



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

3341-3-3 Graduate Appeals Policy.

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| Applicability | All University Units – Graduate Students |
| Responsible Unit | Office of the Provost |
| Policy Administrator | Dean of Graduate College |

(A) Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy describes the types of graduate student appeals, informal pre-appeal consultation, and formal appeal procedures.

(B) Policy

(1) Types of Appeals

(a) This policy describes the types of appeals a graduate student may seek through the Graduate College Appeals process. All appeals must be based on new evidence or procedural error that is outcome determinative.

(i) Grade appeals of the final grade assigned for a graduate course;

(ii) Non-grade academic appeals including academic probation; results of qualifying examinations, comprehensive examinations, preliminary examinations/projects, thesis or dissertation defenses, or other culminating experiences; or

program dismissal; and

(iii) Assistantship-related appeals including training, work assignments, or financial disputes involving graduate assistant contracts or tuition scholarships.

(b) This policy includes only the listed types of appeals. This policy does not apply to admission decisions; cases involving violations of the academic honesty policy; cases related to student conduct; cases related to sexual, racial, ethnic, religious, disability, and other forms of harassment and discrimination; cases related to financial aid; or cases related to residency status. Such cases are referred to the appropriate units on campus, such as Graduate Admissions, the Office of Accessibility Services, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of Equity and Compliance, or the Office of Registration and Records, to be assessed outside of this policy.

(2) Procedures

(a) Informal: Pre-Appeals Consultation

(i) Prior to initiating a formal appeal, a student should engage in pre-appeals consultation with the appropriate individual or entity:

(a) Grade concern: consult with the instructor;

(i) Consultation should occur after grades are posted in the Student Center. Faculty can post grades at the end of a session. Grades shall be posted no later than the Wednesday after the end of the semester.

(b) Non-grade academic concern: consult with the graduate program coordinator, line college designee, or original decision-making individual / committee / body;

(c) Assistantship-related concern: consult with the supervisor, graduate program coordinator, or line college designee.

(ii) In cases involving multiple academic or non-academic units, the student should contact the Graduate College. The Dean or

designee will determine the appropriate individual or entity for pre-appeals consultation.

(b) Formal Appeal Procedures

(i) The Graduate College Dean or designee and Department Chair / School Director should be included in all communications related to formal appeals. The formal appeals form will be routed to these units; however, any additional communication should include the aforementioned units.

(ii) Student Initiates the Appeal: First Stage of the Formal Appeal

(a) If a resolution from the pre-appeal consultation is not reached, the first stage of the formal appeal is to complete the formal appeal form and include a letter to the appropriate party within five class days of the decision under appeal. Class days are defined as business days within the fall and spring semesters exclusive of breaks and holidays. (See section B.4.a for timeline exceptions):

(i) A grade appeal should be addressed to the instructor;

(ii) A non-grade academic appeal should be addressed to the graduate program coordinator, line college designee, or original decision-making individual / committee / body;

(iii) An assistantship-related appeal should be addressed to the supervisor, graduate program coordinator, or line college designee.

(b) To ensure a comprehensive review, the student's formal appeal letter should clearly state the grounds for the appeal. The appeal letter should include the following information:

(i) The type of appeal being filed;

(ii) The grounds for the appeal (new evidence or procedural error that is outcome determinative);

(iii) The specific nature of the grievance and how it affected the student's academic performance or progress;

(iv) The date, outcome, and who was consulted during the pre-appeal consultation;

(v) All relevant information (excluding medical records) that supports the grounds for the appeal;

(vi) Any evidence to be considered during the appeal review; and

(vii) The student's desired outcome of the appeals process.

(iii) Response to the Student: Second Stage of the Formal Appeal

(a) A written response from the recipient who reviewed the first stage of the formal appeal should be sent in writing to the student, the Graduate College, and the Department Chair / School Director within five class days after receiving the student's appeal letter. This response should propose a means of redressing the grievance or provide specific reasons why the grievance is without merit or cannot be redressed.

(iv) Continuing the Appeal: Third Stage of the Formal Appeal

(a) If the student wishes to continue the appeal to the Graduate College, it is their responsibility to submit a letter addressing the information in the written response from the original decision-making individual / committee / body and forward the appeal to the Graduate College and Department Chair / School Director with all relevant documents within five class days of the response from the previous stage. The letter should include a detailed response and any additional evidence to be considered during the appeal review. Neither the basis for the appeal nor the desired outcome can change at this stage.

(b) If the student does not submit a letter responding to the reviewers of the second stage within five class days, the

appeal will be closed.

(v) Graduate College Review: Fourth Stage of the Formal Appeal

(a) All appeals that reach the Graduate College will receive a Final Letter from the Dean of the Graduate College or designee.

