

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 663
APPEAL OF ACADEMIC DECISIONS

I. PURPOSE

Provides procedures for student appeal of an action or decision on the part of faculty or professional staff (respondent) affecting a student's academic status. (College Policy 663, Appeal of Academic Decisions)

This procedure does not apply to student appeals of decisions affecting college policies such as satisfactory academic progress (AP 513, Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (FASAP) and Appeals Policy); withdrawal (AP 635, Withdrawal from College); Harassment (AP 875, Harassment); probation, suspension, and reinstatement (AP 638, Student Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement); readmission (AP 627, Readmission of Former Students); disciplinary actions (AP 592, Student Disciplinary Action); or other college policies of a similar nature.

II. DEFINITIONS

Academic decisions – decisions affecting the assignment of course grades, academic level placement, curriculum status, and academic dishonesty.

Administrator - the appropriate campus academic dean or designee.

Appeal of Academic Decisions Form – Form originated in the appropriate campus dean's office documenting the results of each step in the appeal process.

Business day – day when the administrative offices of the college are open.

CAO - Chief Academic Officer for the College.

Respondent-- any person assigned to teach the course or responsible for the academic decision in question.

III. PROCEDURES

The student must identify one or more of the following grounds for an appeal of an academic decision:

- A. Grounds for Appeal
1. A practice/policy at variance with accepted College practice/policy
 2. Faculty/calculation error
 3. Inconsistent application of grading standards within a respondent's sections of the same course
 4. Capricious or arbitrary application of standards concerning grading, curriculum, or placement status
 5. Allegation of academic dishonesty not supported by evidence

- B. The steps in this AP must be followed in sequence. The student bears the burden of providing evidence in support of the grounds for an appeal.

The steps and requirements of an appeal of an academic decision may be made available to the students in a number of ways. First, the procedure is included in the Student Handbook. Also, this AP may be referenced by counselors, faculty, or others to whom students come with questions or concerns. If a student comes to an academic administrator with a concern about his or her grade, the administrator may provide the student with a copy of this administrative procedure and a copy of AP 121, Ombudspersons, explain the process and grounds for an appeal of an academic decision. The student then may decide whether he or she desires to pursue such an appeal. If the student desires to pursue the appeal, he or she must begin with Step One.

At any point after Step One, the process may be ended because the appeal does not meet the grounds listed above.

- C. Step One - Contacting the Respondent

Step One must be completed within thirty (30) business days of the decision date. This date shall begin two (2) business days after the last day of the term, or the date shown on any letter or other written communication advising the student of any other academic decision.

The student must contact the respondent (in person, by phone, or by e-mail) to discuss the issue in question, stating the grounds for the appeal and presenting the pertinent evidence to support those grounds. The student may bring a third party. This step shall not be skipped unless the student is unable to contact the respondent. In this case, the student may start with Step Two. Failure to contact the respondent must be indicated on the Appeal of Academic Decisions (AAD) form.

If the appeal is resolved at Step One, there is no need to complete this form.

Outcomes of Step One:

1. The respondent may find that an error has been made, or that a compromise can be reached, and take the appropriate steps for correction.
2. The respondent may uphold his or her decision, in which case the student may either accept the decision or proceed to Step Two.

Step Two - Discussion with Administrator

In Fall and Spring semesters, Step Two must be initiated by the student within ten (10) business days of the completion of Step One and must be completed within the next ten (10) business days of its initiation. In summer sessions, the completion of Step Two may take up to 20 business days. Step Two must not be skipped.

The student must contact the appropriate academic dean (or his or designee) on the campus from which the appeal originated. At this point, the administrator will ascertain that the student has appropriately completed Step One. If the student has been unable to contact the respondent, the administrator will make every effort to contact the respondent concerning the student's concern about the academic decision and intention to pursue an appeal and indicate such efforts on the AAD form.

The administrator will gather and document appropriate information regarding the academic decision. The administrator will discuss the issue (in person, by phone, or by e-mail) with the Respondent separately or by holding a joint meeting with the student and the Respondent.

Outcomes of Step Two:

1. The administrator may find that the appeal is not timely, is without merit, or does not meet the appeal criteria set forth within the appeal procedure. In this case, the appeal ends.
2. The administrator, student, and respondent may reach a mutually agreeable resolution. If a change needs to be made, the respondent must make the change within 10 business days. The appeal ends.
3. If no mutually agreeable resolution can be found, the administrator may find that there are grounds for the pursuit of an appeal. The administrator then informs the student that he or she may proceed to Step Three and outlines any impending deadlines in the appeal process. Again, the student bears the burden of providing evidence in support of the grounds for an appeal.

