



Approving University Official(s): Provost
Responsible Offices: Registrar; Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities
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[Student Grievances and Appeals Procedures]

Purpose

These procedures implement the Student Grievances and Appeals Policy

Audience

These procedures apply to all students at Yorkville University.

Procedures

Student Grievances and Appeals – Right to Appeal

Where there are grounds for doing so, students have the right to appeal any decision by any faculty member, committee, or administrator at the University/School. Decisions that are appealable might be made under any one of a number of University/School policies, including, but not limited to, those policies governing harassment and discrimination, anti-violence, credit transfer, leaves of absence, advanced standing, withdrawal from a course or program, grading, academic integrity and honesty, professional suitability and ethics, academic standing (including probation), and academic dismissal. Because appeals can come only from students, decisions relating to admission to academic programs are not appealable.

A. Grounds for Appeal

Dissatisfaction with University policy, unhappiness with the outcome of a decision, and technicalities that do not materially affect a decision are not sufficient grounds for appeal. Students appealing decisions must provide argument and evidence addressing one or more of the following grounds for appeal:

- Procedure: Procedures were not correctly followed in making the decision. For example:

- University policy was incorrectly interpreted and applied;
- There was a fundamental procedural error seriously prejudicial to the student;
- The decision maker erred in interpreting the facts or assessing the evidence.
- Student rights: The decision process or the decision infringed on the rights that the University guarantees to the student, including rights identified under the Academic Freedom policy and the Harassment and Discrimination policy;
- Natural justice: The decision-making process was not consistent with the generally understood principles of procedural fairness (natural justice). These include:
 - Right to be heard: the student did not have a fair opportunity to present their case to an appropriate body of forum, via an appeal or other means;
 - Freedom from bias: The decision maker was not impartial;
 - Evidence-based decision-making:
 - The decision was not based on evidence, but on speculation or suspicion; and/or
 - The decision was not communicated in a way that made clear what evidence was used in making the decision.
- Medical: An unforeseen medical condition affected the student's ability to meet their academic obligations.
- Compassion: Events and circumstances beyond control of the student seriously impaired the student's ability to meet their academic obligations.

B. Types of Grievances and Appeals

The University has established procedures related to grade appeals, academic standing appeals, non-academic misconduct appeals, and academic misconduct and professional suitability appeals. These procedures are approved by the Provost's Academic Cabinet and are available from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or the Registrar's Office and can be downloaded at <https://myyu.ca/osrr/>.

Any decision by any faculty member, committee, or administrator may be appealed if there are grounds for doing so. Without limiting this general right of appeal, the most common types of academic appeals are identified below.

Academic Results Appeals

Grade appeals, requests for reassessment: When a student believes an instructor erred in assessing a piece of the student's course work, the following steps will be followed:

- Informal resolution: The student will discuss the matter with the instructor, giving

reasons for believing the assessment to be wrong. If the instructor agrees that an error was made, the grade will be changed. If the instructor concludes that an error was not made, the original grade will stand.

- **Reassessment:** If, after discussion with the instructor, the student continues to believe the instructor's assessment was wrong, they may request through the Registrar's Office a formal one-time re-assessment of the original work submitted. Such requests must identify where and/or how the instructor erred, in the student's opinion. The Registrar's Office will convey the request for re-assessment to the Academic Head (or designate) of the program in which the student is enrolled. The Academic Head (or designate) will ask another appropriately qualified instructor or faculty member to assess a clean copy of the student's work that is in question (i.e., the original work submitted by the student, but free of any instructor's comments or grades). When possible, the work will also be anonymized; i.e., the student's name and other personally identifiable information should be redacted. The grade assigned by the instructor asked to reassess the work will be the final grade and may be higher or lower than the original grade assigned. (Note that if the assignment had previously been assessed a penalty, such as for late submission, that penalty will still apply to the re-graded assignment.)

Right to appeal: The results of a formal reassessment are final and cannot be appealed.

Other grade appeals: If a student wishes to appeal a grade on an assignment for a reason other than instructor error (e.g., illness or compassion), the following steps will be followed. (Note that grade appeals based on illness, compassion, or similar grounds are not normally addressed by requesting a re-assessment of work. The usual appeal argument is that an unexpected medical, compassionate, or other event prevented the student from meeting the requirements of the assignment and the normal solutions sought are permission to re-submit the assignment or to have a late assignment accepted for assessment.)

