

Academic Appeals Policy

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Contents

PURPOSE.....	1
SCOPE	1
DEFINITIONS	2
POLICY.....	3
NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS	5
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	5
RELATED POLICIES.....	5
RELATED MATERIALS.....	6
APPENDIX 1, PROCEDURES	7
APPENDIX 2, GROUNDS FOR APPEAL.....	11
APPENDIX 3, ACADEMIC APPEAL APPLICATION FORM	13
APPENDIX 4, ASSOCIATE DEAN REVIEW FORM.....	13
APPENDIX 5, MEDICAL FORM	13

PURPOSE

To provide students with a timely, respectful, and thorough review of an academic decision they perceive to be unfair.

SCOPE

All George Brown College students have the right to an academic appeal, regardless of their academic record.

DEFINITIONS

This includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within the policy and procedure.

Word/Term	Definition
Academic Appeal	The process by which a student may challenge an academic decision they received.
Academic Appeals Committee	A group of designated students, instructor/faculty members and academic administrators who listen to, analyse and decide the outcome of an academic appeal hearing.
Academic Appeal Hearing	A confidential meeting in which the appellant and respondent take turns explaining their case and providing evidence to the Academic Appeals committee to support or deny the grounds for academic appeal. (Also referred to as 'Hearing').
Academic Appeals Committee Moderator	An academic administrator designated by the College's Vice-President, Academic to facilitate and oversee academic appeal hearings. (Also referred to as 'Moderator').
Appellant	A student who has exhausted Stage 1 of the academic appeals procedure and files and Application for Academic Appeal, as per Stage 2 of the academic appeals procedure.
Business Day	Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays or any other day in which the College has publicly announced that it is not open for business.
Associate Dean	For purposes of this policy, 'Associate Dean' refers to the academic administrator with most immediate responsibility for the program from which the academic appeal has arisen. This individual may have the title 'Associate Dean' or 'Manager' or 'Director' (in the absence of an Associate Dean), depending on the program.
Grounds for Academic Appeal	The reason(s) for the appellant's challenge of an academic grade or decision.
Hearing	See definition of 'Academic Appeal Hearing' above.
Moderator	See definition of 'Academic Appeals Committee Moderator' above.
PLAR	Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition: A competency-based assessment process that seeks to recognize and give formal credit for college-level learning that is acquired informally, non-formally and formally.
Respondent	The instructor/instructor/faculty member responding to a Stage 2 academic appeal.

POLICY

1.0 General Principles

1.1 George Brown College is responsible for maintaining standards that promote academic integrity and student success. It is expected that instructors/instructor/faculty members will make academic judgments that are consistent and fair, and that students' academic records will reflect their demonstrated abilities and accomplishments.

1.2 Students are entitled to know their rights under the Academic Appeals policy. It is expected that instructor/faculty members and Associate Deans will inform students of their right to academic appeal and enable students to access the academic appeals process.

1.3 It is expected that students, instructor/faculty members, and Associate Deans will work to resolve academic issues at the program level in a timely fashion, beginning with the individual who awarded the grade or made the academic decision. Documentation of such interactions is encouraged. These efforts should occur within an environment of integrity, partnership, fairness, respect, and transparency.

2.0 Academic Issues that may be Appealed

2.1 Students may initiate Academic Appeals in relation to the following types of academic decisions:

- A final grade in a course
- A grade within a course that could not be reassessed (e.g., oral presentation, performance, practical exam, placement) or that was denied reassessment
- A probationary or withdrawal decision
- A PLAR decision

Should a student wish to appeal more than one decision, each request will constitute an individual and separate academic appeal.

2.2 Students with academic issues involving allegations of discrimination or harassment should consult the GBC Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights Office.

2.3 Students with concerns about the quality of the educational experience – who are not looking to challenge an academic decision – should refer to the Educational Complaints Resolution policy.

2.4 Students who wish to appeal a code of non-academic student behaviour violation should follow the appeal process outlined in the Code of Non-Academic Student Behaviour policy.

3.0 Grounds for Academic Appeal

Academic appeals must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- Merit of Work
- Illness and/or Disability
- Compassionate Grounds
- Course Management
- Policy Violation

Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

4.0 Timelines for Academic Appeal

4.1 All students, instructor/faculty members, and Associate Deans are expected to adhere to the timelines outlined in this policy.

4.2 Where a student fails to adhere to the timelines, an academic appeal will be deemed to have lapsed except in extenuating circumstances (e.g., injury or illness) where valid documentation is provided to support the given delay.

4.3 Where an instructor/faculty member or Associate Dean fails to adhere to the timelines this may result in the student's appeal being granted.

4.4 Every effort is made to adhere to the timelines articulated above; however, in exceptional circumstances, these deadlines may be subject to change. If the college is unable to meet these deadlines, the appeals moderator will notify the parties as soon as is practical.

