



**UPEI
SU**

*your voice...
...your union*

**Student Appeal Guidebook
2020-2021**

Table of Contents

1. General Considerations	3
2. General Timelines	4
3. Specific Timelines According to Faculty	5
4. Types of resolutions	7
5. Informal resolutions	8
6. Formal appeals	
Grade reconsideration	9
Complaints against an instructor	12
Academic Dishonesty	14
Examinations	15
Academic Probation/Suspension	16
Expulsion	16
7. Board of Governors Appeals	17
8. Harassment/ Discrimination	18
9. Sexual Violence	19
10. Contact	19

General Considerations

When dealing with an academic grievance of any kind, there are certain considerations to keep in mind.

TIMELINES

Action must be taken in a timely manner. In a lot of circumstances, there are time limits as to the validity of a grievance as per the policies and governing documents of the University. If there is an issue, action should be sought in a way that is as prompt as possible.

DOCUMENTS

To set yourself up for success, it is imperative that documents be prepared as appropriate. This can include paper trails of emails, letters of support, additional evidence, etc.

HONESTY

This one might seem a little obvious, but stay truthful. Any omissions are easily detectable by the relevant people, as these processes may include interviews and different points of view by a number of people.

ESCALATION

Appeals and grievances are an immensely stressful process, and the higher up the body you are appealing to, the more extensive and time-consuming that process will be for the student. As much as possible, trying to work up the chain of command is preferable as a resolution may be reached before being subject to committees.

SUPPORT

Due to how time consuming some processes might be, it might be tempting to give up sometimes. Students should ensure they have a support system in place to help them throughout the process.

General Timelines

An Academic Regulations Appeal Form must be attached to most appeals. The form is available online, if you have any difficulty finding it, please contact

vpax@upeisu.ca or
academiccoordinator@
upeisu.ca

INFORMAL APPEALS

Appeals made to the instructor regarding grade reconsideration or any concerns regarding the course and/or course material.

Timeline: *Within 20 business days of the instructor's decision.*

FORMAL APPEALS¹

Appeals filed when the student is dissatisfied with the instructor's decision.

- a. Appeal to the **Chair** of the department: Within **5 business days** of the instructor's decision.
- b. Appeal to the **Dean** of the department: Within **10 business days** of the Chair's decision.
- c. Appeal to the **Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee**: Within **20 business days** of the Dean's decision.
- d. Appeal to the **Board of Governors**: Appeal filed if the student is dissatisfied with the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee's decision.

¹ UPEI Calendar 2020-2021. (2020). Undergraduate Academic Regulations. Retrieved from <https://calendar.upei.ca/current/chapter/undergraduate-and-professional-programs-academic-regulations/>

Specific Timelines According To Faculty

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICAL AND COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCES²

- If the student is dissatisfied with the decision made by the instructor (informal appeal). A formal appeal must be made to the **Associate Dean** within **one week** of the instructor's decision.
- The School of Mathematical and Computational Sciences has a separate appeals form that is available online. Please contact vpax@upeisu.ca or academiccoordinator@upeisu.ca if you have any difficulty finding it.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

- Appeal to the **instructor**: Within **20 business days** of grade assignment.
- Appeal to the **Chair** of the department:
Within **5 business days** of the instructor's decision.
- Appeal to the **Dean** of the department:
Within **10 business days** of the Chair's decision.
- Appeal to the **Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee**: Within **20 business days** of the Dean's decision.
- Appeal to the **Board of Governors**: Appeal filed if the student is dissatisfied with the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee's decision.
- The **Department of Biology** has a separate appeals form that is available online. Please contact vpax@upeisu.ca or academiccoordinator@upeisu.ca if you have any difficulty finding it.

²UPEI School of Mathematical and Computation Sciences Procedure for Academic Appeals. (2017, April 3). Retrieved from https://files.upei.ca/science/mathcompsci/smcs_academic_appeal_policy.pdf

Specific Timelines According To Faculty

Please note that not all Faculties/Departments have specific separate procedures, thus, if your department/faculty is not listed above, please follow the procedure under GENERAL TIMELINES.

FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

INFORMAL APPEALS

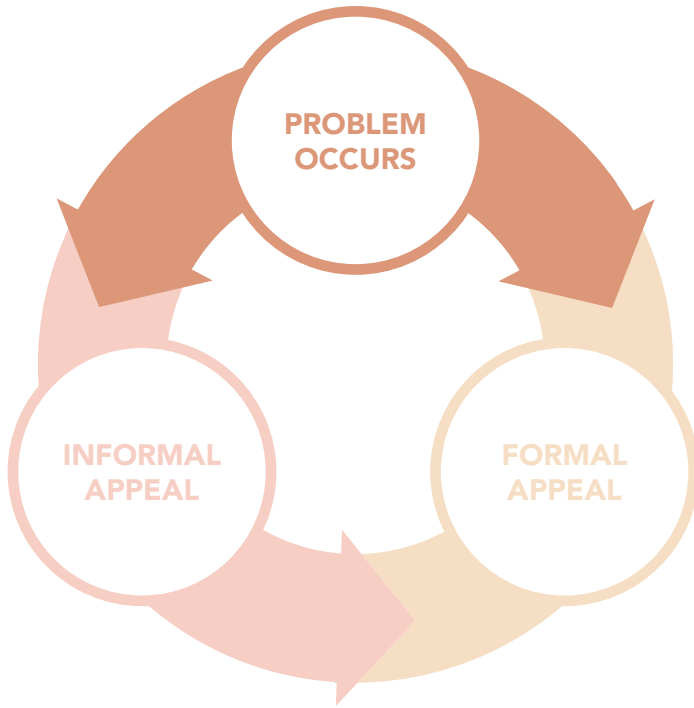
Any request to have coursework re-evaluated. This appeal must be made to the **instructor** or **Department Chair** within **one week** of the grade being issued.

FORMAL APPEALS

Filed when the disagreement regarding grade cannot be resolved by an informal appeal.

- [Stage #1] Appeal made through the **Registrar's Office** with a copy to the **Department Chair**: Within **one week** after the informal appeal process has been concluded. The Instructor will respond to the student within one week of receiving notification.
- [Stage #2] The student must communicate their dissatisfaction (in writing) to the **Chair of the Department**: Within **24 hours** of meeting with the instructor.
- If no resolution is found in Stage #2, they can further appeal to the **Dean of AVC**: Within **one week** of the department's decision.
- The student can further appeal to the **Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee** through the Registrar: Within **one week** following the decision of the Dean.
- The **Faculty of Veterinary Medicine** has a separate appeals policy document that is available online. Please contact vpax@upeisu.ca or academiccoordinator@upeisu.ca if you have any difficulty finding it.

Types of Resolutions



Based on the problem encountered, a formal or informal resolution may be sought.

An **INFORMAL RESOLUTION** is more appropriate for lower-stakes issues, including grade changes, or accommodations for a course, or other issues.

A **FORMAL RESOLUTION** should be pursued for higher stakes academic issues, including academic dishonesty, probation or suspensions.

*It is also possible to start with an informal process and move to a formal one should a satisfactory outcome not be received. This is in line with the escalation principle, where issues are addressed in the less taxing way first before moving on to a more structured one.

In some cases, however, students might prefer to skip over the informal process and go straight to the formal process. This might be because of poor relationships with an instructor, or degree of comfort.

5 Informal Resolutions

If students face any issues with an instructor, in terms of course content, grades, teaching methods, accommodations, or other areas, the easiest way to address this is to seek an informal resolution:

1. Reaching out to the instructor personally, explaining the issue and seeking explanations or accommodations.
Often, an informal resolution will be reached at this stage.
2. Should a resolution not be reached here, then a formal appeal can be commenced with the Chair of the department, or in programs with no departments, the Dean of the appropriate faculty.

Informal resolutions are preferred by students and instructors for a number of reasons:

1. Relationships are better maintained between both parties
2. Reluctance to involve third-parties

A. GRADING RECONSIDERATION - *Undergraduate*

Should students feel they have been graded incorrectly for a certain assignment or course, you should firstly reach out to the instructor to seek a reconsideration for the grade. Typically, as per UPEI's Academic Regulation 17.12.3,

An informal appeal must first be made to the instructor within **20 business days** of receipt of the grade. For professional programs and the Faculty of Business, see Faculty/School's policy/procedures, which may impose different requirements, and override, this section.

If a resolution is not reached at this informal level, a formal written appeal must be made within **5 business days** of the instructor's decision to the **Chair** of the Department, or in departments without a Chair, to the Dean.

FOR DEPARTMENTS WITH A CHAIR:

1. The Chair will provide students with the appeals procedure specific to the Faculty/school
2. The Chair's decision may be appealed within **10 business days** to the Dean of the Faculty.