- **Informal resolution:** The student will discuss the matter with the instructor, explaining why they are appealing the grade and what outcome they want. If the instructor agrees to accommodate the student's request, they will take appropriate steps to do so.
- **Appeal through the Registrar's Office:** The student can file a formal appeal through the Registrar's Office, providing documentation, evidence, and argument addressing one or more of the grounds for appeal set out above and specifying the remedy sought (which must be something other than reassessment of the work). The Registrar's Office will present the matter to the Academic Head (or designate) responsible for the program in which the student is enrolled. (If the Academic Head (or designate) is also the instructor who submitted the grade being appealed, the Registrar's Office will present the matter to the Academic Head's (or designate's) immediate superior.) The Academic Head may conclude that there are no grounds for the appeal and inform the student that the grade(s) assigned by the instructor will stand or may provide the outcome sought by the student or another outcome consistent with university policy and principles of fairness.

Right to appeal: If, after the Academic Head has given a grade appeal decision to the Registrar, the student believes there are still grounds to appeal the grade (see grounds for appeal, above), they may present a case, through the Registrar, to the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct Appeals, which will review the file and render a decision upholding, overturning, or modifying the Academic Head's decision. The appeal committee's decision will be communicated by letter to the student, the instructor, and the Academic Head. The decision of the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct Appeals is final and cannot be appealed.

Grade appeals and requests for reassessment after a course has ended: Some programs allow students to file grade appeals only after a course has ended. In such cases, the procedures described above are followed, with the following additional steps:

- Students are normally required to submit a request for reassessment or an academic appeal to the Registrar's Office within two days of the release of the final course grades. Note, however, that the Registrar's Office may extend the deadline for submission of the written appeal to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the student.
- Pending the outcome of the reassessment or appeal, the Registrar's Office will record an "incomplete" on the student's record.

Academic Standing Appeals

In the event that the Registrar notifies a student that they are not in good academic standing and have been placed on academic probation or academically dismissed, the following steps will be followed:

- Within two (2) business days of having been notified by the Registrar that they are not in good academic standing, the student may appeal the decision by writing to the Registrar providing documentation, evidence, and argument to support the appeal. Such documentation, evidence, and argument must address one or more of the grounds for appeal set out above. The Registrar will present the student's appeal to the head of the academic program in which the student is enrolled, who will review the case in light of the reasons for the student having been placed on probation or academically dismissed. The program head will advise the Registrar whether there are grounds for changing the decision. If, in the opinion of the program head, the decision to place the student on probation or to dismiss the student should stand, the Registrar will notify the student that they may, within two (2) business days, appeal the decision through the Registrar to the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct appeals, which will review the file and render a decision upholding, overturning, or modifying the decision. The Registrar will communicate the Committee's decision and reasons for the decision by email to the student. The decision of the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct Appeals is final and cannot be appealed. Note that the Registrar's Office may extend the deadlines for submission of the written appeals to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the student.

Non-Academic Misconduct Appeals

When a student has been found culpable of a non-academic misconduct, the appeal avenue is determined by who approved the decision and stipulated the penalties and sanctions.

Where the decision was approved by the:

- a) Student Liaison Officer, the decision can be appealed to the Manager, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- b) Professional Suitability Panel, the decision can be appealed to the Standing Committee.
- c) Student Conduct Committee or Provost, the decision can be appealed to the Standing Committee.

Appeals of Academic Misconduct and Professional Suitability

- a) Decisions made under the *Academic Code of Conduct* policy, may be appealed to the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct Appeals in the following circumstances: the processes enumerated in the policy must be exhausted; the appeal is initiated through the Registrar within two (2) business days of the student having been notified of the final decision; the appeal presents documentation, evidence, and argument addressing one or more of the acceptable grounds for appeal as set out above. Note that the Registrar's Office may extend the deadlines for submission of written appeals to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the student.
- b) Decisions made under the *Policy for Assessing Conduct Related to Professional Suitability of Students in the Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology* may be appealed to the Standing Committee on Academic and Student Conduct Appeals in the following circumstances: the processes enumerated in the policy must be exhausted; the appeal is initiated through the Manager of the OSRR within two (2) business days of the student having been notified of the final decision; the appeal presents documentation, evidence, and argument addressing one or more of the acceptable grounds for appeal as set out above. Note that the Manager of the OSRR may extend the deadlines for submission of written appeals to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the student.

Related Information

Student Grievances and Appeals Policy

Contacts

Revision Log

Policy URL: