

# FACULTY OF SCIENCE ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY

## I Terms of Reference and Exclusions

This document sets out formal regulations for appeal of decisions regarding grades, academic standing, graduation and practicum intervention related to undergraduate courses, graduate courses and undergraduate degree programs in the Faculty of Science.

Section IV of this document describes the procedures to be followed in considering the appeal of the grade in an individual Science course. These procedures apply to all grade appeals in Science courses whether or not the students are registered in the Faculty of Science. Under the terms of this policy, grade appeals in interdisciplinary courses offered by the Faculty of Science are also heard in the Faculty of Science. Courses offered by other Faculties, but counted as Science courses in Science programs are not governed by this policy.

Sections VI - IX of this policy apply only to students registered in the Faculty of Science.

Denial of admission/re-admission to the Faculty of Science is not subject to appeal. In addition, denial of a request for an excused absence or deferred examination and denial of an application for a re-examination are not subject to appeal. There shall be no appeal on the transfer of courses from another post-secondary institution, from another Faculty or from another degree program within the Faculty of Science.

## II Definitions

- II.1 Academic Standing: Any matter covered by the Faculty's academic standing regulations as governed by General Faculties Council (GFC), its Executive or the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and as published in the Calendar, including such matters as continuation in a program, graduation and the requirement of a student to withdraw.
- II.2 Advisor: A person who assists the Student or a Faculty during the appeal process. Students are encouraged to seek advice from the Student OmbudService. Advice on the preparation and submission of appeals is also available from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office.
- II.3 Appellant: The student launching the appeal.
- II.4 Committee: members appointed to the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC) or the Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee (FPRC)
- II.5 Dean: The Dean (or designate) of the Faculty of Science. The Dean has delegated responsibility for Academic Appeals and Practicum Intervention in the Faculty of Science to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate.
- II.6 Deemed receipt: delivery is deemed to have been effected with one of the following:
  - II.6.1 On the date of pick-up from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office
  - II.6.2 On the date of being sent electronically by email to the student's University of Alberta (ualberta.ca) email address or by posting to Bear Tracks
  - II.6.3 On the date of receipt by hand or courier delivery

- II.6.4 Five (5) working days after being sent by Canada Post to Canadian addresses, or seven (7) Working Days after being sent by Canada Post to International addresses. Letters will be sent to the active mailing address listed in Bear Tracks.
- II.7 Faculty of Science Grade Resolution Committee: A committee composed of at least three (3) Associate Chairs (Undergraduate), or at least three (3) Associate Chairs (Graduate), whose composition rotates between all these Associate Chairs in the Faculty of Science. This committee is formed by the Dean, Faculty of Science, or delegate.
- II.8 Practicum: Any placement (volunteer or otherwise) that is part of a student's Program and that places or may place the student in contact with the public.
- II.9 Practicum Intervention: See section IX and GFC Policy Manual 87
- II.10 Respondent: The Associate Dean, Undergraduate or designate
- II.11 Witness: A person who can present evidence or information to support an appellant or a respondent at a hearing
- II.12 Working Day: A day on which University administrative offices are open

### III Policy for Resolving Grade Disputes

Where disputes in assigning final grades arise between instructors and grade approvers, and no resolution seems possible after an informal process involving detailed discussion by the parties (including, where appropriate, the Department Chair or delegate if different from the grade approver), at least one of the parties must inform the Dean, Undergraduate or delegate, who will then constitute the Faculty of Science Grade Resolution Committee. The Procedures of this committee are governed by the Composition and Procedures of the Faculty of Science Grade Resolution Committee.

### IV Initiation of Appeals and Deadlines

There are deadlines for the initiation of appeals. Late appeals will not be considered. Unless specified otherwise below, all appeals must be submitted with complete documentation within ten (10) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision being appealed. (Earlier deadlines do apply in some cases. For details see below.)

Respondents and/or appellants wishing to bring witnesses to a hearing must inform the Chair of FAC or FPRC at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.

Under the terms of this policy, written notification may be effected by pick up, by mail, by courier or electronically by email or through Bear Tracks.

### V Procedures for Grade Appeals

- V.1 Informal Process: A student who wishes to appeal a grade in an individual science course must first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor.