The administrator will note the outcome of Step Two on the AAD Form, sign it, notify both the student and the respondent of the outcome (outcomes 1,2, or 3 above) and the rationale, and secure their signatures on the AAD Form. A copy of the form will be given to both the student and the respondent.

After receipt of the form,

- a. The student may accept the original decision of the respondent or the mutually agreeable decision and take no further action.
- b. The student may proceed to Step Three.

E. Step Three – AAD Committee

If the student chooses to continue the appeal, a written request from the student must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to initiate Step Three. This request must describe the grounds for appeal, name the parties involved, state the reason for the appeal, and include any pertinent evidence; the request must be signed. The campus dean will provide a copy of the written request, any associated documents, and the AAD Form to the CAO.

In Fall and Spring semesters Step Three must be initiated by the student within ten business days of the completion of Step Two and must be completed within the next ten business days of its initiation. In summer sessions, the completion of Step Three may take up to 20 business days.

The CAO will convene the AAD committee and forward to them copies of the written request, the associated documents, and the AAD form.

An AAD Committee consisting of three tenured faculty, three students and the CAO (to serve as the non-voting ex officio chair) shall be formed each academic year to hear all cases of appeals of academic decisions. The faculty and student representatives shall be selected by their respective governing bodies. Faculty and students shall also select an alternate to serve in the case of a conflict of interest or the unavailability of a member of the AAD committee to serve. In addition to the three faculty chosen by the appropriate constituency council, the CAO will request the participation of two faculty members (preferably tenured) from the discipline or a closely related academic area from which the appeal arose. These faculty will provide content clarification and context for the deliberations of the committee, but they will not be voting members.

The AAD committee may contact either the student or the respondent (in person, by phone, or by e-mail) for clarification of issues as they deem necessary. If the student or the respondent feels the need for outside counsel, these persons may attend but they must notify the CAO in advance and adhere to the rules of order established by the AAD Committee.

A two-thirds vote of the AAD Committee is necessary to require a change in the academic decision. The AAD Committee must render its decision within five business days of the date of the final meeting of the committee. The student and the respondent shall be informed of the ruling of the AAD Committee in writing.

If a reversal of the original academic decision occurs and requires the assignment of a new grade based on evaluation of student performance, the AAD Committee will recommend a grade based on the judgment of the discipline faculty participating with the committee. The AAD Committee will forward the new grade to the CAO for administrative implementation. The CAO will make the grade change within 10 business days. Notification of the grade change will be sent to the appropriate campus dean's office.

- F. The CAO is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is administered properly and for resolving procedural issues which may arise.
- G. Deadline for each step of the procedure may be extended on written request to the CAO, who may grant extensions based on extenuating circumstances. The decision of the CAO on delay in the implementation of the academic decision is final.

- H. Confidentiality of information is to be maintained at all steps.
- J. The respondent and/or appropriate administrator at Steps One, Two, and Three keeps notes of any meetings and limits the review to clarification of the issues.
- K. Recordings or verbatim records may be maintained only upon agreement of all parties concerned.
- L. Legal advice may be requested by the AAD Committee through the Office of the President of the college.
- M. This procedure is to be printed in the Student Handbook.
- N. Summary of Deadlines

**Deadlines (Business Days)
(Fall/Spring Semester)**

Action

The appeal has to be filed within 30 days of decision date.	Complete Step One – student meets with respondent
Within ten days of completing Step One	Initiate Step Two
Within ten days of initiating Step Two	Complete Step Two – student meets with administrator
Within 10 days of completing Step Two	Initiate Step Three
Within ten days of initiating Step Three	Complete Step Three-- AAD Committee meets and acts

JF/EVB – 11/21/02
 RRY/EVB 2/17/05
 RRY/EVB – 12/20/07
 RRY/EVB – 10/15/09

Appeal of Academic Decisions Form

(Attachment to AP 663)

REASON FOR APPEAL (From list found in AP 663): _____

Step One: Student Contacts Respondent

Date of Initial Meeting and Type of Contact: _____

Outcome: _____

Student's Name (printed)

Respondent(s) Name(s) (printed)

(Student's Signature)

Date: _____

Step Two: Administrator Meets with Student and Respondent (individually or together)

Date of Initial Meeting: _____

Outcome: _____

Student's Name (signature)

Respondent (s) Name(s) (signature)

Administrator's Name (printed)

Administrator's Name (signature)

Date: _____