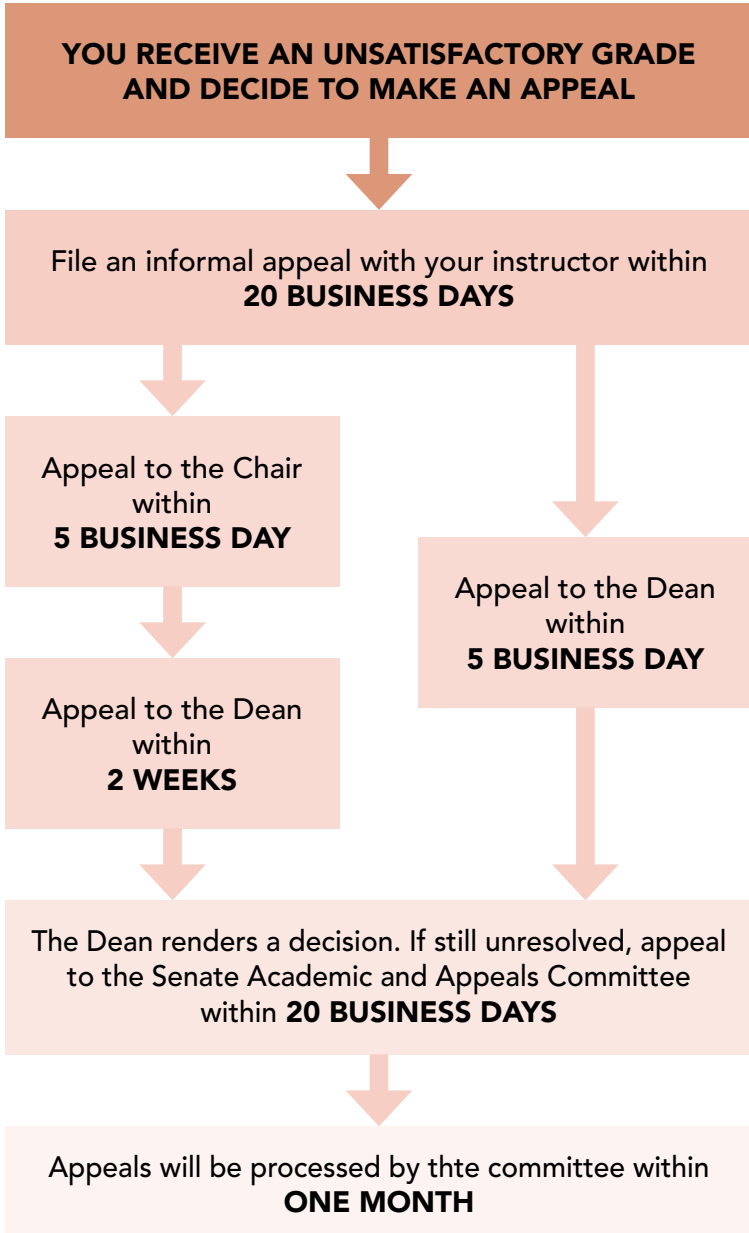
FOR APPEALS TO THE DEAN:

1. The Dean will provide students with a copy of appeals procedures specific to the faculty/ school.
2. The Dean will establish a committee to investigate the appeal (through individual interviews, document analysis).
3. The committee will make a recommendation to the Dean, who will make a final decision and inform the student.

If a satisfactory resolution is still not reached, for final course grades, a written appeal may be made to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee within 20 business days of the Dean's decision.

Formal Resolutions

A. GRADING RECONSIDERATION - *Undergraduate*



A. GRADING RECONSIDERATION - *Graduate*

For graduate appeals, a similar process is followed.

An appeal to have an exam re-graded must be made in writing to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Committee within a month of results being obtained.

What to include in a grade appeal?

