

Faculty of Science

Academic Appeals Procedures

Approved June 14, 2024

Introduction

This document sets out formal regulations for the appeal of decisions regarding grades, academic standing, graduation and practicum intervention related to undergraduate courses, graduate courses and undergraduate degree programs in the Faculty of Science.

The Faculty of Science appeal process for academic appeals and course grades is confidential, provides procedural fairness, strives for consistency in terms of its decisions, and strives to be as timely as possible.

1. Guidelines

- **Appeals:**
 - Appeals must be in the form of a written statement and sent electronically by email (or google form).
 - Each appeal must include:
 - appellant's full name and ID number;
 - decision in dispute;
 - grounds for appeal;
 - any evidence to support that ground(s);
 - remedy sought; and
 - student signature.
 - All relevant information must be disclosed in the initial appeal.
 - Appeals that are not submitted in full by the deadline will not be considered.
 - The Faculty of Science recommends that students consult with the Office of Student Ombuds for advice on formulating appeals and to act as advisors.

*See Figure 1 at the end of the document for a visual aid of the levels to which an appeal can be submitted.

- **Deadlines:**
 - There are deadlines for the initiation of appeals. Unless specified otherwise below, all appeals must be submitted with complete documentation within ten (10) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision being appealed.
 - Respondents and/or appellants wishing to bring witnesses to a hearing must inform the Chair of Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC) or

Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee (FPRC) at least 3 days prior to the hearing date.

- Additional resources (available at the Faculty of Science website unless otherwise noted)
 - How to submit an appeal
 - Figure 1 (which can be found at the end of this document)
 - Student Ombuds Office
 - Academic Standing Brochure

2. Definitions

Academic Standing: Any matter covered by the Faculty's academic standing regulations as governed by General Faculties Council (GFC), its Executive or the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and as published in the Calendar, including such matters as continuation in a program, graduation and the requirement of a student to withdraw.

Advisor: An individual who assists the appellant or a Faculty during the appeal process. Students are encouraged to seek advice from the Office of the Student Ombuds. Advice on preparation and submission of appeals is also available from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office.

Appeal: A challenge to or request for reconsideration of an academic decision or judgment.

Appellant: The student who is launching the appeal. For the purposes of these policies, a student is defined as an individual who is registered in a course or program of study with the University, whether for credit or not, at the time the subject matter of the decision under appeal occurred.

Chair: An individual appointed by the Dean to oversee a committee.

Committee: A set number of members appointed to the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC) or the Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee (FPRC).

Dean: The Dean (or delegate) of the Faculty of Science. The Dean has delegated responsibility for academic appeals and practicum intervention in the Faculty of Science to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, and to the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, (or delegate).

Deemed Receipt: The day by which deadlines are calculated for the next stage in the appeal process. In accordance with the "Electronic Communication Policy for Students and Applicants" in the University Calendar, electronic communications sent by the University will be deemed received on the next University working day after the day the communication was sent.

Hearing: The opportunity for the appellant and the respondent to present the case in person or via video conference in response to their appeal brought to the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee.

Practicum: Any placement (volunteer or otherwise) which is part of a student's Professional Program and which places or may place the student in contact with the public. Practicums include, but are not limited to, education placements in schools; and placements in cooperative work settings.

Practicum Intervention: A means by which, because of public interest, public safety or public health considerations, a student can be denied placement in a Practicum; be withdrawn from participation in a Practicum; or have participation in a Practicum suspended or varied through the imposition of conditions which must be met prior to or as part of the student taking up, continuing, or returning to a Practicum. See the University Practicum Intervention Policy for further information.

Respondent: The person responding to an appeal. In the Faculty of Science respondents include: (1) Associate Dean, Undergraduate, (or delegate), (2) Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, (or delegate), (3) Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee, and (4) Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee

Witness: A person who can present evidence or information to support an appellant or a respondent at a hearing

Working Day: Any day on which University administrative offices are open.

3. Jurisdiction

The Associate Dean, Undergraduate (or delegate) is authorized to hear undergraduate student appeals arising from decisions that impact a student's progression through their degree. These include appeals on academic standing rulings (where applicable), graduation and practicum intervention.

The Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning (or delegate) is authorized to hear grade disputes and undergraduate and graduate student appeals related to letter grades in Faculty of Science courses.

- Areas of authorization:
 - Grade disputes between instructors and grade approvals (see section 4).
 - Appeals on letter grades (see section 5).
 - Appeals stemming from academic standing, including may not continue decisions, and some required to withdraw appeals (see section 6).
 - Denial of graduation (see section 7).
 - Practicum intervention (see section 9).
- Decisions that cannot be appealed:
 - All admission decisions for Faculty of Science programs, including internal

transfer. (Admission decisions cannot be appealed as per the University Calendar - point 5, Admission Decision Process).

- The transfer of courses from another post-secondary institution, from another University of Alberta faculty, from high school courses equivalent to post secondary courses (IB, AP, GCE) or from another degree program within the Faculty of Science.
- Denial of a request for an excused absence of a final exam or deferred examination and denial of an application for a re-examination.
- Denial of graduation in a Bachelor of Science Honors or Bachelor of Science Specialization program from students who have not been admitted to the program.
- Terms of probation for students admitted on probation or who successfully appealed a required to withdraw decision.
- Academic Standing (Marginal standing):
 - Students registered in a pre-fall 2024 Bachelor of Science Honors or Bachelor of Science Specialization program:
Students who have earned a GPA between 1.7 and 1.9 (marginal standing) may not appeal the requirement to discontinue in their program. Such students may apply to continue on academic warning in the Bachelor of Science Major program.
 - Students registered in a Bachelor of Science Honors Fall 2024 onwards:
 - Students who have earned a GPA between 1.7 and 1.9 (marginal standing) may not appeal the requirement to discontinue in their program. Such students may apply to continue on academic warning in the Bachelor of Science Major program.
 - Students either fail to meet the continuation requirements a second time, or whose GPA is greater than 0.3 grade points below the minimum continuation requirements of the subject area in which they are registered, may not appeal the decision to discontinue in their program. Such students may apply to continue in the Bachelor of Science Major degree so long their GPA is 2.0 or greater.
- Students on probation in the Faculty of Science who fail to satisfy any conditions of probation and are required to withdraw for a second time.

4. Grade Disputes

Where disputes in assigning final grades arise between instructors and grade approvers, and

no resolution seems possible after an informal process involving detailed discussion by the parties (including, where appropriate, the Department Chair (or delegate) if different from the grade approver), at least one of the parties must inform the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning (or delegate) who will then work to resolve the issue. The Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning (or delegate) may consult with the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee if needed.

5. Grade Appeals

This section of the document describes the procedures to be followed in considering the appeal of the grade in an individual Faculty of Science course (undergraduate and graduate). These procedures apply to all grade appeals in science courses whether or not the students are registered in a Faculty of Science program. Under the terms of this policy, grade appeals in interdisciplinary courses offered by the Faculty of Science are also heard in the Faculty of Science. Courses offered by other Faculties, but counted as science courses in Faculty of Science programs are not governed by this policy.

Refer to the guideline section for deadlines and what should be included in each appeal.

- 5.1. Informal Process: A student who wishes to appeal a grade in an individual Faculty of Science course must first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. If the matter is not resolved at the level of the instructor by the informal process, the student may appeal to the Chair of the Department (or delegate) offering the course.
- 5.2. For courses taken in the Fall, the appeal deadline is February 1 immediately following. For courses taken in the Winter, the appeal deadline is June 25 immediately following. For courses taken in Intersession, the appeal deadline is September 1 immediately following. For students who have been granted a deferred final examination or re-examination, the deadline for submitting a grade appeal is twenty-one (21) calendar days after the date the deferred examination or re-examination was written. Grade appeals will not be considered in cases in which a deferred examination or re-examination was granted but not written.
- 5.3. As part of the appeal process, the student may be advised to apply for a re-appraisal of the final examination before any further action will be considered.
- 5.4. If the appellant believes the decision of the Department Chair (or delegate) did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning (or delegate).
- 5.5. If the appellant believes the decision of the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, (or delegate) did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, the student may appeal to the FAC. Please see the FAC section for details on how to appeal to the FAC and their procedures. **The decision of the FAC is final and binding.**

6. Appeals Stemming from Academic Standing

This section of the document describes procedures to be followed with regards to academic standing rulings. These procedures only apply to students who are currently registered in a Faculty of Science undergraduate program: Bachelor of Science General, Bachelor of Science Honors and Bachelor of Science Specialization (pre-2024), Bachelor of Science Major and Bachelor of Science Honors (Fall 2024 onwards), and BSc (Specialization in Science and Education)/BEd (Secondary) program.