5.0 Stages of Academic Appeal

5.1 The College maintains a two-stage academic appeal procedure. Refer to Section E for details.

5.2 A student must exhaust the Stage 1 Academic Appeal procedure before they can initiate a Stage 2 Academic Appeal.

6.0 Rights and Responsibilities

6.1 At any stage in the academic appeals process, students may bring a support person, including a Student Association advisor, to meetings relating to their academic issues.

6.2 Students awaiting academic appeal hearings may register in the next semester of their program and enrol in all regular courses. Where an appeal involves academic performance in a field placement, the student will not be permitted to enrol in the subsequent field placement course while awaiting the hearing.

6.3 If a student enrolls in the next semester of their program while awaiting a hearing and the appeal is subsequently denied, the student will be required to withdraw from the course or program they are no longer qualified to attend. A tuition refund will be made on the following basis:

- If the student is required to withdraw from the program, a refund of the tuition for the semester will be made.

- If the student is required to withdraw from a course or courses, a refund for only the affected courses will be made. In both cases, the student's academic record will be modified accordingly.

6.4 Only one academic decision will be discussed at a scheduled Academic Appeal Hearing.

7.0 Academic Appeal Committee and Moderators

7.1 The College will appoint at least two Academic Appeal Moderators to preside over the academic appeal hearing process and will appoint an Academic Appeal Committee to hear each individual academic appeal.

7.2 The mandate, composition and responsibilities of the Moderators, Academic Appeal Committee and the Hearing procedures will be described in the Academic Appeal Hearing Manual.

7.3 For all Stage 2 academic appeals, an Academic Appeal 'Review Moderator' will conduct a Pre-Hearing Review before an appeal hearing is scheduled, to determine whether the hearing should be granted. A different Academic Appeal 'Presiding Moderator' will chair the hearing if granted.

7.4 Hearings are typically scheduled on the last Friday afternoon of the month.

7.5 The decision of the Academic Appeal Committee is final and can not be appealed.

NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy has been sanctioned by the Board of Governors, requiring compliance across the College. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures commensurate with the offence.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Appendix 1: Procedures for Academic Appeal under this Policy
- Appendix 2: Grounds for Academic Appeal
- Appendix 3: Academic Appeal Application Form
- Appendix 4: Associate Dean Review Form
- Appendix 5: Medical Form

RELATED POLICIES

- Accessible Learning Policy
- AODA Accessibility Policy
- AODA, Customer Service Standard Policy
- Code of Conduct – Academic Staff
- Code of Non-Academic Student Behaviour
- Educational Complaint Resolution Policy
- Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Office of the Registrar's Policies

RELATED MATERIALS

Academic Appeal Hearing Manual (available from the Office of Academic Excellence).

APPENDIX 1, PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE

STAGE 1 Academic Appeal

Step 1

Timeline: Within 10 business days of receiving a grade or academic decision

Action: The student contacts the instructor/faculty member to arrange a meeting to discuss their academic issue.

Step 2

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the student's request to the instructor/faculty member.

Action: The instructor/faculty member responds to the student's inquiry and sets up a meeting. If the instructor/faculty member does not respond to the inquiry within the timeframe or is unavailable to meet with the student during the timeframe, the student proceeds to Stage 1, Step 4.

Step 3

Timeline: Within 10 business days of the student's request to the instructor/faculty member

Action: The student and instructor/faculty member meet and discuss the issue. If a resolution is reached, the academic decision is modified, if applicable. If a resolution is not reached and the student remains dissatisfied with the academic decision, the student proceeds to Stage 1, Step 4.

Step 4

Timeline: Within 5 business days of meeting with the instructor/faculty member.

Action: The student contacts the Associate Dean to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue.

Step 5

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the student's request to meet with the Associate Dean

Action: The Associate Dean responds to the student's inquiry and sets up a meeting with student.

Step 6

Timeline: Within 10 business days of the student's request to meet with the Associate Dean

Action: The student and Associate Dean meet to discuss the issue. The student must present evidence (emails, medical documentation, etc.) in support of their appeal. If the student has not followed Steps 1 – 3 above, the student must explain why.
The Associate Dean then meets with the responsible instructor/faculty member to discuss the original academic decision, to review the supporting documentation, and, where warranted, to discuss options or alternatives for resolving the student's challenge such as meeting with the student, re-marking or re-

assessment. Such a meeting may be delayed accommodating faculty absence only to the extent that this does not unfairly impact the student's right to a timely response.

If, following this consultative process, a new academic decision is reached, this is communicated, via GBC email, to the student.

If the responsible instructor/faculty member is not available to participate in such a review (i.e. faculty is on vacation, on leave, no longer working for the College, and cannot be contacted), and if a delay in reviewing the decision will unfairly impact on the student's progression in the program, the Associate Dean will seek input and advice from another instructor/faculty member who is familiar with the course in order to render a decision.

