
Policy Title:	Academic Appeals		
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Policy Statement

University Canada West adheres to principles of administrative law and natural justice. This policy describes mechanisms for students to appeal a decision made about grades or academic disciplinary matters that they believe is unjust or has inappropriate consequences. The policy outlines procedures for students to follow when they wish to dispute those decisions.

Purpose

The purpose of this academic appeals policy is to provide the framework within which students have the right to be heard in a fair and impartial manner regarding academic matters which impact their student record, academic standing, and/or academic continuance within the University. The decisions eligible for academic appeal include the imposition of academic decisions that may range from grade changes for assignments and final marks, plus penalties imposed for academic misconduct.

Scope

All members of the University community are expected to use informal reviews as the preferred method to resolve disputes as close to the decision point as possible. Only in circumstances where a resolution is not reached through informal review shall the student initiate a formal appeal.

All notices to students about decisions which impact their academic standing at UCW must include notice of the right to appeal.

Every student must adhere to the highest standards of scholarly integrity. Academic dishonesty and engaging in behaviours that are in breach of, or otherwise seek to abuse the University's academic integrity are serious offences and are not tolerated. Students discovered to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including plagiarism, cheating, and falsifying materials, are subject to academic penalties.

Students who have had sanctions imposed as a result of grading decisions or alleged academic misconduct, and who are dissatisfied with the decisions must follow the designated processes for review or appeal. At each level of appeal, the student must provide a written basis for the appeal.

The grade determined by means of a review or appeal will be recorded as the final official grade and may be equal to, lower than, or higher than the original.

Faculty, Deans, and Program Chairs must provide complete documentation on cases of academic misconduct, including date, modes of communication, particulars of the offence, penalty imposed, a clearly articulated rationale for their decision, and remediation actions if appropriate. They must also provide a copy of the complete written documentation to the Registrar's Office for the student's file.

Academic Council delegates to the Appeals Committee the authority and responsibility to decide, on behalf of Academic Council, all formal academic appeals from students. The role of the Appeals Committee is to determine if:

- There was unfairness in the previous decisions and/or sanctions;
- The penalty imposed was inappropriate; or
- New evidence is presented that was not available previously and which casts doubt on the accuracy of the findings.

Types of Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism: includes, but is not limited to:

- Submission of another person's work as original;
- Inadequate attribution given to an author or creator whose work is incorporated in the student's work; and
- Paraphrase or use of material verbatim from a source without sufficient acknowledgement.

Falsifying Materials: includes, but is not limited to:

- Fraudulently manipulating laboratory processes, electronic data, or research data in order to achieve desired results;
- Submitting work prepared by someone else (e.g., commercially prepared essays) as one's own;
- Citing a source from which material was not obtained; and
- Submitting false records, information or data, in writing or orally.

Cheating : includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting the same work for different courses without prior permission from the faculty member;
- Copying another person's answers or other work;
- Sharing information or answers when doing take-home assignments, tests, and examinations except where the instructor has authorized collaborative work;
- Having any unauthorized materials or equipment in an examination or test;
- Submitting an assignment completed (or partially completed) by someone else;
- Falsifying or making up data or bibliographic information;
- Impersonating a candidate in an examination or test, or being assigned the results of such impersonation;
- Reproducing, sharing or otherwise making unauthorized copies of UCW materials in any format;
- Using technological means such as cell phones, data storage units, and other electronic devices during examination without prior permission from the faculty; and
- Assisting others or attempt to help others to engage in any conduct described above or any other activities prohibited by UCW.

Penalties for Academic Misconduct

Penalties for academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- At the course level:
 - Written reprimand for retention in the student file (no transcript entry)
 - Repetition of the assignment or completion of a different, but similar, assignment (no transcript entry)
 - Failing grade for the assignment (no transcript entry)
 - Failing grade for the course (recorded on transcript)
- At the program level:
 - Disciplinary probation for a defined period with written documentation retained in the student's file (transcript notation for period of probation)
- At the University level:
 - Suspension (permanent transcript entry)
 - Expulsion (permanent transcript entry)

- Rescission of degrees granted (permanent transcript entry)

Review Process

Mathematical marking errors will be corrected without a formal appeal. Examination papers graded 'F' are automatically read a second time before grades are recorded.

Requests for review based on documented illness or compassionate grounds will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If, in the student's opinion, the decision and/or penalty of the faculty member is unjust, the student must first discuss the assigned grade or misconduct issue with the faculty member no later than 7 days after the decision. The faculty member shall document the decision, including the rationale and facts upon which it is made.

