

## Academic Affairs Policy Manual

### General Academic Policy: Student Appeals (Section 4.05-01)

#### Academic Appeals at the University of Georgia

##### Policy

Specific procedures exist at the University of Georgia for students who wish to appeal a decision on an academic matter. At the university level, the Educational Affairs Committee of the University Council considers students' petitions and appeals. Excluded from these procedures is any allegation involving discrimination or harassment in violation of the University of Georgia Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (<http://www.uga.edu/legal/NDAH.htm>) and the University of Georgia Sexual Orientation Policy (<http://www.uga.edu/provost/polproc/aapm/gp/gp411.htm#4113>). Those matters shall be referred to the appropriate office as required by the applicable policy.

The policy and procedures used in the academic appeal process follows.

##### Implementation

The Bylaws of the University Council of the University of Georgia give authority to the Educational Affairs Committee to hear student appeals on academic matters. The Bulletin specifies that the Educational Affairs Committee (EAC) shall have authority to readmit students following second dismissal from the institution. The Bylaws specify that the Committee will hear appeals on academic matters generally and, in addition, have special responsibility for hearing appeals on academic matters emanating from the Division of Academic Enhancement and University Studies and grade appeals from throughout the institution.

The following procedures have been developed since the establishment of the Educational Affairs Committee in 1975. They are organized with respect to the types of appeals assigned to the Educational Affairs Committee.

##### 1. Subcommittee on Petitions

- a. The Educational Affairs Committee processes student appeals through its subcommittee on petitions. This subcommittee has existed since the creation of the Educational Affairs Committee in 1975.
- b. The subcommittee on petitions will be comprised of three faculty members from the EAC. In an emergency situation or during those periods when the members of the subcommittee may be absent from campus, the chairperson or delegate staff member in the Office of the Vice President for Instruction (OVPI) is empowered to confer with one or more members of the entire committee and to render a decision jointly. Such decisions will be reported to the full committee at the next meeting of the EAC.

c. The designated staff member in the OVPI shall assemble the appropriate documents pertaining to the appeal in question and make these available to the committee members prior to the meeting. It is also his/her responsibility to seek legal counsel should it be required.

d. The chairperson will prepare a written response for the student which will include the subcommittee's rationale in reaching its decision.

e. The records of the subcommittee on petitions including the student files and other pertinent materials will be maintained in the OVPI.

## 2. Appeals after Second Dismissal

a. The EAC subcommittee on petitions will hear all such appeals. Additionally, petitions will be reviewed expeditiously at times to be determined by the chairperson. Normally, the subcommittee on petitions will hear appeals once a month.

b. When a petition is received, the designated staff member in the OVPI will assemble the necessary supporting documents, including a recommendation from the dean of the school or college from which the student has been dismissed.

c. Students readmitted after second dismissal are placed on continued probation as defined in the Bulletin.

d. In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the subcommittee, the subcommittee on petitions may hear appeals from students who have not fulfilled the requirement of being absent from the institution for one calendar year.

## 3. Appeals from First Dismissal

Appeals from students who are seeking reinstatement after first dismissal are decided by the dean of the school/college of the student's major. In cases where such an appeal comes to the committee, the same procedures will be followed as are followed regarding second dismissal.

## 4. Appeals from the Division of Academic Enhancement

a. Appeals following dismissal. All appeals for readmission to the University following the dismissal of Developmental Studies students are referred to the EAC subcommittee on petitions. Each case must be considered within the regulations of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Board of Regents presently requires that a dismissed Developmental Studies student not be readmitted to any system institution until at least three years after the dismissal but provides that system institutions may adopt more stringent regulations. By action of the Vice President for Instruction, a Developmental Studies student dismissed from the institution may petition for readmission after remaining out of the University of Georgia for three years. Upon receipt of a petition, the Office of the Vice President for Instruction will seek a recommendation from the Director of Academic Enhancement.

All Developmental Studies students readmitted after dismissal will be placed on scholastic probation and must meet the standards for retention as described in the UGA Bulletin. Students who do not meet these standards are placed on second dismissal from the University.

b. Other academic appeals from the Division of Academic Enhancement. Any other academic appeals from the Division of Academic Enhancement will be heard only after they have been reviewed by the appropriate faculty committee within the Division of Academic Enhancement. They will be treated in the same manner as appeals coming from the schools or colleges.

## 5. Grade Appeals

The EAC subcommittee on petitions considers student grade appeals. The petition of the student should state clearly the grade which the student believes should be assigned to the work or course in question and why that grade is more appropriate than the one which was assigned. Grade appeals should originate in the department in which the course was taken (or in non-departmentalized schools/colleges, in the college/school in which the course was taken). If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at that level, the petition should then be directed to the college/school in which the department is located, except for graduate students, who will appeal any grade in a graduate course from the department or school to the graduate school. Students may appeal decisions of college or free-standing schools to the Educational Affairs Committee.

