



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

3341-3-3 Appeals policies- Graduate.

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

(A) Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy describes the types of graduate student appeals, pre-appeal procedures, and formal appeal procedures. This includes information on grade appeals, non-grade academic appeals, and assistantship-related appeals.

(B) Policy

(1) Types of Appeals

(a) This policy describes the three types of appeals a graduate student may seek through the Graduate College Appeals process.

(i) Grade appeals, including a grade assigned for a graduate course;

(ii) Non-grade academic appeals, including academic standing; qualifying, comprehensive, or preliminary examination results; thesis or dissertation defense; 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 cases involving violations of the academic honesty policy; cases related to student conduct; cases related to sexual, racial, ethnic, and other forms of harassment and discrimination; cases related to financial aid; or cases related to residency status.

(2) Timeline and Notification of Intent to Appeal

(a) A student must notify the Graduate College Dean or designee of their intent to appeal. This notification must be received within fourteen calendar days of the decision under appeal.

(b) Prompt resolution of appeals is in the best interest of all parties. However, there may be situations where exceptions are warranted. All timeline exceptions require approval of the Graduate College Dean or designee. Upon approval, all appropriate parties will be informed.

(3) Pre-Appeals Procedures

(a) Prior to initiating a formal appeal, a student should consult with the appropriate individual:

- (i) A grade appeal should be addressed to the instructor;
- (ii) A non-grade academic appeal should be addressed to the graduate program coordinator or original decision-making individual / committee / body;
- (iii) An assistantship-related appeal should be addressed to the supervisor or graduate coordinator.

(b) The Graduate College encourages students to seek a solution to all issues at the most local level, ensuring the least disruption to the learning or assistantship experience.

(c) In cases not directly involving the graduate program coordinator, the student is advised to seek their advice before initiating a formal

appeal. In cases involving the graduate program coordinator, the student is advised to seek the advice of a school / department administrator, college administrator, or Graduate College Dean or designee.

(4) Formal Appeal Procedures

(a) Initiating the Formal Appeal

(i) If an issue is not able to be resolved with the pre-appeal consultation, a formal appeal may be initiated with a letter to the appropriate party:

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

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

(c) An assistantship-related appeal should be addressed to the supervisor or graduate coordinator.

(ii) A copy of the letter must be sent to the Graduate College Dean or designee.

(iii) To ensure a comprehensive review, the student's formal appeal letter should include the following information:

(a) The type of appeal being filed;

(b) All relevant information related to the issue being appealed;

(c) Any evidence to be considered during the appeal review (Note: If evidence includes medical information, submit this to the Office of Accessibility Services. Accessibility Services will determine what is pertinent and share needed information); and

(d) The student's desired outcome.

(iv) The Graduate College Dean or designee should be included in all communications related to appeals.

(b) Formal Appeal Levels of Review

(i) A formal grade appeal may include a separate review at each of the following levels:

(a) Instructor;

(b) Department Chair / School Director; and

(c) Graduate College review.

(ii) A formal non-grade academic appeal may include a separate review at each of the following levels:

(a) Graduate Program Coordinator or original decision-making individual / committee / body;

(b) Department Chair / School Director; and

(c) Graduate College review.

(iii) A formal assistantship-related appeal may include a separate review at each of the following levels:

(a) Supervisor;

(b) Department Chair / School Director; and

(c) Graduate College review.

(iv) In cases in which there are multiple academic or non-academic units involved in an appeal, the student should contact the Graduate College. The Dean or designee will determine the appropriate levels of review.

(v) A written response should be sent to the student following each level of review. This response should include a clear statement of support or lack of support for the student's

requested outcome. The written response should be sent to the student within seven calendar days of the completion of the review.

(vi) If the student wishes to continue the appeal to the next level of review, it is their responsibility to forward the appeal to the next level of review with all relevant documents. If the student does not forward their appeal within seven calendar days, the appeal will be closed. All timeline exceptions require approval of the Graduate College Dean or designee.

(c) Graduate College Review

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

(ii) In instances where the appeal is based on new evidence, misinterpretation of evidence, or significant procedural error, a Graduate College appeal hearing will precede the Final Letter. Two Associate Deans from outside of the student's College will determine if the appeal meets the criteria necessary for a Graduate College appeal hearing.

(iii) Appeal Hearing: Committee Membership

(a) The members of the Appeal 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.

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

(i) An Associate Dean from the student's college (serving as committee chair);

(ii) 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);

(iii) A regular member of the Graduate Faculty; and

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

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

(iv) Appeal Hearing Procedures

(a) 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.

(b) Both the student and the responding party may be accompanied by someone 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.

(c) An audio 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. The university will make the recording available to the parties for inspection and review upon request. Copies of the summary will be distributed to the appropriate parties concerned and be kept on file in the Office of the Graduate College as appropriate.

(d) 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 on only information provided prior to the hearing and information presented at the hearing.

(e) 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.

(f) Committee deliberations are not recorded.

(g) The Appeal Committee will reach a consensus and the chair of the committee should provide a written recommendation to the Graduate College Dean or designee within seven calendar days of the hearing.

(v) Appeal Hearing Due Process Rights

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

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

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

(iii) Review evidence prior to the hearing;

(iv) Question evidence at the hearing;

(v) Be accompanied by an advisor; and

(vi) Receive notice of the final recommendation made by the committee.

(d) Graduate College Final Letter

The Graduate College Dean or designee will review the responses from each level of review, including the recommendation from the Appeal Committee chair, and make a final recommendation in the case. The Graduate College Dean or designee will convey the final recommendation in writing to the appropriate parties within seven calendar days. In addition to the final Graduate College recommendation, in cases involving a Graduate College Appeal Committee, the committee's summary recommendation will also be shared with all appropriate parties.

(5) Appeal Review Outcome

For grade appeals and non-grade academic appeals, recommendations following an appeal review are advisory, and the original individual / committee / body retains the right of final decision. For assistantship-related appeals, the Graduate College retains the right of final decision.

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