

Annual Report of Appeals And Compliance Coordinator (Including University Discipline Statistics)

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



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Scope

This report covers the period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Statistics for previous years are also included for comparison.

This report provides information about discipline decisions and appeal processes under five university policies/procedures. Appeals under the Code of Student Behaviour (COSB) and the Code of Applicant Behaviour (COAB) are heard by the University Appeal Board (UAB). Appeals under the Student Conduct Policy (SCP) are heard by the Student Misconduct Appeal Panel (Appeal Panel). This report also provides information for two other university-level appeal bodies, the General Faculties Council Academic Appeals Committee (GFC AAC) and the General Faculties Council Practice Review Board (GFC PRB).

Role of the Appeals Coordinator

Working as the Appeals and Compliance Coordinator in University Governance, I carry out the role of the Appeals Coordinator under the COSB, COAB, SCP, the University of Alberta Academic Appeals Policy (AAP), and the University of Alberta Practicum Intervention Policy (PIP). In this role I am neutral and do not advocate for any party in an appeal. I facilitate or administer the appeal process steps from the time an appeal is received, through the hearing and decision made by a hearing panel, to distribution of the written decision. I also provide procedural information to the parties to an appeal and to the hearing panel throughout the appeal process.

Apart from individual appeals, I oversee administration of the final level of student appeals under the above policies/procedures to ensure that the university continues to implement and follow fair processes by which to address appeals. This includes helping appeal committee members understand the framework within which they work when hearing appeals, and also helping the university community understand these processes.

University-Level Student Appeal System

The university-level student appeal system is made up of four appeal bodies – the UAB/Appeal Panel, the GFC AAC, and the GFC PRB. Internally, decisions of these appeal bodies are final and binding, subject only to judicial review, unless otherwise noted.

Discipline decisions arise as a result of a student being charged with academic offence(s) under the COSB or COAB. When the appropriate decision-maker has made a final decision finding offence(s) and imposing sanction(s), the decision can be appealed by the student (and in some cases the Dean) to the UAB. Under the COSB (and the COAB), the UAB has broad authority to determine whether an offence was committed and to confirm, vary or quash sanctions imposed.

Sharing a common membership with the UAB, the Appeal Panel hears appeals from students found in violation of the SCP or the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy (SGBVP) following the

process outlined in the Student Misconduct Appeal Procedure (SMAP). Under the SMAP, the Appeal Panel has the authority to overturn a decision of the Student Conduct Officer (SCO) where a decision was made on the basis of an error or errors that would have had a material effect on the outcome, showing deference to the SCO decision. They also have the authority to grant an appeal of sanction where the appellant establishes the SCO assigned sanctions outside a reasonable range.

Under the AAP, academic standing issues are heard by the GFC AAC. Students may appeal faculty decisions on matters including the requirement to withdraw, and denial of graduation or promotion. These appeals are heard after a student has exhausted all other avenues of appeal within a faculty. The authority of the GFC AAC is to uphold (and award any remedy not contrary to faculty rules) or deny an appeal depending upon whether it finds that a miscarriage of justice, as defined by the AAP, occurred within the faculty process.

Under the PIP, appeals concerning practicum interventions are heard by the GFC PRB after a student has exercised their right of appeal to a Faculty Practice Review Committee (FPRC). The GFC PRB's authority is similar to the UAB's authority, to confirm, reverse or vary the decision under appeal.

Principles of the Appeal Process

Appeals at the university level deal with complex issues affecting students, faculties and the university as a whole. Given this impact, and the fact that this final level of appeal is the last opportunity for issues to be heard within the university, it is very important that the appeal process is both fair and perceived to be fair to promote confidence in appeal outcomes.

The authority of appeal bodies (UAB/Appeal Panel/GFC AAC/GFC PRB) flows from powers delegated under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. The appeal bodies carry out their authority as outlined in the applicable university appeal policy, in keeping with the principles of administrative fairness. The principles of administrative fairness are the basis for our appeals policies, help us to interpret those policies, and provide the framework within which our hearing panels make decisions.

The structured steps of our appeals processes recognize the impact and finality of these decisions and ensure the opportunity for parties to an appeal to make their best cases and be fully heard. The appeals process has been designed to enable students and university decision-makers to be heard through presenting their arguments and evidence to an objective hearing panel coming from the university community.