(b) Two Assistant or Associate Deans from outside of the student's line college will determine if the criteria for an appeal are met (see Section B.1.a in this policy) within three class days. If one or more criteria are met, a Graduate College appeal hearing will be held.

(c) Appeal Hearing: Committee Membership

(i) The members of the Appeal Hearing Committee shall have had no material conflicts of interest with parties involved in the appeal. They must all be from outside the student's program.

(ii) The committee is comprised of the following members:

(a) An Assistant or Associate Dean from outside the student's line college (serving as committee chair);

(b) A graduate student in good academic standing (in the case of a doctoral student's appeal, a reasonable effort will be made to have a doctoral student serve on the committee);

(c) A regular or provisional member of the Graduate Faculty; and

(d) A representative of the Office of Student Employment Services (assistantship-related appeal only).

(iii) If it is necessary for the Graduate College to change committee membership, all parties will be notified as

early as possible.

(d) Appeal Hearing Procedures

(i) The hearing by the appointed Appeal Committee shall be conducted in closed session with only members of the committee and invited or approved persons present.

(ii) Both the student and the responding party may be accompanied by an advisor of their choosing during the hearing. These advisors are not permitted to participate directly in the hearing or speak for the student or responding party. If an advisor is invited, the Graduate College must be notified, and contact information must be shared prior to the hearing.

(iii) An audio or video recording will be made of the appeal hearing and a summary will be prepared by personnel from the Graduate College. The recording and summary are university property and shall be education records of the student. Copies of the summary will be distributed to the appropriate parties concerned and be kept on file by the Graduate College.

(iv) Both the student and the responding party have the right to present and question information at the hearing. The committee's final recommendation is to be based only on information provided prior to the hearing and information presented at the hearing.

(v) Student education records discussed or shared leading up to and during the appeals hearing are confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This information should not be disclosed to individuals who do not have a legitimate educational interest or a need to know.

(vi) If the student or responding party fails to attend the hearing, the hearing will be held in their absence. A

hearing will only be rescheduled based on compelling extenuating circumstances.

(vii) Committee deliberations are not recorded.

(viii) The Appeal Committee will make a decision and the chair of the committee shall provide a written recommendation to the Graduate College Dean or designee immediately following the hearing.

(e) Appeal Hearing Due Process Rights

(i) The student and the responding party will both have the right to:

(a) Receive official notice of the time and place of the hearing;

(b) Supply evidence to be reviewed at the hearing;

(c) Review evidence prior to the hearing;

(d) Question evidence at the hearing;

(e) Be accompanied by an advisor; and

(f) Receive notice of the recommendation made by the committee.

(vi) Graduate College Final Letter

The Graduate College Dean or designee will review the responses from each level of review. They may also contact the student, original decision-maker, or Appeal Hearing Committee with clarifying questions and request additional evidence as needed. The Graduate College Dean or designee will convey the final recommendation in writing to the appropriate parties within five class days of the Appeal Hearing or determination of the Assistant/Associate Deans that a hearing is not warranted.

(3) Appeal Review Outcome

(a) For grade appeals and non-grade academic appeals, the Graduate College conducts a comprehensive appeal review and provides recommendations. While the ultimate decision rests with the original individual / committee / body, the Graduate Dean or designee assumes a central and influential role, providing decisive direction and insightful contributions that significantly shape the decision-making process.

(i) Within five class days of the Graduate College Final Letter, the original individual / committee / body will provide a written response to the student, the Graduate College, and the Department Chair / School Director with the final decision. If the final decision differs from the Graduate College Final Letter, a rationale will be described in the written response.

(b) For assistantship-related appeals, the Graduate College retains the right of final decision.

(4) Timeline Exceptions

(a) Prompt resolution of appeals is in the best interest of all parties. However, there may be situations (such as during the summer semester, breaks, and holidays) where exceptions are warranted. All timeline exceptions require approval of the Graduate College Dean or designee. Upon approval, all appropriate parties will be informed.

(b) Expedited timelines may be required by accelerated clinical programs. Procedures must be communicated in program handbooks and require the approval of the Graduate College.

(5) Non-Retaliation

This policy prohibits retaliation against any person for asserting their rights under this policy, or against any person participating in activities protected under this policy. No agent of the university may harass, coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against an individual for initiating this process or for participating in this process. Any person within the scope of this policy who engages in retaliation is subject to a charge of retaliation, which will be investigated separately. See

University Policy 3341-5-51: Non-Discrimination in Employment and Education.

Equity Impact Statement: The policy has been assessed for adverse differential impact on members of one or more protected groups.

Registered Date: March 3, 2015

Amended Dates: December 3, 2015, November 2, 2016, October 25, 2018, March 4, 2020; February 8, 2022; April 1, 2024