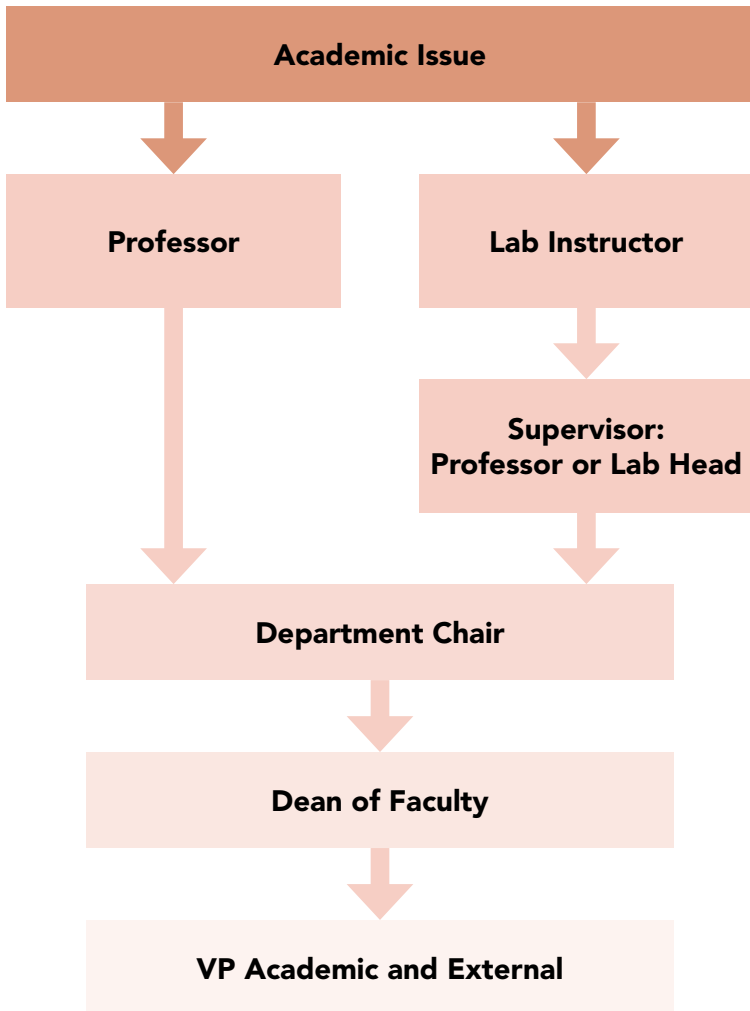
1. **YOUR NAME, THE INSTRUCTOR'S NAME AND THE COURSE CODE**
2. **A PERSONAL STATEMENT EXPLAINING:**
 - a. The circumstances of your grade (did you have extenuating family circumstances? Were you sick for part of the semester?)
 - b. How the circumstances impacted your performance/ why you think the grade is unfair
 - c. What this grade means for you and your academic journey (is this going to set you back a semester for graduation?)
 - d. What would be a favourable outcome for you? (Regrading the exam/ assignment in question? Having the chance to write an assignment or test for extra credit?)
3. **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**
 - a. Doctor's notes where applicable
 - b. Email exchanges and paper trails with the instructor that might outline your circumstance
 - c. Any and all documentation you have
4. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**
 - a. From classmates: Have you helped anyone with an assignment which thus reflects your abilities? Did you have a group project together?
 - b. From support systems: Did you use the writing centre for an assignment? Have your roommates or friends seen you struggle and ask the instructor for assistance? Did you require a counsellor's services on campus?

*There is no such thing as too much information.
Successful appeals rely on the details, a full description of the story,
and your ability to make a case in your favour.*

Formal Resolutions

B. COMPLAINT AGAINST AN INSTRUCTOR - *General*

If students are facing an issue with a professor, lab instructor or other person of authority which is not related to academic standing or grades, the chain of command should be followed.



Going up the chain of command allows for a gradual escalation, as well as transparency in the process.

B. COMPLAINT AGAINST AN INSTRUCTOR

- *Graduate Students: Issues with Supervisors*

The student-supervisor relationship is one that varies between student-supervisor duos. Should a student face issues with their supervisor, they are encouraged to follow the chain of command as well as explore other avenues:

1. Bringing up issues at the level of the supervisory committee overseeing the student
2. Addressing concerns with the Chair of the Department or the Dean of the Faculty
3. If the concern is with regards to harassment or discrimination, a Fair Treatment investigation may be launched with the university's Board of Governors.

Formal Resolutions

C. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes:

1. Plagiarism, defined by UPEI's Academic Regulations as "when a student submits or presents work of another person in such a manner as to lead the reader to believe that it is the student's original work; submission of work previously submitted for academic credit without prior approval of the professor."
2. Cheating, defined as "attempting to secure a grade for yourself or others by unethical means"
3. Falsifying records or submitting false documents
4. Tampering with or damaging university resources
5. Other academic misconduct

TO APPEAL THESE ACCUSATIONS, students must make an appeal directly to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee within 15 days of the decision made by the instructor or other relevant personnel.

Here, the appeal must include relevant documentation and supporting evidence:

1. A personal statement reflecting the circumstances leading up to the incident
2. Letters of reference/ support/ other justification
3. Evidence of remorse and self-improvement. This may include
 - a. Letters stating student has undergone training regarding the offense (such as plagiarism)
 - b. Description of structures and supports set in place by the student to ensure further recurrences are prevented

Since academic dishonesty is considered to be a more serious offense, students are encouraged to ensure their documentation is thorough and no details are omitted when preparing for their appeals.

D. EXAMINATIONS

Special Accommodations

Should students require particular accommodations to be made under exceptional circumstances, they must make a request to the instructor prior to the scheduled exam. They must explain their situation as well as why they will not be able to attend the original date.