- V.2 If the matter is not resolved at the level of the instructor by the informal process, the student may appeal, in writing, to the Chair of the Department offering the course. The letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the grade appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature. For courses taken in the Fall the appeal deadline is February 1 immediately following, for courses taken in the Winter the appeal deadline is June 25 immediately following, and for courses taken in Intersession the appeal deadline is September 1 immediately following. For students who have been granted a deferred final examination or re-examination, the deadline for submitting a grade appeal is twenty-one (21) calendar days after the date the deferred examination or re-examination was written. Grade appeals will not be considered in cases in which a deferred examination or re-examination was granted but not written.
- V.3 As part of the appeal process, the student may be advised to apply for a re-appraisal of the final examination paper before any further action will be considered.
- V.4 If the student has appealed in writing to the Department Chair and is not satisfied with the resolution at that stage, the student may appeal to the Dean, or delegate. Such an appeal must be made within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Chair's decision and must be submitted in writing to the Dean, or delegate. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the grade appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.
- V.5 If the matter is not resolved by the Dean or delegate, the student may appeal to the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC). To initiate this level of appeal, the appellant must inform the Chair of the FAC in writing within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Dean's or delegate's decision. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the grade appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.
- V.6 The decision of the FAC is final and binding, and no further appeal can be made.

## VI Procedures for Appeals Specifically Involving a B.Sc. Honors or B.Sc. Specialization Program

Examples of decisions that may be appealed under this section include:

- i) Denial of recommendation for graduation in a B.Sc. Honors or B.Sc. Specialization program. (In the case of Departments in which Honors or Specialization programs have more than one stream or designation, the decision to deny a graduation with a particular designation may also be appealed.)
- ii) The application of residence requirements in a B.Sc. Honors or Specialization program.
- iii) The requirement to discontinue an Honors program.

- iv) The requirement to discontinue a Specialization program.

Decisions that cannot be appealed:

The decision to deny an applicant admission or transfer to an Honors or Specialization program is not subject to appeal, and appeals for graduation in a B.Sc. Honors or B.Sc. Specialization from students who have not been admitted to the program in question will not be heard.

Students who are enrolled in an Honors or Specialization program and earn a GPA between 1.7 and 1.9 (Marginal Standing) may not appeal the requirement to discontinue in their program. Such students may apply to continue on Academic Warning in the BSc General program.

- VI.1 At each stage, the appeal must be in the form of a written statement, signed by the appellant, setting forth the decision in dispute, the grounds for appeal and the remedy sought.
- VI.2 In cases that do not also include a requirement to withdraw from the Faculty, the first level of appeal of an academic standing decision specifically dealing with an Honors or Specialization program shall be to the Chair of the Department, or delegate offering the program. Such an appeal must be made within ten (10) working days of deemed receipt of the original decision. The Chair shall provide a written response to the student's appeal. The first level of appeal for students in Honors or Specialization programs who are required to withdraw from the Faculty (and not just required to discontinue the Honors or Specialization program) is to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate as described in Section VIII below.
- VI.3 If the matter is not resolved by the Department Chair, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Department Chair's decision. Such an appeal must be submitted in writing. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.
- VI.4 If the matter is not resolved by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate, the student may appeal to the FAC. To initiate this level of appeal, the appellant must inform the Chair of the FAC in writing within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate's or delegate's decision.
- VI.5 The decision of the FAC is final and binding, and no further appeals can be made.

## VII Procedures for Appeals of Denial of Graduation in the B.Sc. General Program

- VII.1 Such an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.

- VII.2 If the matter is not resolved by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate, the student may appeal to the FAC. To initiate this level of appeal, the appellant must inform the Chair of the FAC in writing within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Associate Dean's or delegate's decision.
- VII.3 The decision of the FAC is final and binding, and no further appeals can be made.