Refer to the guideline section for deadlines and what should be included in each appeal.

6.1. May Not Continue in a BSc Specialization and Honors program (pre-Fall 2024)

- 6.1.1. The first level of appeal of an academic standing decision specifically dealing with a may not continue decision in a pre-2024 Honors or Specialization program should be to the Chair of the Department (or delegate) offering the program.
- 6.1.2. The first level of appeal for students in the Honors or Specialization program who are required to withdraw from the Faculty (and not just required to discontinue their Honors or Specialization program) is the Associate Dean, Undergraduate as described in section 6.2.
- 6.1.3. If the appellant believes the decision of the Department Chair (or delegate) did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, they may appeal to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate.
- 6.1.4. If the appellant believes the decision of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, they may appeal to the FAC. Please see the FAC section for details on how to appeal to FAC and their procedures. **The decision of FAC is final and binding.**

6.2. Required to Withdraw in any Faculty of Science Undergraduate Program

- 6.2.1. The first level of appeals is to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (or delegate).
- 6.2.2. If the appellant believes the decision of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, (or delegate) did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, they

may appeal to the FAC. Please see the FAC section for details on how to appeal to FAC and their procedures.

- 6.2.3. Students who have successfully appealed the requirement to withdraw will be placed on Probation the following Fall/Winter subject to specific conditions of Probation. Conditions of probation may not be appealed.
- 6.2.4. Students who have been required to withdraw and, as an alternative to an appeal for Probation, have chosen to discontinue their studies for a minimum of 1-year period will be readmitted on Probation in a subsequent Fall/Winter.
- 6.2.5. Students who fail to fulfill all of the required conditions of probation will be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Science for a minimum 5-year period without the option to appeal.
After 5 years, such students may petition the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (or delegate) for readmission. Successful students will be placed on Probation for the following Fall/Winter subject to specific conditions of probation. These conditions cannot be appealed. Students who fail to fulfill all of these required Conditions of Probation will not be granted opportunity to appeal and will be required to withdraw permanently from the Faculty of Science.

7. Denial of Graduation

This section of the document describes procedures to be followed when a student is denied a recommendation for graduation (e.g., where course requirements have been fulfilled but the graduation grade point average has not been met). These procedures only apply to students who are registered in and have applied to graduate in a Faculty of Science Undergraduate program: Bachelor of Science General, Bachelor of Science Honors and Bachelor of Science Specialization (pre-2024), Bachelor of Science Major and Bachelor of Science Honors (Fall 2024 onwards), and BSc (Specialization in Science and Education)/BEd (Secondary) program. Please note that some requirements of graduation are specified by the Government of Alberta and are not appealable (e.g., units towards degree).

- 7.1. Informal process. When issues involve program requirements, especially the requirements in a subject area or minor, students should first discuss the matter with the appropriate Department or Program Advisor, and /or Faculty of Science Advisor to seek support for program modifications. Students are advised to do so as soon as they reasonably foresee a possible need for a program modification.
- 7.2. If the student believes the decision from the informal process did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant they may appeal to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate.
- 7.3. If the appellant believes the decision of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, (or delegate) did not give adequate consideration or failed to consider all factors relevant to the decision being appealed, they may appeal to the FAC. Please see

the FAC section for details on how to appeal to FAC and their procedures. **The decision of FAC is final and binding.**

8. Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee (FAC)