The Associate Dean may modify the academic decision if:

- In the Associate Dean's opinion, the instructor/faculty member has misinterpreted, misapplied or breached College policies in a manner that is detrimental to the student and puts the College at risk.
- The student has presented sufficient evidence to warrant reconsideration of the original academic decision, and the responsible faculty is not available for consultation.

A decision to modify an academic decision in the absence of the responsible instructor/faculty member will be fully documented by the Associate Dean and communicated to the responsible instructor/faculty member via GBC email upon their return to the College.

If a resolution is not reached and the student still wishes to challenge the academic decision, **the Associate Dean advises the student of their right to file a Stage 2 Academic Appeal and has 5 business days to do so.** This outcome is communicated by the Associate Dean, via GBC email, to the student and relevant instructor/faculty member(s).

Step 7

Please review and complete the five-step process outlined on the "[How do I appeal a grade?](#)" webpage. Before a Stage 2 Academic Appeal can be considered, you must first complete all Stage 1 requirements, including meeting with your instructor and Associate Dean (or Dean) and exhausting all available resolution options at the program level.

Once your [Stage 1 Student Intake Form](#) has been reviewed and approved for progression to Stage 2, you will receive a confirmation email containing your **Case ID number** and instructions for completing the formal Stage 2 Academic Appeal Application.

Step 1

STAGE 2 Academic Appeal

Timeline: Within 5 business days of meeting with the Associate Dean

Action: Upon approval to proceed to Stage 2, the appellant will receive an email containing a link to the Academic Appeal Application Microsoft Form, the appellant has 5 business days to complete this form. When completing the form, please carefully check your email and **copy and paste the Case ID exactly** as provided in the approval email. ***The Case ID is case-sensitive; therefore, please ensure there are no extra spaces before or after the ID.***

All supporting documentation must be uploaded directly through the Microsoft Form at the time of submission.

If you are unable or choose not to use the Microsoft Form, you may request an Adobe PDF fillable version of the Academic Appeal Application by emailing appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca. Please note that students using the PDF version are responsible for submitting the completed application and all required supporting documentation within the applicable appeal timelines.

Please note: Students using the PDF version are responsible for emailing all required supporting documents along with their completed form to appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca within the specified appeal timelines.

Step 2

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the appellant's submission of their Stage 2 – Academic Appeals Application form.

Action: Within five (5) business days of receiving the appellant's Stage 2 Academic Appeal submission, the Associate Dean must complete the [Associate Dean Review Form](#) and upload all relevant supporting documentation, including scanned copies of any applicable records, through the Microsoft Forms submission process.

Step 3

Timeline: Within 10 business days of the appellant's submission

Action: The alternate Academic Appeal Review Moderator completes the Pre-Hearing Review, with one of the following three outcomes:

- a) **Academic appeal hearing is granted.** Both appellant's and Associate Dean's submissions meet the specified criteria (academic issue falls within the scope of the Academic Appeals policy, documentation is provided, timelines are met, Stage 1 procedure is exhausted). The Review Moderator emails the Appeal Moderator, and a hearing is scheduled. The academic appeal proceeds to Stage 2, Step 4.
- b) **Academic appeal hearing is denied.** The appellant's submission fails to specify official grounds, provide documentation, meet the timeline, and/or exhaust Stage 1 academic appeal procedures. The Review Moderator drafts a letter explaining this decision and sends it to the Appeals Moderator, the appellant, the respondent, and the Associate Dean.
- c) **Inconclusive – more information, investigation, discussion, alternative resolution or redirection is required.** Should the Review Moderator determine that more information is required before a decision can be rendered or that the issue falls outside the scope of the Academic Appeals policy, the issue is referred to the appropriate College department. The appellant and respondent are informed of the outcome by email.

Step 4

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the Review Moderator's email to the Appeals Moderator.

Action: If an academic appeal hearing has been granted, the Appeals Moderator schedules the hearing and notifies all participants in writing of the hearing date, time, and location. The hearing will be scheduled on a timely basis.

If a hearing has been denied, the Appeals Moderator sends the decision letter to the appellant, the respondent, and the Associate Dean.

Step 5

Timeline: Up to 5 business days prior to the academic appeal hearing date

Action: The Appeals Moderator circulates the names of all academic appeal hearing participants (appellant, advisor, respondent, Associate Dean, and Academic Appeal Committee members) and attaches an electronic version of the Academic Appeal Hearings Manual for their review.

Step 6

Timeline: Up to 2 business days prior to the academic appeal hearing

Action: The appellant informs the Appeals Moderator of any concerns over Academic Appeals Committee members, if applicable. Similarly, Academic Appeals Committee members inform the Appeals Moderator of any possible conflict of interest.

