

## **ALGOMA UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY**

The Appeals Committee is a Committee of Senate charged with considering student appeals with respect to grades, including examinations, term assignments and tests, academic dishonesty, and the general conduct of the course involved. The Committee shall exercise its authority in accordance with the following policies and procedures.

Faculty shall not retaliate in any way against students who have initiated appeals of grades in current or previous courses.

The fact that appeals of grades (successful or not) have been made by students shall not be used as a reason for any punitive measures against faculty.

Students shall not use this appeals process frivolously or maliciously.

All steps of the resolution process shall be kept confidential between the parties who participate in the process.

### **Initiating an Appeal**

A student may initiate an appeal of a grade at any time before, or within 15 days after, the release of an official report of grades for the course involved.

### **Resolution Procedures**

Strict adherence to the following stages is mandatory.

#### **Informal Resolution**

##### **Stage One**

A student who wishes to appeal a grade (on a specific test or assignment, or the final grade for a course) must first contact the faculty member teaching the course in question. The student and the faculty member should meet to review the grading procedures and the student's grades on individual assignments, essays and exams.

If a student requests that the faculty member re-grade an assignment, essay, or exam, the faculty member should solicit a written statement from the student explaining why the student believes that a different grade is appropriate for the work in question. The student should be informed that re-grading the assignment can result in a grade that is lower, the same as, or higher than the grade initially assigned.

It is recommended that both the student and the faculty member keep records of the informal contacts made.

If such a meeting is not feasible, or is unacceptable to either party, the student may proceed directly to stage two.

##### **Stage Two**

If the student and the faculty member cannot come to a satisfactory solution, the student may appeal to the Divisional Chair within ten days of the meeting between the student and the faculty member. In the event that such a meeting has been deemed not feasible or unacceptable, the student may appeal to the Divisional Chair within ten days of such determination.

The Divisional Chair should try to resolve the dispute in any way that s/he feels is fair and appropriate to the satisfaction of both parties. This will normally involve a meeting with both the student and the faculty member, unless such a meeting is unacceptable to either of the parties. It is recommended that the student, the faculty member, and the Divisional Chair keep records of this informal meeting.

The Divisional Chair may not direct that a different grade be assigned for the work in question.

If a satisfactory solution is not reached, a formal appeal may be initiated within 30 days of the informal meeting/attempt.

### **Formal Resolution**

#### **Stage Three**

If satisfactory results are not achieved in either of the two previous stages, the student may initiate a formal appeal 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, and any supporting documentation or evidence that the student wishes to be considered. In the case of an appeal of a grade on an assignment, essay, or test that has been returned to the student, the student must provide the original work in question. Copies of these materials should be given both to the Divisional Chair and to the Dean.

Upon request from the Dean, the faculty member will provide the student's final exam, in cases where this is relevant to the appeal.

At this point, the Dean (in consultation with the Divisional Chair) will normally attempt further mediation between the student and the faculty member. This will normally involve bringing all parties together face-to-face. If such a meeting is considered unacceptable or futile by either party, written reasons must be given to the Dean by the party in question.

#### **Stage Four**

If mediation does not produce a satisfactory result, or if either party refuses to attempt mediation, 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 mediation.

### **APPEALS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

The Committee has the right to do whatever is reasonable and fair, including interpreting and applying this policy. The appeals process is an informal, internal mechanism that relies on the cooperation of all parties concerned. It is not, and is not meant to be, a juridical or quasi-judicial process.

The Committee shall at all times be governed by the rules of natural justice.

The standard of review shall be reasonableness.

A Committee member who has a conflict of interest with, or bias for or against either the student or the faculty member in an appeal shall identify such conflict at the first reasonable opportunity and shall remove him/herself from further proceedings connected with the appeal. Both the student and the faculty member shall be made aware of the members of the Committee, and shall be given the opportunity to identify any real or perceived conflict of interest or bias on the part of any Committee member.

In response to a formal appeal forwarded to the Chair of the Appeals Committee by the Dean, the Committee will meet and:

1. will ensure that stages one through three have been completed; if they have not, the appeal will be suspended until they have been completed
2. will ensure that both parties have a copy of these procedures
3. will examine the formal statement of the student and satisfy itself that it falls within the guidelines and timeframe as indicated above and that it is not frivolous
4. will provide the faculty member with a copy of the written appeal statement of the student
5. will invite the faculty member to submit a written response to the student's appeal statement, and any additional documentation or evidence that the faculty member wishes to be considered
6. may request that the faculty member provide a copy of the course outline for the class in question, and/or copies of the instructions for the assignment(s) or questions for the test(s) that are subject of the appeal
7. may request that the instructor provide comparative materials from other students in the same class, and/or utilize external examiners as required, at the discretion of the Committee
8. may request additional materials or information, as deemed necessary
9. in the case of academic dishonesty, the Appeals Committee will refer to the regulations provided in the Academic Calendar for guidance on making final recommendations
10. in the case of a disputed grade, the Appeals Committee will refer to the regulations provided in the Academic Calendar and to the course requirements specified in the Course Outline for the class in question
11. if deemed necessary, may 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 meet this requirement cannot halt proceedings, but may affect the outcome.
12. will arrive at a final decision and report it to the Dean. The Dean will implement the decision, and may report to Senate concerning the case, keeping the names of the parties involved confidential.
13. may make general recommendations intended to prevent future appeals.
14. after completing an appeal, will 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.
15. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding.