



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 5

 APPENDIX 1, PROCEDURES 6

 APPENDIX 2, GROUNDS FOR APPEAL 10

 APPENDIX 3, ACADEMIC APPEAL APPLICATION FORM 12

 APPENDIX 4, CHAIR REVIEW FORM 16

 APPENDIX 5, MEDICAL FORM 17

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, 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 Senior 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 publically announced that it is not open for business.
Chair	For purposes of this policy, 'Chair' 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 'Chair' or 'Director' (in the absence of a Chair), 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 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 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 faculty members and Chairs 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, faculty members, and Chairs 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
- An academic dishonesty charge (e.g., plagiarism, cheating)
- 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.

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, faculty members, and Chairs 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 a faculty member or Chair fails to adhere to the timelines this may result in the student's appeal being granted.

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: Chair Review Form
- Appendix 5: Medical Form

RELATED POLICIES

- AODA Accessibility Policy
- AODA, Customer Service Standard Policy
- Code of Conduct – Academic Staff
- Curriculum Policy
- Disability Policy
- Educational Complaint Resolution Policy
- Office of the Registrar's Policies
- Persons of Harm Policy
- Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

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 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 faculty member

Action: The faculty member responds to the student's inquiry and sets up a meeting. If the 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 faculty member

Action: The student and 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 faculty member

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

Step 5

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

Action: The Chair 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 Chair

Action: The student and Chair 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 Chair then meets with the responsible 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 in order to accommodate 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.



Academic Appeals Policy Page 7

If the responsible 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 Chair will seek input and advice from another faculty member who is familiar with the course in order to render a decision.

The Chair may modify the academic decision if:

- In the Chair's opinion, the 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 faculty member will be fully documented by the Chair and communicated to the responsible 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 Chair 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 Chair, via GBC email, to the student and relevant faculty member(s).

STAGE 2 Academic Appeal

Step 1

Timeline: Within 5 business days of meeting with the Chair

Action: The appellant fills out an Academic Appeal Application form (Appendix 3) and, using only their George Brown College email address, emails the completed form along with scanned copies of all supporting documentation to: appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca WITH COPY (cc:) to the Program Chair.

Step 2

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the appellant's submission

Action: The Chair emails the completed Chair Review Form (Appendix 4) and scanned copies of all supporting documentation to: appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca

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 Chair'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 Office of Academic Excellence 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 Office of Academic Excellence, the appellant, the respondent, and the Chair.
- 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 back to the Division or 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 Office of Academic Excellence.

Action: If an academic appeal hearing has been granted, the Office of Academic Excellence 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.

Step 5

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

Action: The Office of Academic Excellence circulates the names of all academic appeal hearing participants (appellant, advisor, respondent, Chair, and Academic Appeal Committee members) to all participating 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 Office of Academic Excellence of any concerns over Academic Appeals Committee members, if applicable. Similarly, Academic Appeals Committee members inform the Office of Academic Excellence 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



Academic Appeals Policy Page 9

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

Step 9

Timeline: Within 5 business days of the academic appeal hearing

Action: The Office of Academic Excellence emails a letter to the appellant, the respondent, and Chair 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 outline/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 Divisional or 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

(TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT)

A: Student Information

Please provide accurate information. If you cannot be contacted, you risk missing important deadlines and information and may jeopardize your ability to further appeal.

Please note that if the Office of Academic Excellence is unable to contact you and you have not contacted the same within the required timeframes, the request will be deemed “abandoned” and no further action will be taken. Please complete information below:

Last Name(s)

First Name(s)

Preferred Name (if different from above)

Student I.D. #

GBC Email Address

Phone # (primary)

Phone # (additional)

Street Address

City

Postal Code

B: Details of Academic Appeal

1. Type of Academic Issue

Please place a checkmark beside the type of academic issue(s) you are seeking to appeal. Only one issue per appeal.

Final Grade in a Course

Grade within a Course that could not be reassessed (e.g., oral presentation, performance, practical exam, placement) or that was denied reassessment

Probationary or Withdrawal Decision

Academic Dishonesty Charge (e.g., cheating, plagiarism)

PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) Decision



ACADEMIC APPEAL APPLICATION FORM, Page 3/4

4. Supporting Documentation

Please place a checkmark to acknowledge that you have attached copies of relevant documentation to support your academic appeal, and list these documents in the area provided below.