- 8.1. As FAC will never be an appellant's first appeal, it will examine the appellant's original written grounds for appeal, as submitted to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate, or the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, and the response denying that appeal. The Committee will confine itself to the question of whether the grounds stated in the original appeal were given adequate consideration. New evidence beyond what was submitted in the original appeal will only be heard if the appellant can demonstrate both that it was unavailable at the time of the original appeal and that it is of substantial importance to the outcome of the case. The Chair of the FAC shall have sole discretion in deciding if new evidence will be accepted or considered.
- 8.2. For each appeal received, the Chair of the FAC shall appoint a panel from the FAC. Each FAC panel shall consist of the Chair, (or delegate) plus one (1) academic staff member and one (1) student member chosen from the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Committee.
- 8.3. The Chair of the FAC, (or delegate) shall have the authority to make ad hoc appointments of a Science student and an academic staff member to the FAC Panel in the event that members of the Panel are absent from the campus. A quorum shall be three (3) members.
- 8.4. After hearing an appeal and reaching a decision, the Chair of the FAC, (or delegate) shall inform the Associate Dean, Undergraduate and/or the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning and the appellant of the decision as soon as possible.
- 8.5. With the exception of decisions where a student has been required to withdraw, decisions made by the FAC are final and binding, and no further appeals can be made.
- 8.6. Appellants who have been required to withdraw and who believe that there has been a miscarriage of justice in the hearing of their appeal by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (or delegate) and the FAC may appeal on that ground to the GFC Academic Appeals Committee. Such an appeal must be received by the Appeals Coordinator of the GFC Academic Appeals Committee within fifteen (15) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision of the FAC.

Policies governing the initiation of an appeal and hearing procedures:

- FAC hearings will be scheduled following academic standing decisions. Grade appeals and appeals on graduation will be scheduled as quickly as possible after they arise.
- The appellant will be given at least seven (7) calendar days notification of the date and time of the hearing. Appellants who have indicated their wish to appear before the FAC are required to advise the committee with a minimum five (5) calendar days in advance of their scheduled hearing.
- There is no obligation on the part of the appellant to appear at the hearing, and the FAC is empowered to proceed on the basis of the written record should the appellant not appear or choose not to appear.
- The FAC may, at its sole discretion, request that resource persons be available at the hearing of the appeal. Depending on the case such resource persons could include an advisor from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office, the appellant's instructor, the Department Chair or Associate Chair, or a Departmental Honors or Specialization advisor.
- The Hearing shall not be open to the public and only invitees are permitted to attend. There will be no audio or video recording of the hearing by the panel or any participant.
- At the conclusion of the Hearing, the appellant and the appellant's advisor (if present) must leave the hearing. The FAC shall then decide, by majority vote, either:
 - to uphold the appeal and make such order as required, provided that no order shall be made which is contrary to published Faculty regulations
 - or to deny the appeal.
- The written summary and decision of the FAC shall be signed by the Chair and delivered to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate and/or the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning within five working days of the conclusion of the Hearing and to the Appellant electronically. An appellant shall be permitted only one (1) appeal to the FAC on the same matter.

9. Practicum Intervention Decisions

This section of the document describes procedures to be followed regarding practicum Intervention decisions made by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate(s). As defined by the University Governance Practicum Intervention Policy, Practicum Interventions are a means by which, because of public interest, public safety or public health considerations, a Student can be denied placement in a Practicum; be withdrawn from participation in a Practicum; or have