At its core, our appeals system involves the parties fully making their cases in writing and knowing the case of the other side before an appeal hearing takes place. Depending on the appeal process and applicable policy, parties either appear at a hearing where they are able to present their information, subject to questioning, before an objective hearing panel, or the appeal is held by way of documentary review. The hearing panel then considers and weighs all of the evidence and comes to a decision, which it explains to the parties in writing. If any process issues or requests arise

before or during a hearing, the hearing panel chair (sometimes with the full hearing panel) decides how to fairly address the issues, keeping in mind the relevant appeals policy and the principles of administrative fairness, including the goal to provide for a full and fair hearing.

Appeal Committee Membership

The university-level hearing panels are made up of volunteer members from the university community. While the exact makeup of a hearing panel depends on the applicable appeal policy, generally the hearing panels are a combination of undergraduate/graduate students and academic staff selected from the university's appeal committee membership lists. Membership is determined by an application process and ultimately approved by the General Faculties Council. Appeal committee members come from the greatest possible variety of faculties and the broadest possible representation of the university community. Appeal hearings are scheduled throughout the academic year, including summer, mainly in evenings around academic schedules. Student appeal committee members normally serve for terms of two years, while academic staff appeal committee members normally serve for terms of three years (both with the possibility of serving additional terms). The number of appeals heard by individual appeal committee members depends on the number of appeals received and the faculties involved.

In addition to their understanding of the university environment through their experience as students and academic staff, our appeal committee members are provided ongoing training, including understanding the principles of administrative fairness within which their tribunals operate. This helps to ensure that, as discussed above, the appeal process is a fair one.

The service of appeal committee members is a significant commitment, including considering and addressing procedural issues arising before and during hearings, preparing for and participating in hearings, and deliberating and drafting written reasons for decisions. All of our appeal committee members recognize the need to objectively hear cases, analyze and weigh evidence, and then come to reasonable decisions based on that evidence. Part of my role is to ensure that appeal committee members have all the needed resources to perform their role. I thank all of our appeal committee members for their commitment and service to our university community. Their work is a very important contribution to fostering and maintaining the values of the university, for all members of our community.

Discipline Decision Statistics / Appeals Statistics

In conjunction with administering appeals, my office collects and maintains the statistics from every discipline decision made at the university under the COSB, COAB and SCP.

The 2023-2024 reporting statistics included in this report show a significant decrease in the number of discipline decision cases decided by Deans and Discipline Officers across the university. One can speculate and hope this means there are less incidents of questionable academic integrity. The

majority of discipline decisions still involve the academic offences of cheating and plagiarism. As mentioned in last year's report, mass cheating events and unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools continue to impact discipline decisions. While anecdotal, some of the decrease in discipline decisions may relate to the development and understanding of rules related to authorized AI use.

With the introduction of the Student Academic Integrity Policy in September 2024, we anticipate less discipline decisions in the coming year(s) as Faculties and students have available to them non-disciplinary accountability options designed to be less punitive, and designed to encourage responsibility and accountability among students.

This reporting year saw a slight increase in the number of appeals compared to the previous year. While the provided statistics include general outcomes of the appeals heard, caution should be used before considering any trends from these outcomes. The sample size is small and each case was decided on its own unique merits, with the resulting statistics providing simply a snapshot of the outcomes for those particular cases heard and decided.

Attached are the statistics for university-level student appeal processes and university-wide discipline decisions. The statistics are based on the year of appeal deadline: July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Laura Riley
Appeals and Compliance Coordinator
University Governance, University of Alberta

Figure 1

Number of Appeals Received by University Governance

Judiciary/Academic Year (July 1 - June 30)	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024
University Appeal Board (UAB)	23	48	42	22	20
Student Misconduct Appeal Panel (Appeal Panel)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	3
GFC Academic Appeals Committee (GFC AAC)	5	4	3	3	4
GFC Practice Review Board (GFC PRB)	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPEALS	28	52	45	25	28