Step 7

Timeline: During the academic appeal hearing

Action: The Hearing takes place following the procedures outlined in the Academic Appeal Hearings Manual.

Step 8

Timeline: Within 3 business days of the academic appeal hearing

Action: The Moderator submits the Decision Memo and the signed Academic Appeal Hearing Decision Form to the Appeals Moderator. The Moderator then sends the Program Recommendations arising from the Hearing (if applicable) to the Office of the Vice-President, Academic.

Step 9

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the academic appeal hearing

Action: The Appeals Moderator emails a letter to the appellant, the respondent, and Associate Dean outlining the Academic Appeal Committee's decision.

APPENDIX 2, GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

1. Merit of Work

An academic decision that does not accurately reflect the student's demonstrated abilities, actions, and/or achievements.

Required Documentation:

- Specific and detailed reasons, in writing, as to why the academic decision does not reflect the student's demonstrated abilities, actions, and/or achievements.
- Any documentary evidence from course notes, textbooks, assignment rubrics, placement supervision records, emails, evaluations, or other relevant course materials.

2. Illness and/or Disability

An illness or disability that significantly affected the student's academic performance. Disability may include medical, mental health, physical and other as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Required Documentation:

- Medical Form or equivalent documentation completed by a registered health professional (see Medical Form, Appendix 5). Documentation will be viewed in confidence only by the Academic Appeals Committee Moderator.

3. Compassionate

Unforeseen events or circumstances that may have seriously impacted the student's academic performance (including ability to complete course requirements and meet deadlines). This may include the death of a family member, a legal issue, or other life circumstances.

Required Documentation:

Some documents might include:

- ✓ Death certificate
- ✓ Funeral notice
- ✓ Legal notice (e.g., eviction notice)

4. Course management

A significant departure from the course outline provided at the outset of the semester, which has negatively affected the student's academic performance. This may include a failure to return graded work in a timely manner during the semester.

Required Documentation:

- ✓ Course out line/course management document.
- ✓ Specific and detailed reasons, in writing, as to where the deviation occurred and how this deviation affected academic performance.

5. Policy Violation

An academic grade or decision that the student believes is invalid because a decision-maker failed to follow a College rule (policy), procedure, or established practice.

Required Documentation:

- Reference the policy, procedure, or established practice and the alleged error. Explain how this has affected academic performance.

APPENDIX 3, ACADEMIC APPEAL APPLICATION FORM

Student Section – To Be Completed by the Student

Important Notice: Stage 2 Academic Appeal Application Process

To initiate a Stage 2 Academic Appeal, students must complete the Academic Appeal Application through Microsoft Forms. This is the official method for submitting a Stage 2 appeal.

Students are eligible to access the Stage 2 Academic Appeal Application only after their **Stage 1 Student Intake Form** has been reviewed and approved. Upon approval, the student will receive:

- A unique **Case ID**; and
- A link to the **Academic Appeal Application Form** via their George Brown College email account.

Please ensure that you:

- Use the **Case ID** provided in your approval email when completing and submitting the Academic Appeal Application Form.
- Enter the Case ID exactly as provided. The Case ID is case-sensitive, and no additional spaces should be included before or after the ID.
- Upload all supporting documentation directly through the form (e.g., relevant emails, assessments, grading rubrics, course outlines, medical documentation, accommodation documentation, and any other evidence supporting your appeal).
- Ensure all required documentation is submitted at the time of application, as incomplete submissions may delay the review process.

Please note that a Case ID is generated only after the Stage 1 Intake Review has been completed and approval to proceed to Stage 2 has been granted.

APPENDIX 4, ASSOCIATE DEAN REVIEW FORM

➔ Access to the **Associate Dean Review Form** will be automatically provided to the Associate Dean once the student's **Stage 1 Academic Appeal Intake Form** has been reviewed and approved by the Appeals Moderator to proceed to **Stage 2 of the Academic Appeal process**.

APPENDIX 5, MEDICAL FORM

➔ Access the Adobe PDF Fillable Form here: [Medical Form](#)

Medical Documentation Instructions

If you are submitting an appeal based on **Illness and/or Disability**, please complete the **Adobe Fillable PDF Medical Form**, print it, and have it completed, signed, and stamped by your licensed physician or other registered health professional.

The completed Medical Form should be uploaded as part of your supporting documentation when submitting either:

- The **Stage 1 Student Academic Appeal Intake Form**; or
- The **Stage 2 Academic Appeal Application Form**.

If the completed Medical Form is not available at the time you submit your Stage 1 Intake Form or Stage 2 Application, you may submit it separately by email to appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca as soon as it becomes available.

To ensure your documentation is matched to your appeal file, please include your **full name, student number, and Case ID** (if one has been assigned) in the subject line of your email.