### VIII Procedures for Appeals of the Requirement to Withdraw from the Faculty of Science

- VIII.1 Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate within ten (10) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the original decision. The Associate Dean, Undergraduate may delegate this process. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.
- VIII.2 Should the appeal be based in whole or in part on extenuating circumstances, or on mitigating factors, these must be fully described in the appeal letter and the letter **MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION**. In particular, any documentation to be considered must be received within the ten (10) working days of the appeal deadline. Appeals that are not submitted in full by the deadline will not be considered.
- VIII.3 If the appeal is denied by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate, and the appellant has grounds to believe that due consideration has not been given to the extenuating circumstances or other factors described in the appeal, the student may appeal to the FAC. To initiate this level of appeal, the appellant must inform the Chair of the FAC in writing within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Associate Dean's or delegate's decision. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.
- VIII.4 The FAC will schedule hearings of the requirement to withdraw following the end of the Fall/Winter session. If the appellant has not asked to appear in person before the FAC, the hearing will be held on the first available scheduled date and time. If the appellant has asked to appear in person at the hearing, the appellant will be given at least seven (7) calendar days notification of the date and time at which his/her appeal hearing is scheduled.
- VIII.5 Students who believe that there has been a miscarriage of justice in the hearing of their appeal by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (or delegate) and the FAC may appeal on that ground to the GFC Academic Appeals Committee. Such an appeal must be received by the Appeals Coordinator of the GFC Academic Appeals Committee within fifteen (15) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision of the FAC.
- VIII.6 Students who have successfully appealed the requirement to withdraw will be placed on Probation for the following Fall/Winter subject to specific Conditions of

Probation. Students who wish to appeal the Conditions of Probation set by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate may appeal to the FAC. To initiate this level of appeal, the appellant must inform the Chair of the FAC in writing within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Associate Dean's or delegate's decision. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature. Conditions of Probation set by the FAC are final and binding, and no further appeals can be made.

VIII.7 Students who have been required to withdraw and, as an alternative to an appeal for Probation in the next Fall/Winter session, have chosen to discontinue their studies for a minimum 1-year period will be readmitted on Probation in a subsequent Fall/Winter subject to specific Conditions of Probation. As these Conditions of Probation will also be Conditions for Readmission, they cannot be appealed (see the University of Alberta Calendar <http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=819&hl=%22Appeal+from+Admissions+and+Readmissions+Decisions%22&returnto=search>).

VIII.8 Students who fail to fulfill all of the required Conditions of Probation will not be granted a further opportunity to appeal and will be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Science for a minimum 5-year period. After 5 years, such students may appeal to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate or delegate for readmission. Successful appellants will be placed on Probation for the following Fall/Winter subject to specific Conditions of Probation. As these Conditions of Probation will also be Conditions for Readmission, they cannot be appealed (see the University of Alberta Calendar <http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=819&hl=%22Appeal+from+Admissions+and+Readmissions+Decisions%22&returnto=search>). Students who fail to fulfill all of these required Conditions of Probation will not be granted a further opportunity to appeal and will be required to withdraw permanently from the Faculty of Science.

## IX Procedures for Appeals of Practicum Intervention Decisions

IX.1 Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Chair of the Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee (FPRC) within ten (10) calendar days of deemed receipt of written notification of the Associate Dean's or delegate's decision. The appeal letter may be delivered electronically or by letter mail, and must include the ground(s) for the appeal, any evidence to support that ground(s), and the student's signature.

IX.2 The appellant should include supporting documentation; give a description of the steps already taken in an attempt to seek resolution; set out the substance of the decision being appealed, including the grounds for an appeal, the nature of the relief being requested and, if applicable, the conditions being appealed; indicate whether the intervention will result in any adverse effect to his/her academic standing in the case of the practicum intervention; and state whether or not the s/he wishes to appear in person before the FPRC.

- IX.3 If the appellant has asked to appear in person at the FPRC hearing, the appellant will be given a least seven (7) calendar days notification of the date and time at which his/her appeal hearing is scheduled.
- IX.4 If the appeal to the FPRC is unsuccessful, in whole or in part, the student may appeal to the GFC Practice Review Board (PRB). Such an appeal must be received by the Appeals Coordinator of the GFC PRB within ten (10) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision of the FPRC.

#### X Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC)

The FAC hears appeals of decisions that have been made at earlier levels of the academic appeals process. In doing so, it will examine the appellant's original written grounds for appeal, as submitted in writing to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, and the response denying that appeal. The Committee will confine itself to the question of whether the grounds stated in the original appeal were given adequate consideration. New evidence beyond what was submitted in the original appeal will only be heard if the appellant can demonstrate both that it was unavailable at the time of the original appeal and that it is of substantial importance to the outcome of the case. The Chair of the FAC shall have sole discretion in deciding if new evidence will be accepted or considered.

For information about hearings of the FAC refer to the document Composition and Procedures of the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee, which is available from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office and on the Faculty of Science website.

#### XI Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee (FPRC)

The FPRC hears appeals of Practicum Intervention decisions made by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate on delegated authority of the Dean. For information about hearings of the FPRC refer to the document Composition and Procedures of the Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee, which is available from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office and on the Faculty of Science website.

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