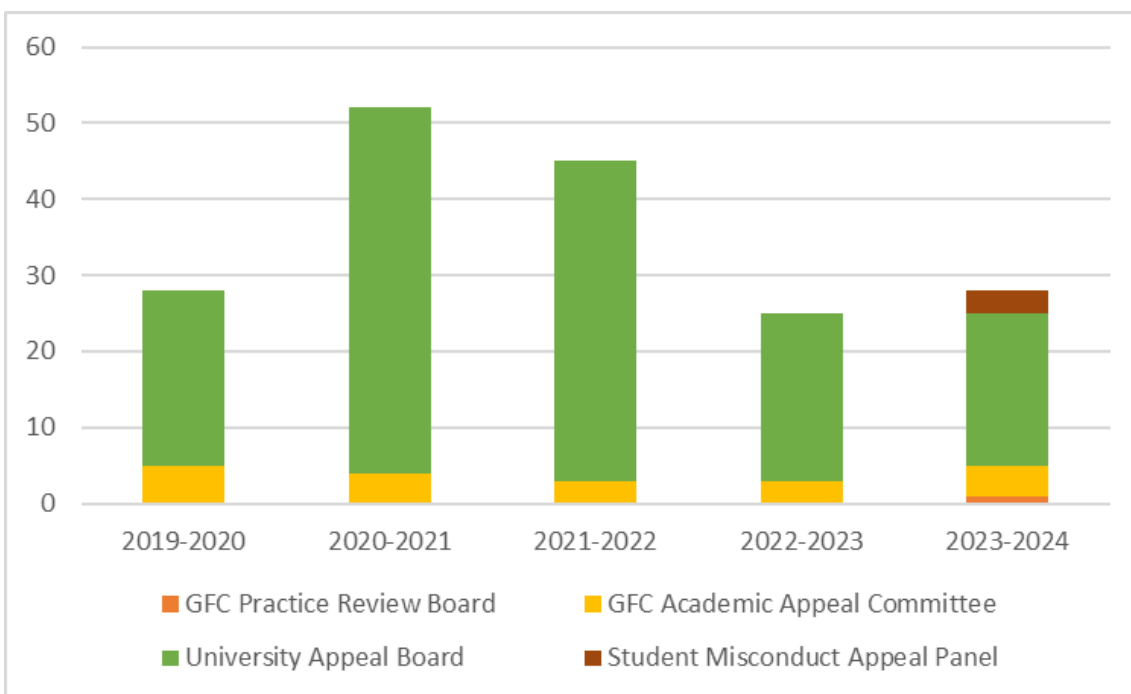


Figure 2

**UAB Disposition of Code of Student Behaviour (COSB) Appeals
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Appeal Upheld	0
Appeal Denied	7
Appeal Still in Progress as of June 30, 2024	12
Appeal Withdrawn	1
Total Appeal Cases	20
Offences Upheld on Appeal	0
Offences Denied on Appeal	4
Sanctions Upheld on Appeal	3
Sanctions Varied on Appeal	4

Students can be charged with and appeal more than one offence and/or sanction. As appeals may concern the offence(s), the severity of sanction(s), or both, the total number of appeal cases and how sanctions were addressed will not necessarily match. In some appeals, the offence is not appealed, but the sanction is. There are also appeals in which the appeal of the offence is denied, but the appeal of the sanction is upheld.

Figure 3

**Appeal Panel Disposition of
Student Conduct Policy (SCP) Appeals
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Appeal Upheld	0
Appeal Denied	1
Appeals Still in Progress as of June 30, 2024	2
Total Appeal Cases	3

Figure 4

**GFC AAC Disposition of Appeals
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Appeal Upheld	0
Appeal Denied	4
Returned to or taken back by Faculty	0
Total Appeal Cases	4

- “Returned to Faculty” means the GFC AAC decided at the appeal hearing to return the matter to the Faculty Academic Appeals Committee for re-hearing, based upon new evidence being introduced at the appeal hearing.
- “Taken Back by Faculty” means the student provided new information as part of the appeal and, before the GFC AAC hearing, the Faculty chose to reconsider the matter at the Faculty level.

Figure 5

**GFC PRB Disposition of Appeals
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Appeal Upheld	1
Appeal Denied	0
Total Appeal Cases	1

Figure 6

**Total Discipline Decision Cases under COSB Decided by
Deans and Discipline Officers
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