Yes, I have attached copies of relevant documentation to support my academic appeal.

(Examples include: timeline of events leading to the academic appeal; chronological summary of attempts to resolve the academic issue; relevant emails; course outline; graded assessments; assignment rubrics; medical form; other documents. Do not send Academic policy documents)

List of Attached Documents:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

C: Application Submission

Note: After meeting with your Chair, you have only **5 business days** to submit your application along with scanned copies of all supporting documentation by email to: appealsmoderator@georgebrown.ca with a copy (cc:) to the Program Chair.

Please place a checkmark beside each statement that you acknowledge to be true:

I have read George Brown College’s Academic Appeals policy.

I am aware of my right to meet with a Student Association advisor to clarify any questions I may have about the academic appeals process.

I have met with my faculty member and attempted to resolve my academic issue(s).

Please specify the meeting date: _____



ACADEMIC APPEAL APPLICATION FORM, Page 4/4

- I have met with my Academic Chair and attempted to resolve my academic issue(s).
Please specify the meeting date: _____
- I certify that the statements I have made in this Academic Appeal Application are true and complete.
- I certify that the supporting documents I have submitted are authentic.
- I understand that my academic appeal will be deemed to have lapsed if I do not follow the timeframes stipulated in the Academic Appeals policy.
- I understand that by submitting this application I am requesting to present my case in person at an Academic Appeal Hearing.
- I understand that the Office of Academic Excellence will contact me - no later than 15 business days after my submission - to inform me of my academic appeal hearing date, time, and location.
- I understand that my request for an appeal hearing could be denied if I do not provide evidence to support my grounds for appeal.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX 4, CHAIR REVIEW FORM

A: Academic Appeal Information

Student's Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Course Code: _____

Course Name: _____

Instructor's Name: _____

Program Name: _____

B: Chair's Review

Please place a checkmark beside each statement that you acknowledge to be true, and specify details as required:

- I have met with the student and listened to the details of their academic issue(s).
Please specify the meeting date: _____
- I have communicated with the involved faculty member and understand the steps taken to try to resolve the issue(s).
- I have reviewed all related supporting documentation from both the student and the faculty member.
- I have had the student's work reassessed.
- I have made every effort to resolve the student's academic issue(s).
- The student's academic issue was not resolved through my review.
- I have attached relevant supporting documentation (e.g.: timeline of events leading to the academic appeal; chronological summary of attempts to resolve the issue; relevant emails; course outline; graded assessments; assignment rubrics; other documents).

List of Attached Documents: _____

Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____



APPENDIX 5, MEDICAL FORM

Medical Form

Verification of student illness, injury, or disability for academic consideration. Form to be completed by a registered health professional.

1. Section to be completed by Student:

I, (print name) _____, Student # _____ authorize this registered health professional to provide the below confidential information to George Brown College. The College may contact this person to verify the information provided, but may not request additional information without my permission.

Student's Signature: X _____

Date: _____

NOTE: Please retain a copy of this completed form for your records

2. Section to be completed by Registered Health Professional:

Please indicate below the impact of the present medical episode (illness, injury, disability) and/or treatment on the student's ability to perform academically.

Impact on Academic Functioning – Please checkmark correct category

- Critical** – Unable to function academically (e.g., unable to attend classes or fulfill any academic obligations)
- Significant** – Significantly impaired in ability to fulfill academic obligations (e.g., unable to complete an assignment, unable to write a test/examination)
- Moderate** – Able to fulfill some academic obligations but performance considerably affected (e.g., decreased concentration, decreased participation in class, assignments may be late)
- Mild** – Able to fulfill academic obligations with performance only marginally affected
- Insignificant** – Negligible effect on ability to fulfill academic obligations

For the present medical episode, please indicate the following:

Date of Acute Onset: _____

Date of Anticipated Recovery: _____

Additional Comments:



Medical Form, Page 2/2

3. Verification by Registered Medical Professional

Name (please print): _____

Licensing Body and Registration #: _____

Date of Consultation: _____

Business Stamp, with address and telephone:

This information is collected under the authority of Section 2 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002 for the purpose of administering an academic appeal and otherwise administering the student-college relationship. If you have questions please contact the Freedom of Information Coordinator, at 416-415-5000 ext.4646.

George Brown College acknowledges the University of Toronto's *Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form* upon which this Medical Form was based.