In all grade appeals, the designated staff member in the OVPI shall request copies of all material reviewed by the college/school committee that reviewed the student's grade appeal. In addition, the faculty member who assigned the student's final grade will receive a copy of the student's letter of appeal and be given the opportunity to provide a response to the appeal for the subcommittee members.

If the faculty member who assigned the student's grade is no longer employed by UGA or if reasonable attempts to contact him/her are unsuccessful, the copy of the student's letter of appeal will be referred to the department head, who will be given the opportunity to provide a response to the appeal on behalf of the department. If the faculty member has left the University, a copy of the Petition Subcommittee decision will be mailed to the department head.

Ordinarily, grades are assigned solely at the discretion of the instructor. A primary criterion for a successful grade appeal is the demonstration either that the grade was the result of a factual error or that it was influenced by improper or unprofessional bias on the part of the instructor. Appeals will follow the Hearing Procedures described in Section 4.05-02 of the General Academic Policy: Student Appeals.

## 6. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a student may request that the custodian of his/her academic record amend the record if the student believes it contains information that is inaccurate or misleading. If the custodian decides not to amend the record as requested, the student may file a petition with the committee to challenge the content of the record.

## 7. Other Academic Appeals and Requests

a. The committee occasionally receives petitions from students concerning waivers of various school/college and University requirements. Cases involving students who have been certified as

disabled by the University of Georgia Learning Disabilities Center will be heard by the subcommittee. These cases frequently involve requests to waive or substitute requirements as a result of the learning disability. All petitions concerning waivers of academic requirements are referred to the petitions subcommittee. The designated staff member in the OVPI is responsible for assembling these files and for seeking recommendations from the appropriate dean.

b. The subcommittee may consider requests from student athletes that they be certified as an "intended major" for purposes of NCAA certification. The request is sent to the Educational Affairs Committee and ordinarily the Office of the Vice President for Instruction processes the student athlete's request in coordination with the dean's office of the student's intended major.

#### 8. Appeals from the USG Independent and Distance Learning Program

Appeals from students in the University System of Georgia Independent and Distance Learning Program are handled in the same manner as are those from other students. Recommendations of these petitions are sought from the Director, Independent Study and Distance Learning Program.

#### 9. Posthumous Degrees

In appropriate circumstances, the University of Georgia may honor an undergraduate student by granting a degree posthumously. This status will be reserved for those students who have made substantial progress toward their degrees as outlined below. The procedure for granting a degree posthumously will be as follows:

a. The deceased student will be recommended for the honor by a faculty member, and the request will be reviewed by the student's major department (or the equivalent). In general, the following guidelines should be used in the departmental review:

- The student earned at least 90 semester hours of credit toward the degree, at least 30 of which were completed at UGA;
- The student had been admitted to the major in which the degree is sought and had earned at least 12 semester hours of upper-division coursework in the major; and,
- The student's University of Georgia (cumulative) grade point average was at least a 2.0 on a scale of 4.0.

By recommending a student for a posthumous degree, the department is agreeing to waive any remaining requirements for graduation.

b. If the request is supported by the student's department, it will be forwarded to the college/school. The appropriate committee or individual in the college/school will consider the merits of the case and determine whether the degree shall be granted. If the request for a degree is granted, the school/college shall notify the Registrar's Office and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. These offices will then ensure that the student's name is included in the next commencement exercises and that the student's family is notified of the granting of the degree.

c. In cases in which the request is not supported all the way through the school/college, the faculty member or department may submit a petition to the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee of University Council to request the granting of the degree. Generally, there

should be extenuating circumstances or additional evidence of accomplishments at UGA that would warrant the granting of the degree when the guidelines above have not been met.

A certificate of attendance shall be issued to the families of deceased students who have attended the University of Georgia but do not meet the qualifications for a posthumous degree. (Approved by University Council February 6, 2003)

#### 10. General Procedures

The EAC subcommittee decision(s) on student petitions shall be transmitted in writing to the student within ten UGA working days after the subcommittee action. A subcommittee's decision can be appealed by the student to the President of the University of Georgia. Such an appeal must be provided to the Office of the President in writing no later than thirty calendar days after the student has received the decision. The information on how to appeal a decision must be transmitted to the student with the written decision. Instructors, department heads, directors, and deans may not appeal decisions made by the Educational Affairs Committee.

#### Source

Bylaws of the University Council of the University of Georgia -- adopted by the Educational Affairs Committee

May 26, 1988; revised March 6, 1989, September 20, 1989, May 29, 1990, March 24, 2000, February 6, 2003, March 29, 2006.

