.
- 10) After completing a case, return all original documents to their sources, keep one copy of all documents and a record of Committee proceedings to be placed in secure confidential storage with the Dean's Office, and destroy all other copies. The records will be kept for as long as is required by applicable statutes of limitations.

If either party is not satisfied with the decision s/he may appeal to the Laurentian Senate Committee on Student Appeals within 30 days of the decision.

The Committee has the right to do whatever is reasonable and fair, including interpreting and applying this policy. It is an informal, internal mechanism that relies on the cooperation of all parties concerned. In the case of academic dishonesty, the appeals committee will refer to the regulations for guidance on making final recommendations. It is not, and is not meant to be, a juridical or quasi-juridical process.