Missed Examinations

Students must write to the Registrar within 48 hours of the missed examination and submit documentation explaining the absence from the exam. The Registrar, along with the instructor, Department Chair or Dean will consider requests on a case-by-case basis and determine whether the student will be allowed to write the examination and when.

Quizzes outside of class time

Should an instructor schedule an exam outside of class time and a schedule conflict ensue, students are encouraged to reach out to the instructor to inform them of this so that proper accommodations can be made.

Material on exams not covered in classes

This would be considered a general academic grievance, and would follow a similar procedure as for a grade appeal.

Formal Resolutions

E. PROBATION/SUSPENSION

1. Probation

If a student is on academic probation they should follow the following procedures:

1. To have the probation lifted, students should appeal to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee within 15 days of being placed under probation
2. To request special permission to take more than three courses a semester, students must reach out to the Registrar as well as to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee.

In both of these cases, students must clearly outline:

1. The circumstances leading to poor academic standing
2. Why academic probation is not a feasible option for them/ why they absolutely need to take more than 3 courses
3. What support they have set up to ensure that you remain in good academic standing.

The statement may be supplemented by the appropriate documentation, letters of support, and other materials as required.

2. Suspension

To appeal a suspension due to extended probation, students must file an appeal with the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee within 15 business days of being suspended.

Here, in addition to information that would be included in a probation appeal, it is imperative for students to outline any extenuating situations or incidents that would lead to a continued bad academic standing and how they plan to improve their standing going forward.

F. EXPULSIONS

Expulsions may occur due to a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

1. Violations of student code of conduct
2. Improper conduct on professional placements
3. Academic dishonesty

Since expulsions are typically reflections of more serious or continued issues, students are encouraged to seek out additional help in preparing documentation and statements. This may be available through the office of the VPAX of the UPEI Student Union, as well as through certain faculty and staff members.

Board of Governors Appeals

While most appeals usually get resolved at the level of the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee, there is a last level where students can file an appeal.

This can be done if:

- there was a fundamental procedural error seriously prejudicial to the Appellant; or
- there was clear evidence of bias in a hearing or decision; or
- significant new information relevant to the case that was not available through diligence prior to the decision has been discovered; or
- the severity of the penalty imposed substantially exceeds the nature of the offence for reasons identified by the appellant; or
- there was a clear denial of natural justice.

Students must clearly demonstrate one or more of the above conditions have been met when appealing to the Board of Governors. Here, a committee is set up after receipt of an appeal by a student to hear out the appeal, and a decision is reached.

Harassment or Discrimination

If students face harassment or discrimination on campus, they can seek informal or formal resolutions. Please refer to the Fair Treatment Policy for more details.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

1. If it is an option, students can address the issue with the perpetrator.
2. University staff or faculty may assist in the resolution here. The resolution may involve a meeting, a letter of apology or other action item.
3. If a resolution is not reached, mediation may be sought out and a settlement reached.
4. If no resolution is reached with mediation, a formal investigation may be filed at any time.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

1. If the complainant wants a formal investigation, they should write to the Fair Treatment Officer including accusation and evidence. Should there be sufficient grounds, an investigation will be launched
2. The accused will receive a copy of the complainant's letter and provided the opportunity to respond in writing to accept/deny the accusation, provide additional context, and other information. This response will be provided a copy of this letter.
 - a. If this letter is accepted by the complainant as a resolution, the complaint is considered to be closed.
 - b. If the complainant offers a counter-resolution, the respondent can respond as well. This back and forth may continue until a resolution is reached.
 - c. If the complainant pursues a full investigation, the Fair Treatment Officer will begin this process. Both parties can provide information as required, and relevant witnesses will be interviewed. Parties will be able to provide a response to witness testimony,
 - i. This investigation will be concluded within 40 days and results will be provided by the officer to the University President. This includes recommendations on actions, and the President will make the final decision.
 - ii. Any parties have 10 days to file the appeal with the University President outlining the grounds for the appeal. Two senior administrators will be appointed to assess the ground for appeal
 - iii. If there are grounds, a committee will be struck to hear the appeal. These results will be released and the complaint will conclude.

Students may make a complaint regarding sexual violence by another university community member to the UPEI Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office.

This office will furthermore provide students with supports and accommodations as required in order for them to have access to a safe environment.

The full procedures may be accessed in the ***UPEI Sexual Violence Policy***.

Contact

If in need of any assistance with regards to appeals,
please contact:

MALAK NASSAR

(Vice President Academic and External):
vpax@upeisu.ca

ANAGHA MURALIDHARAN

(Academic Coordinator):
academiccoordinator@upeisu.ca

@upeisu



*your voice...
...your union*