## **General Academic Policy: Student Appeals (Section 4.05-02)**

### **Hearing Procedures - Educational Affairs Committee**

#### **Policy**

A student who petitions the Educational Affairs Committee on an academic matter will have the petition considered by the petitions subcommittee of the full committee. A student who wishes to address the appeals body orally must make the request in the written appeal. The purpose of an oral presentation is to provide an opportunity for individuals who may communicate more effectively orally than in writing to supplement their written appeal. If the student is scheduled to meet with the Subcommittee members, appropriate individuals against which the appeal is directed will be afforded the opportunity to attend the hearing. The letter of petition should state the decision desired by the student and the reasons the student believes that decision is justified. The petition must be signed by the student making the appeal.

When a hearing is to occur on the case, the following rules will apply:

1. The student and all involved parties will be notified of the date, time, and place of the hearing.
2. The hearing will be recorded. Recording equipment will be provided by the Educational Affairs Committee. The recording will be placed in the student file for a period of one year. The student may request to hear the recording to use in any appeal of the petition.
3. Prior to the hearing, the student may review the written material in the file which will be provided to the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee which will hear the case. The material will be available to the student at least 48 hours prior to the hearing. If requested in writing, a copy of the file will be given to the student for appeal purposes.
4. The appeal will be heard by members of the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee. This is a three-person panel comprised of faculty members of the full committee.
5. Faculty members on the Educational Affairs Committee designated as members of the petitions subcommittee will be excused from service on a particular case under the following circumstances:
  - a. If they have a personal or professional relationship with any party to the case which would preclude them from rendering an objective judgment in the case.
  - b. If the case involves a faculty member in the same department or promotion unit as a member of the subcommittee.
  - c. If the case involves an appeal from a department, college, or school committee in which the faculty member has participated.

6. Hearings shall be closed and attended only by essential parties, as determined by the chair of the subcommittee.
7. If an oral hearing is to be held, the chair of the subcommittee will decide whether the student and respondent will appear separately or together. Parties will not be permitted to cross-examine each other during the hearing. Formal legal rules of evidence do not apply in hearings on academic matters.
8. The chair of the subcommittee will determine the order of appearance by the student and other parties including any faculty or other university personnel who are respondents.
9. When the subcommittee has received the information it deems necessary to render a decision in a case, it shall determine by majority vote of the subcommittee members what the decision will be. Only subcommittee members may vote in the decision of a case. The decision will be transmitted in writing to the student within ten (10) working days after the subcommittee action. The subcommittee's decision can be appealed by the student to the President of the University of Georgia. Such an appeal must be provided to the Office of the President in writing no later than (30) calendar days after the student has received the decision of the Petitions Subcommittee.

## **General Academic Policy: Student Appeals (Section 4.05-03)**

### **Routing of Academic Appeals**

#### **Policy**

University of Georgia students have rights to appeal decisions on academic matters. The following information is designed to indicate where to begin appeals and how the appeal process works.

Academic decisions at the University of Georgia may occur at several levels: instructor, department, college or school, or the university. An appeal may originate with respect to the actions of an instructor, with a department, a school or college, or at the university level. An appeal begins at the level at which the decision was made. If the student is dissatisfied with a negative decision and wants to appeal further, he or she must progress to successive levels of the appeals process as defined in the Guidelines for Routing of Academic Appeals. An appeal must be made within thirty days after receiving the written ruling.

The precise procedures for beginning an appeal may vary by the department or college. Students who have a matter they may wish to appeal should ask the department head or college or school dean what procedures are used. At the University level, appeals are considered by the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee of the University Council. Decisions by the petitions subcommittee may be appealed by the student successively to the President of the University and except for grade appeals the Board of Regents.

The appeal route for the following academic decisions is as follows:

<b>Guidelines for Routing of Academic Appeals</b>	
<b>Academic Decision</b>	<b>Appeal Route</b>
Grades	Instructor, and then, if unresolved to the Department Head, Dean, Educational Affairs Committee, and President. Grades are appealed within the department and college in which they are earned, not in the department and college in which the student's major resides. Beyond the instructional-unit level, graduate students' next line of appeal is to the Graduate School.
Department Curriculum Requirements	Department, Dean, EAC, President
College or School Curriculum Requirements	College or School, EAC, President
University Curriculum Requirements	Educational Affairs Committee, President
University Resident Requirements for Graduation	Educational Affairs Committee, President
Grievances	Instructor, then Department Head. Under the university grievance procedure, grievances which pertain to discrimination prohibited under the law are considered by the Conflict Resolution Program. Other student grievances on academic matters go from the department to the college and then to the Educational Affairs Committee. If a college/school has no grievance procedure a student may appeal a grievance at the department-level directly to the Educational Affairs Committee, President
Accuracy of Academic Records	The University's policy on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act covers appeals on this matter.
Second Dismissal	Educational Affairs Committee, President
First Dismissal	College or School, except Developmental Studies which goes directly to the Educational Affairs Committee, President
Independent and Distance Learning Program	Appeals are handled by the USG's Independent and Distance Learning Program, EAC, President.

Source

Adopted, Educational Affairs Committee, September 20, 1989 Revised, Educational Affairs Committee, November 8, 1989, March 24, 2000, March 29, 2006.