If, in the student's opinion, a decision of the faculty member is unjust, the student may then submit a written request for a formal review to the Dean or Program Chair, stating in writing the grounds for believing that the grade awarded should be adjusted. The appeal must be submitted within 7 days from the date of faculty member's final decision. The Dean or Program Chair completes the review within 7 days of receipt of the request for the formal review and makes a decision on the appeal to either uphold, modify, or rescind the original decision. The Dean or Program Chair provides the student with a written decision including the rationale and facts upon which it is made, with a copy to the Registrar for the student's record.

The student has the right to be accompanied by another student when appealing to the Dean.

Appeal Process

If the student believes the decision of or sanction imposed by the Dean or Program Chair is unjust, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the Appeals Committee. The student must submit the appeal to the Registrar's Office within 30 days of notice of the written decision or disciplinary action taken by the Dean or Program Chair.

The Appeals Committee reviews the process by which the academic decision was made, not the academic decision itself (refer to the Appeals Committee Terms of Reference in the Appendix).

The appeal must include:

- The date of submission and a summary of the decision(s) made and the name(s) and role(s) of the person making the decision(s);
- A clear, precise statement of the decision(s) being appealed;
- The reasons the student believes the appeal should be heard; and
- The remedy or relief the student is seeking.

An appeal may be dismissed by reason of delay if it is over 30 days from the date of notice of decision of the Dean or Chair.

The Vice President Academic and Student Services shall review the appeal submission within 5 working days to ensure it is complete, and not frivolous or vexatious. If its merit is upheld, the Vice President Academic and Student Services requests the Chair of Academic Council to appoint an Appeals Committee.

The student has the right to be accompanied by another student when appealing to the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee will normally convene within 14 days of appointment of the Committee. The Committee considers the appeal in relation to the fairness in the previous decisions and/or sanctions.

The Appeals Committee renders a decision and either upholds, modifies, or rescinds the original decision. The Chair of the Committee provides the appellant with a written decision via the Registrar, including the rationale and facts upon which it is made, with a copy of all documentation to the Registrar for the student's record. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding.

All communications from the Appeals Committee to an appellant will be confirmed clearly and in writing, with the documentation retained by the Registrar's Office.

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Word/Term	Definition
Appeal	An official and written request by the appellant for a formal review of decisions and/or sanctions imposed by the University
Review	An informal yet studied and careful examination of the facts pertaining to the situation
Sanction	A formal penalty or restriction imposed on the student as a result of inappropriate behaviours, the severity of which vary according to the specifics of the offence
Work	Includes written material; laboratory, computer, or mathematical exercises; musical or art works; oral reports; group reports and presentations; audio-visual or taped presentations; material in any other medium submitted to an instructor for grading purposes

Related legislation

Related policies

Policy Number	Policy Title
5002	Turnitin
9007	Admissions
9010	Misrepresentation of Student Documentation
9011	Appeals for Non-Academic Discipline

Responsibility

Academic Council establishes a final appeal forum for academic appeals.

The Chair of Academic Council appoints an Appeals Committee when required.

Students are responsible for ensuring they understand what constitutes plagiarism, and for consulting faculty, a Writing Coach, or the University Librarian for advice and clarification. Students are also responsible for familiarizing themselves with UCW policies and expectations regarding academic conduct and integrity.

Students are responsible for deciding whether to appeal a decision or to abide by the sanctions imposed. They are also responsible for assembling and submitting all required documentation within the time limits.

Faculty are responsible for identifying and reporting academic misconduct to the Dean or Program Chair.

Faculty are responsible for reviewing grades upon request by students. Faculty are also responsible for automatically conducting reviews for all failing grades assigned.

The Dean or Program Chair is responsible for conducting formal reviews on request by students and for providing written decisions to both the student and to the Registrar's Office for the record. The Dean or Program Chair is responsible for providing complete and factual documentation on the review, including a considered decision with penalties specified (if any).

The Vice President Academic and Student Services reviews the appeal to ensure it is complete, and is not frivolous or vexatious and for requesting the Chair of Academic Council to constitute an Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee is responsible for considering the cases of students who have filed a formal appeal of academic conduct decisions. The Committee is responsible for rendering an objective decision about the appeal, including specific sanctions, if any, and in advising the appellant of the outcome via the Registrar.

The Chair of the Committee is responsible for documenting the process and outcomes, including providing clearly articulated reasons for their decision to uphold, modify or rescind sanctions and in advising the Registrar of the outcome.

The Registrar is responsible for communicating the Appeals Committee decision to the student. The Registrar is also responsible for advising the Chair of Academic Council of the appeal results. The Registrar is responsible for retaining all records related to appeals and for destroying materials returned by the Committee. The Registrar keeps any correspondence as part of the student's permanent record. The Registrar is the sole custodian of the record of an appeal.

The Registrar provides Academic Council with an annual report on all appeals.