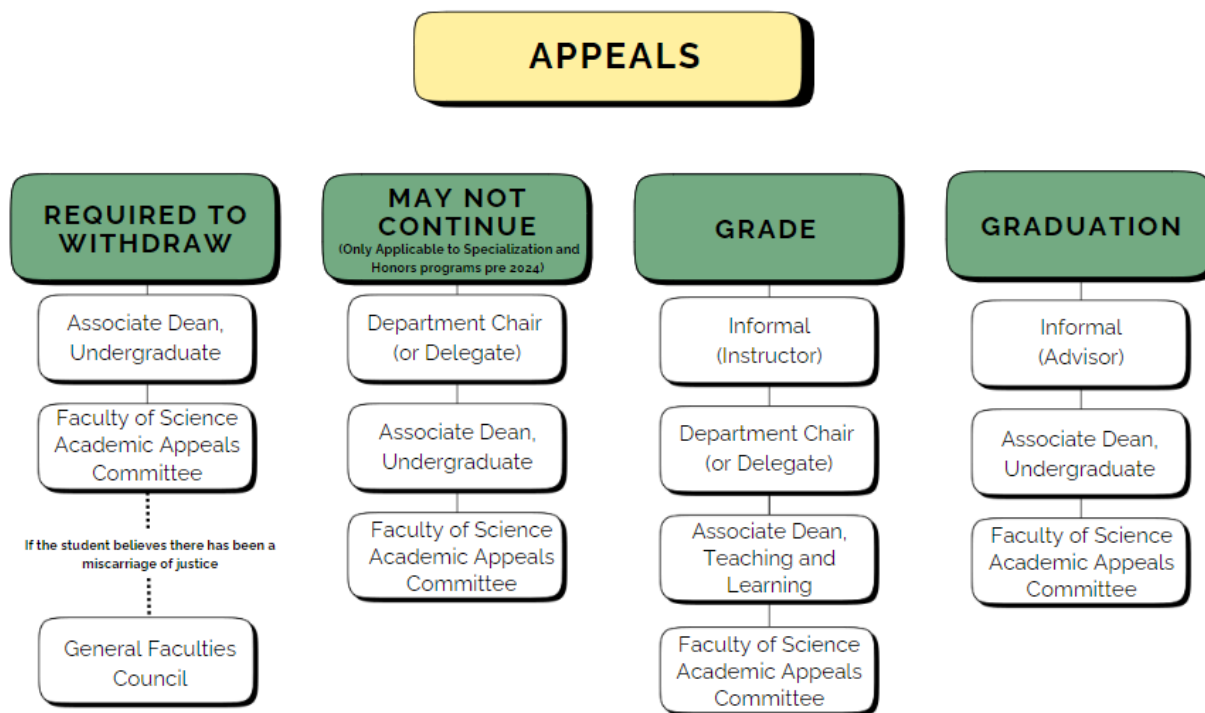
participation in a Practicum suspended or varied through the imposition of conditions which must be met prior to or as part of the Student taking up, continuing, or returning to a Practicum.

Students whose academic standing is affected by a Practicum Intervention are subject to the University Governance Practicum Intervention Policy, and the appeal procedures within that policy.

Students have the right to appeal a Practicum Intervention decision of the Dean (or delegate) to the Faculty Practice Review Committee (FPRC).

- 9.1. The FPRC hears appeals of Practicum Intervention decisions made by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate on delegated authority of the Dean. For information about hearings of the FPRC refer to the Composition and Procedures of the Faculty of Science Practice Review Committee document , which is available from the Faculty of Science Student Services Office and on the Faculty of Science website.
- 9.2. To submit an appeal, students must follow the appeal process (including all deadlines) outlined in the University Governance Practicum Intervention Policy. Such an appeal must be submitted to the Faculty of Science Student Services Office and addressed to the FPRC within the timelines provided in the University Governance Practicum Intervention Policy.
- 9.3. Practicum Interventions accompanied by COSB charges:
 - 9.3.1. Where an appeal of a Practicum Intervention is brought to a FPRC, the appeal shall be stayed and the hearing of the appeal held in abeyance pending a determination being made on the COSB charges by the Dean, or the Discipline Officer, as the case may be. The written reasons issued for the determination made under the COSB, once available, shall be provided to the FPRC who shall then hear the Practicum Intervention appeal with the determination under the COSB forming part of the record available to the Faculty.
- 9.4. If the appeal to the FPRC is unsuccessful, in whole or in part, the student may appeal to the GFC Practice Review Board (PRB). Such an appeal must be received by the Appeals Coordinator of the GFC PRB within fifteen (15) working days of deemed receipt of written notification of the decision of the FPRC. Review the University Governance Practicum Intervention Policy for guidance

History of procedures: Previous versions of policy approved by Faculty Council: May 24, 2001 - May 30, 2002 - October 29, 2009 - May 13, 2010 - October 28, 2010 - October 30, 2012 - May 23, 2013 - November 28, 2014 - November 18, 2015 - October 18, 2016



NOTE: This chart is a visual aid of the appeals process and limitations. Appeals at any level should be carefully considered before being initiated by an appellant. Please review the Faculty of Science Academic Appeals Policy and How to Submit your Appeal documents for additional information.

Figure 1: Flow chart showing levels to which a student initiated appeal can be submitted to, in order from top to bottom.