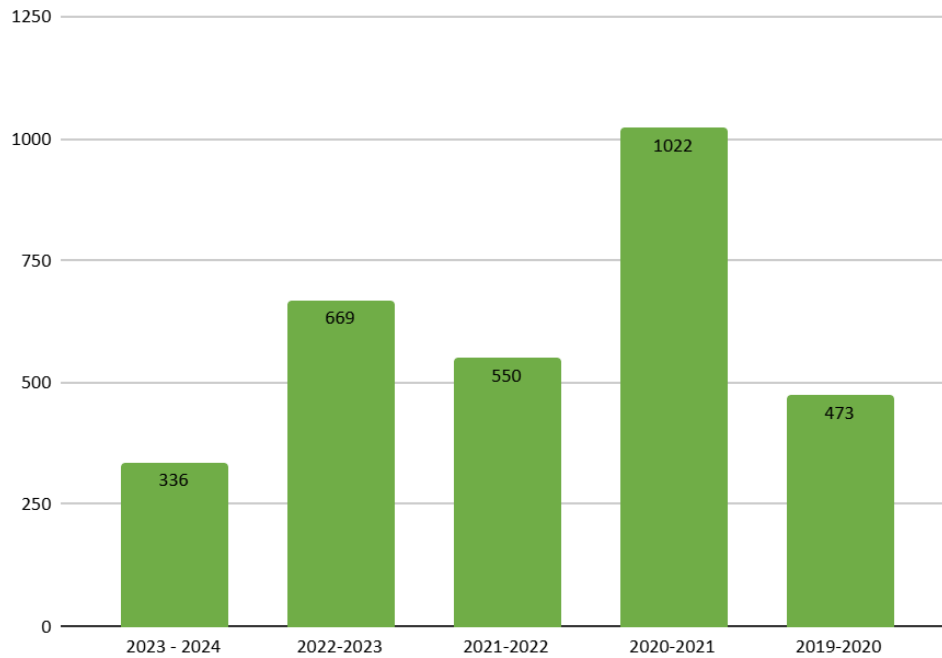


Figure 7

**Category of Sanction by Decision Maker under COSB
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Sanction Type Description	Count	Final Decision By
Less Than Suspension or Expulsion	327	Dean
Less Than Suspension or Expulsion	3	Discipline Officer
Suspension or Expulsion	5	Discipline Officer
Exclusion	1	Discipline Officer
Less Than Suspension or Expulsion	5	UAB
Suspension or Expulsion	3	UAB

Figure 8

**COSB Discipline Decisions
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Offence Description	1	2	3	4	5	GS N/A	N/A
Cheating	95	75	26	18	2	32	4
Misrepresentation of Facts	12	8	1	3			2
Participation in an Offence	7	8	6	2		1	
Plagiarism	52	30	28	19		16	
Inappropriate Behaviour in Professional Programs		2	1	1		1	
Misuse of Confidential Materials	1						
Research and Scholarship Misconduct				1			
Violations of Safety or Dignity	2			2			

- Columns 1 through 5 refer to year of program of student when offence occurred.
- GS N/A refers to graduate student not applicable (i.e. no program year).
- N/A students are students in Open Studies, Visiting Students, Previous Students and Special Students.
- A student can be in violation of more than one offence, so violations and case numbers may differ.

Figure 9

**SCP Misconduct
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Misconduct Description	Count
Harassment & Discrimination	2
Threats and Endangerment	1
Physical Assault and Abuse	2
Other Applicable Policy Violations: Breaching conditions or restrictions applied through interim measures or the Protocol for Urgent Cases of Disruptive, Threatening or Violent Conduct.	1

- A student can be in violation of more than one type of misconduct, so the total count and case numbers may differ.

Figure 10

**Cases Reviewed by Deans, University of Alberta Protective Services,
Discipline Officers, Registrar, and the UAB under COSB
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

Decision Maker	Forwarded By	Count
Dean	Not Applicable	327
Discipline Officer	Dean	5
	UAPS	4
Registrar	Not Applicable	0
UAB	Not Applicable	7

- In all cases where a sanction of suspension or expulsion has been recommended by a Dean, the case goes to the Discipline Officer for review and decision.

Figure 11

**Case Count by Category of Sanction and Decision Maker under COSB
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

Decision Maker	Less Than Suspension or Expulsion	Suspension or Expulsion	Exclusion	UAB dismissed charge
Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences	16			
Arts	117	3		
Augustana	17			
Business	29			
Education	3			
Engineering	54			
Faculte Saint-Jean	6			
Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies	1			
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation	2			
Law	4			
Medicine and Dentistry	2			
Nursing	8	1		
Science	74	2		
UAPS	2	2	1	

Figure 12

**Charge Count by Category of Sanction and Decision Maker under COSB
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

Decision Maker	Less Than Suspension or Expulsion	Suspension or Expulsion	Exclusion	UAB dismissed charge
Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences	18			
Arts	135	4		
Augustana	17			
Business	32			
Education	3			
Engineering	60			
Faculte Saint-Jean	6			
Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies	1			
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation	3			
Law	4			
Medicine and Dentistry	2			
Nursing	11	1		
Science	113	3		
UAPS	2	1	1	