

# ACADEMIC DECISIONS AND APPEALS

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Various types of academic decisions may be made by a course professor, Program Director, Academic Progress Committee, Academic Integrity Panel, Academic Appeals Committee and/or the University Student Appeal Board.

The appeals process at Queen's University is comprised of several levels of appeal by different appeal bodies. In accordance with the Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights and Discipline, the decision system is based on the principle that "decisions should generally be made by those who are most familiar with the context"<sup>1</sup>.

Appeals of academic decisions fall into four possible categories: appeals of grades (Section 6.1), appeals of other academic decisions (Section 6.2), appeals of academic standing and progression decisions (Section 6.3), and appeals of academic integrity decisions (Section 6.4).

<sup>1</sup> Student Academic Appeals Policy (<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/student-academic-appeals-policy/>), Introduction (p. 4).

Note that it is the student's responsibility to clearly establish that grounds for an appeal exist as the basis for an appeal. Below the various decision-making bodies and their mandates are explained.

## Appeals of Grades

Grades are determined by course professors. Appeals of grades in courses (including assignments, examination papers, and final grades) are first handled at the course professor level.

Examination papers and course marks of students whose final grade in a course is marginally below a letter grade, and especially below a failing grade, are reviewed with special care by faculty members before such grades are assigned. Therefore it is unlikely that such a grade is incorrect or unfair to the student. However, if a student feels that a course grade or a portion of it has been unfairly assessed, they should first make an attempt to resolve the issue informally with the professor.

If the student feels that the issue remains unresolved, they should contact the Program Director who will initiate a formal grade review. A review of the assignment or examination shall be conducted by two examiners appointed by the Program Director or designate; one examiner shall be the original professor or grader, if available. The review shall involve a

re-reading of the final examination or deliverable(s) in the course and a review of the student's course record.

Requests for reconsideration of a course grade must be accompanied by payment of a fee of \$100. This fee will be refunded to the student if, as a result of the review, a failing grade is raised to a pass or if a pass is raised by as much as five marks or to a higher letter grade. Note that it is the responsibility of the student to preserve all exercises, papers, reports, and other graded material for the course and to submit a copy of these documents with the request for review. The scanned copy of any graded assignment or material returned to a student shall be deemed to be the original document for the purposes of this section.

The decision of the examiner(s) is final, and there is no further appeal available.

## Appeals of Other Academic Decisions

The Program Director makes some decisions for students facing special circumstances in the Program. The student should request consideration as appropriate to the Program Director as soon as they are aware of a situation requiring such consideration. Examples of such decisions could include: changing a course registration from one elective to another, or deferring an exam.

Appeals of decisions by the Program Director are made to the Academic Progress Committee.

## Appeals of Academic Standing and Progression Decisions

Students are considered to be in Good Academic Standing unless they have violated one or more of the Academic Regulations of the Program. As noted, students who violate one or more of the Academic Regulations of the Program are normally required to withdraw from the Program. In such a case, the Program Director will normally inform the student in writing that, because of their violation of one or more of the Regulations, they are required to withdraw from the Program.

Appeals of these decisions are made to the Academic Progress Committee.

*See Appendix A/B for the Academic Progress Committee's Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.*



## Appeals of Academic Integrity Decisions

Course professors will normally investigate and make decisions regarding possible violations of academic integrity in their courses in accordance with the Smith School of Business Academic Integrity Policy ([https://smith.queensu.ca/\\_templates/documents/general/Policy%20-%20School%20of%20Business%20Academic%20Integrity%20-%20updated%20Aug%202015.pdf](https://smith.queensu.ca/_templates/documents/general/Policy%20-%20School%20of%20Business%20Academic%20Integrity%20-%20updated%20Aug%202015.pdf)) and as set out in Section 5.1.

Appeals of professors' decisions regarding academic integrity are made to the Academic Integrity Panel.

In cases where the Academic Integrity Panel is the initial decision maker, appeals are made to the Academic Appeals Committee.

## The Academic Appeals Committee

The Smith School of Business Academic Appeals Committee (AAC) has jurisdiction over all matters related to academic appeals involving students registered in the School of Business (with the exception of the PhD and Master of Science programs). The AAC hears appeals of decisions made by Academic Progress Committee and the Academic Integrity Panel.

Normally, the AAC serves as a true appeal board, which is not empowered to substitute its own decision for that of the Academic Progress Committee or the Academic Integrity Panel, but rather reviews the decision of the previous decision-making body based on the same information<sup>1</sup> available to the previous body at the time the decision was made<sup>2</sup>.

The AAC reviews the circumstances of the decision of the previous decision-maker to: ensure that the Academic Progress Committee or the Academic Integrity Panel did not exceed its jurisdiction; ensure that there was procedural fairness; ensure that there was appropriate consideration of extenuating circumstances; uphold the academic policies and principles reflected in the School's and University's regulations; and determine if the decision was reasonable.

In rendering a decision, the AAC may uphold the decision of the previous body, grant the student's appeal, or modify the original decision/sanction. Any decision made by the AAC must be within the scope of the School's regulations.

Appeals of decisions made by the AAC are made to the University Student Appeal Board.

<sup>1</sup> In situations where new evidence becomes available which may have, or is likely to have, affected the original decision of the previous decision-maker (i.e. the APC or the AIP), the

AAC may refer those cases back to the previous decision-maker.

<sup>2</sup> Where the Academic Integrity Panel (AIP) was the initial decision-maker, the AAC will investigate an Academic Integrity case *de novo*.

## The University Student Appeal Board

Students wishing to appeal a decision by the Academic Appeals Committee must make their intention known to the University Student Appeal Board (USAB). The University Student Appeal Board is the final internal appeal body at Queen's University. Its mandate is outlined in the Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights and Discipline (SARD).

The decision of the USAB is final, and there is no further level of appeal.

## Queen's University Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights, and Discipline

All students should be familiar with their rights as established in the Student Academic Appeals Policy (<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/student-academic-appeals-policy/>).

## Appeals at Partner Institutions

Appeals of academic decisions at partner, exchange and double degree institutions are subject to the policies and procedures at those universities. Students should note that Queen's has no jurisdiction, or ability to influence, partner exchange or double degree universities in these matters.