

Graduate Student Appeals Procedure – Approved at Senate, April 2009

General:

Under this procedure, an issue should be initially be dealt with as close to its source as possible. Students should first attempt to resolve a matter informally with the initial decision-maker(s). Where informal resolution is not possible, a student has the right to make a formal appeal. This procedure recognizes two different types of appeals: 1) those dealing with assignments and examinations associated with graded courses that are part of the requirements of a degree; and 2) those dealing with the examinations or evaluations associated with major degree requirements such as comprehensive or candidacy examinations, evaluation of major research or internship papers and theses defences.

It is the responsibility of the student to present full supporting documentation and to state grounds for the appeal in writing. Details on the first step of an appeal process may be obtained from each Program Office. Dissatisfaction with, or ignorance or neglect of university policy or published deadlines does not constitute sufficient grounds for an appeal. Decisions related to admission to an academic program are not subject to appeal.

Formal Appeals:

1. Formal appeals of grades on assignments or examinations that are part of a course

Appeals of grades on assignments/exams in a course should be made to the course instructor in the first instance, normally within four (4) weeks of receipt of the grade. Appeals submitted after that time may not be accepted.

The original grade of a student who is making an appeal cannot be lowered as a result of that appeal. If the appeal is denied, the instructor will provide the reasons in writing to the student.

Where the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, a further appeal may be made to the Program Director. The Program Director's decision is final subject to an appeal to the Special Appeals Committee.

2. Formal appeals of outcomes of comprehensive/candidacy examinations, thesis/dissertation examinations, or MRP/Internship evaluations, or other degree elements

Appeals of outcomes of comprehensive/candidacy examinations, thesis/dissertation examinations, MRP/Internship evaluations, other degree elements, or recommendations for withdrawal from a degree program should be referred to the Program Director in the first instance.

Appeals should be submitted to the Program Director normally within four (4) weeks of receiving the outcome in question. Appeals submitted after that time may not be accepted.

If the appeal is denied, the Program Director will provide the reasons in writing to the student.

Where the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the appeal may then be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies, within two (2) weeks of receiving the decision.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the Program Director and will convene the Graduate Studies Appeal Committee. The composition of the Committee will normally be three non-student, voting members of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) who are not members of the graduate program of the student. Where necessary for reasons of expertise or background, the Dean may appoint a non-member of the GSC as one of the three members. The Committee will review written documentation and may seek additional relevant evidence at its discretion, including evidence from external experts. The remedy open to the Committee will be limited to a recommendation for reassessment and the conditions under which a reassessment will be made. The decision of the Committee is final, subject to an appeal to the Special Appeals Committee. The committee will attempt to reach a decision within eight weeks.

In the event that there is a dispute over which process, (i.e.. 1. or 2.) should be used for a particular appeal, the decision on process will be made by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Students who have exhausted all other appeal processes may appeal to the Special Appeals Committee of Senate on the grounds that a policy or practice has caused the student undue hardship. Special appeals must be filed with the University Secretariat within four (4) weeks of the receipt of the previous ruling. More information is found at the Special Appeals website - <http://www.trentu.ca/administration/specialappeals.php>. All decisions of the Special Appeals Committee are final within the university and take effect when issued.