

Academic Appeal Process

Background and Purpose

Occasionally students have concerns about an academic judgement made by a course instructor or supervisory committee. Such judgements typically involve a grade on an assignment or in a course, or the outcome of a doctoral comprehensive examination. The purpose of this document is to summarize the process to be followed within EDST when a student wishes to appeal an academic judgement. For judgements about academic misconduct, please see the section at the end of this document.

Appeals of academic judgements, especially those concerning grades on assignments and in courses, should normally be based on the belief that an unfair or improper assessment procedure was used. In other words, it is normally not enough for a student to feel that they should have received a higher mark unless that feeling is based on the belief that the assessment process was flawed resulting in an unfair or unreasonable decision. Such flaws might include the following:

- an instructor not following the assessment process spelled out in the course syllabus,
- an instructor failing to provide timely feedback on assignments prior to issuing a final course grade,
- an instructor using irrelevant or incorrect information in reaching a judgement, or not considering relevant information that was available when the judgement was made.

Academic Appeal Process

In all cases of disagreements between instructors (or supervisory committees) and students, the preferred course of action is for the student to raise the concern directly with the instructor (or supervisory committee), who must listen to the concern and provide a timely, respectful response consistent with the UBC [Statement on Respectful Environments](#). If this response is not acceptable to the student, then the process described below should be followed. Before starting this process, however, the student may wish to discuss their concern with the Peer Academic Advisor, their Supervisor or Advisor, or the department's Graduate Advisor to get a "third party" opinion on the matter and advice on how to proceed.

1. The student should summarize in writing the nature of the academic judgement of concern, the basis for an appeal of that judgement, and the process followed and outcome of any effort made to resolve the matter with the instructor or supervisory committee. If the matter concerns a grade on an assignment or in a course, the course outline should be provided along with the assignment(s) of concern including any feedback provided by the instructor. This summary and related materials should be submitted to the Head of the Department within two weeks of the effort to resolve the matter with the instructor or supervisory committee.
2. The Head will review the information provided and consult with the instructor or supervisory committee and others as necessary. The Head may also ask other faculty members to review the student's work and offer an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses.
3. The Head will make an initial determination of the merits of the appeal and then meet with the student to discuss it within two weeks of the appeal being submitted. This discussion may include options available to resolve the concern if the appeal is judged to have merit. If requested by the student, the Head will prepare a written summary of this meeting which will be provided to the

student, with a copy to the instructor or supervisory committee, within a week of the meeting.

If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by the Department Head and the student wishes to pursue the appeal further, they should contact the Dean's office in the relevant Faculty. For academic decisions at the undergraduate level, this is the Office of the Dean in the Faculty of Education. For academic decisions at the graduate level, this is the Office of the Dean in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If the Dean denies the appeal, the student can make a final [appeal to the Senate Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing](#).

Academic Misconduct

As outlined in the [Calendar](#), when an instructor suspects that a student has committed [academic misconduct](#) the instructor normally will be the first to investigate the incident and should give the student the opportunity to meet to discuss the suspected academic misconduct. This meeting may not be required in all incidents of suspected academic misconduct.

Assignment of grades is a matter of academic merit and the instructor may re-evaluate the academic merit of the student's work at issue taking into consideration the results of any investigation, in which case the instructor may:

1. require the student to re-do work at issue or to do supplementary work;
2. assign a grade of zero or a failing grade for the work; or
3. assign a mark less harsh than failing for the work.

If a student wishes to appeal the instructor's decision, they can do so by contacting the Dean's Office of the Faculty in which they are enrolled. For undergraduate students, this is the Office of the Dean in the Faculty of Education. For graduate students, this is the Office of the Dean in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If the Dean denies the appeal, the student can make a final [appeal to the Senate Committee on Student Appeals on Academic Discipline](#).

Per UBC [policy](#), all incidents of suspected academic misconduct must be reported to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty offering the course in which the student is enrolled, as well the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of the student's program, if this is different from the course.

Example: an incident of suspected academic misconduct by an EDST MA student taking EDST 493 must be reported to the Dean's Office in the Faculty of Education because it concerns an undergraduate course, and to the Dean's Office in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies because it [concerns a graduate student](#).