

# ACADEMIC AND GRADE APPEALS

## I. Introduction

Under the provisions of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents, students may appeal grades or other evaluations of their academic progress which they believe to have been prejudiced or capricious. In cases in which informal attempts fail to resolve the problem, appeals or complaints should henceforth be made in writing to the appropriate individual or group as described below. All participants should act as expeditiously as possible to resolve the matter.

In cases of appeals concerning matters other than grades, the campus Graduate Council will serve as the Appeals Committee.

For purposes of considering appeal of grades and other course evaluations (see Section IV), the campus Graduate Council will reconstitute itself as a Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee. It will be augmented by an additional student to be recommended by the Graduate Student Association. In the absence of a functioning Graduate Student Association, the additional student representative would be selected by the Dean for Graduate Studies. In these deliberations, both students will be voting members of the Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee.

The Dean for Graduate Studies will not be present during deliberations of the Appeals Committee or the Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee; a member other than the Dean will act as chair. Any members of the Appeals Committee or the Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee who has a conflict of interest in the case (e.g., same department or program as one of the parties, on the Advisory/Supervisory Committee, etc.) should be replaced through *ad hoc* appointment(s) made by the Dean for Graduate Studies.

## II. Intercampus Student

When a student's graduate program consists of registrations essentially or entirely on one campus, the Appeals Committee of the campus administratively responsible for the program will constitute the appeal board.

When a student's graduate program includes substantial registrations on a campus other than the one administratively responsible for the program, three members of the Appeals Committee for the other campus will be designated by the Dean for Graduate Studies on that campus to augment the Appeals Committee on the campus administratively responsible for the program. In this case, the augmented Appeals Committee will constitute the appeal board.

The decision concerning augmentation of a campus Appeals Committee for a specific appeal involving registrations on a campus other than the one administratively responsible for the student's program will be made by the Deans for Graduate Studies on the campuses involved.

## III. Appeal of Matters other than Grades

A. Graduate students holding admission with Unclassified Status in the Graduate College, admission with a M.S. objective, or admission with a doctoral objective (but prior to the appointment of a doctoral Supervisory Committee) should use the following procedure for appeals concerning general academic matters, other than grades or

other course evaluations (e.g., constitution of programs, suspension or dismissal).

1. Initially, after official notification is received by the student, the appeal or complaint should be discussed with the student's Advisor/Supervisor in an attempt to resolve the conflict informally.
  2. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the appeal or concern may be submitted in writing to the (Program or Interdepartmental Area) Graduate Committee administratively responsible for the student's program. This written appeal must be presented within thirty days after official notification of an action is received by the student.
  3. If the appeal to the Graduate Committee is denied, within thirty days of receipt of the denial notice a written appeal may be made to the Graduate Council for the campus administratively responsible for the student's program. At this point the student may be accompanied and advised by legal counsel. During these proceedings, legal counsel may not cross-examine or otherwise formally participate. The Graduate Council may also wish to have legal counsel present. Normally, the Graduate Council will be the final appeals body (for exceptions, see paragraph III.C).
- B. Graduate students holding admission with a doctoral objective in the Graduate College and for whom a doctoral Supervisory Committee has been appointed should use the following procedure for appeals concerning general academic matters or evaluations:
1. Initially, after notification is received by the student, the appeal or complaint should be discussed with the student's Supervisor in an attempt to resolve the conflict informally.
  2. If resolution is not achieved, the appeal may be submitted to the student's Supervisory Committee within thirty days after the meeting which resulted in no resolution of the complaint.
  3. If resolution is not achieved, the appeal may be submitted in writing to the (Program or Interdepartmental Area) Graduate Committee administratively responsible for the student's graduate program within thirty days of receipt of the denial notice by the student.
  4. If the appeal to the Graduate Committee is denied, a written appeal may be made within thirty days of receipt of the denial notice to the Graduate Council for the campus administratively responsible for the student's graduate program. At this point the student may be accompanied and advised by legal counsel. During these proceedings, legal counsel may not cross-examine or otherwise formally participate. The campus Graduate Council may also wish to have legal counsel present. Normally, this will be the final appeals body (for exceptions, see paragraph III.C.).
- C. Role of the Executive Graduate Council
1. In most cases, the decision of the campus Graduate Council will be final. Only under special circumstances will the Executive Graduate Council hear an appeal from the decision of the campus Graduate Council. These circumstances are limited to occasions where the Executive Graduate Council believes that:
    - a. The campus Graduate Council has violated some element of due process or fair procedure (example: the concerned parties were not allowed to present their cases fully to the Graduate Council);
    - b. The campus Graduate Council has failed to examine or give adequate weight to important evidence relevant to one party's position;

- c. The campus Graduate Council has given undue weight to evidence not pertinent to the case; or
- d. Some gross miscarriage of justice would be perpetrated if the decision of the campus Graduate Council were allowed to stand.

It is up to the discretion of the Executive Graduate Council to decide if any of these conditions exist.

2. Appeals to the Executive Graduate Council must be made in writing and must specifically outline the grounds for the appeal. Such appeal must be made within 20 working days of the day the decision of the campus Graduate Council is received. (Working days will not include those days the University is not in session.)
3. The Executive Graduate Council must make a decision to hear the appeal or not to hear the appeal within 30 working days after receipt of the appeal. Acceptance or denial of jurisdiction over the appeal will be made in writing.
4. The decision of the Executive Graduate Council on the merits of the case will be made and transmitted to the concerned parties within 40 working days after the decision to hear the appeal.
5. No person who was a member of the department or campus Graduate Council involved in the case will be eligible to participate in the decisions of the Executive Graduate Council either to decide whether the case should be heard or to decide the merits of the case.

## IV. Grade Appeals

Students who believe that evaluation of their academic progress in a course has been prejudiced or capricious, may appeal that grade or evaluation as follows:

- A. Initially, an attempt should be made to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor of the course for which the grade was received.
- B. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the appeal may be submitted in writing to the chair of the department in which the course was taken.
- C. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the appeal may be submitted in writing (unmcgraduatelstudies@unmc.edu) to the Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee within two weeks following reporting or posting of the grade. This committee may change a student's evaluation if there is sufficient evidence that the evaluation of a student by a faculty member has been improper. When a student takes a course in a department that is administratively based on another campus, the student must follow the grade appeals procedure for that campus. In cases involving dual-listed courses, appeals should be made through procedures of the academic unit that granted admission to the course.
- D. The Graduate Faculty-Student Appeals Committee will be the final authority in resolution of grade appeals, except that either the student or the faculty member issuing the grade may within ten days submit an appeal in writing to the Dean for Graduate Studies setting forth his or her reasons for believing he or she was not accorded a fair hearing. The Dean will review the record and facts of the case and may return the matter to the Committee for reconsideration. The decision of the Dean as to whether the case should be reopened will be final.