

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Academic Policies

Information about the University's academic policies, including what is expected of students and how progress toward graduation is measured, can be found in the *Undergraduate Catalog* and online at www.neu.edu/registrar/catsugd.html.

Appeals Policies and Procedures

Undergraduate Student Academic Appeals Procedures¹

It is the policy of the University that all students shall be treated fairly in evaluations made of their academic performance, standing, and progress. The University presumes that academic judgments by its faculty are fair, consistent, and objective. Students must understand that the substitution of a different academic judgment for that of the original evaluator is a serious intrusion upon teaching prerogatives. Nonetheless, the University believes it is essential to provide an appeals mechanism to students who believe that they were erroneously, capriciously, or otherwise unfairly treated in an academic or cooperative education determination. This includes claims of misinterpretation or inequitable application of any academic provision of the University's *Undergraduate Catalog*, *Undergraduate Student Handbook/Planner*, *Faculty Handbook*, *Cooperative Education Handbook*, or *Graduate Student Handbook*.

In most cases, students should first discuss their concerns with the faculty member who taught the course to see if it is possible to reach agreement on the issue(s). If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this discussion, or if the student is not comfortable discussing the issue with the instructor, the student should request a meeting with the department chair, or a person named by the chair, to attempt a department-level resolution of the appeal. If these attempts to informally resolve the issue fail, the student can enter the formal procedure at college level as follows.

Step 1

A student may appeal an academic determination by submitting a written statement (the "Statement"). If the appeal concerns academic probation, it is submitted to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. If the appeal concerns a grade or course evaluation, it is submitted to the dean of the college in which the course was given. All appeals of grades should be initiated and resolved before the student graduates. If a student wishes to dispute a grade in his or her final semester, this must be done within forty-five days of graduation. If the appeal concerns a cooperative education determination, it is submitted to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. The Statement must specify the details of the action or judgment and the basis for the appeal.²

All parties shall cooperate and act expeditiously in processing the appeal to completion. Though students are always entitled to seek the advice of legal counsel, students may not be represented by a lawyer in the informal or formal academic appeal procedures. A student may consult with the vice president or the vice provost or their designees at any point in these

¹ In the academic appeals procedures described herein, "dean" refers to the dean of the appropriate college or a designee, and "vice president" refers to the vice president for Student Affairs or a designee.

² The Statement shall include when the problem occurred, who made the disputed evaluation, the nature of the evaluation, and what resolution the student would like to see.

procedures for advice or assistance. University officials may take whatever steps they deem reasonably appropriate to achieve resolution of the problem at any stage of these procedures. The Statement should be submitted within twenty working days (four calendar weeks) of the day when the student learns of the academic determination in question. If a student feels that he or she has been the victim of harassment or of discrimination prohibited by law or by University policy, he or she should consult with the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity as soon as he or she becomes aware of alleged prohibited harassment or discrimination and is not required to wait until a term grade or determination is received before seeking advice or redress. If the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity is advised of such alleged prohibited conduct as part of an academic appeal (see below), the appeal shall be pursued and investigated through the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity first. In such cases, the student should submit the appeal to the appropriate dean(s) described in this step, with a copy also given to the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity. Following a resolution of the sexual harassment/discrimination issues, any remaining academic issues will be addressed, at the request of the student, according to the academic appeals procedures.

Step 2

The dean shall respond to the student in writing, including specific instructions for the student to seek an informal resolution to the matter, unless such course of action, as outlined by the student in his or her Statement, is demonstrably futile. The dean's directions shall include discussing the matter with the person whom the student identifies as involved in the matter. If the student is not satisfied with the informal resolution, the dean shall discuss the matter with the department chairperson (where one exists) or equivalent supervisor and the dean of the college in which the faculty member involved in the matter serves, who shall attempt to effect an informal resolution. The student shall also have the right to discuss the matter with the chairperson (where one exists) or equivalent supervisor in which department the faculty member involved in the matter serves.

If the appeal involves allegations of prohibited harassment or discrimination, the dean shall consult with the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity before making this response, and shall, as part of this response, explain the role that the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity will play in Steps 2 and 3 of this procedure.

A copy of this response shall be sent to the department chairperson or equivalent supervisor of the appropriate unit.

Step 3

If the appeal cannot be resolved informally within thirty days of the student's original submission of his or her Statement to the dean, or if he or she is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter at Step 2, the student may proceed with the appeal through his or her college's established academic appeals procedure. The dean or the academic standing committee, as applicable, must provide the student and the involved faculty member with a written report of his/its finding(s) and decision.

- This step involves a review by an academic standing committee making the recommendation to the dean. The student may obtain a copy of the operating rules of the academic standing committee from the dean of the college involved.
- In appeals involving allegations of prohibited harassment or discrimination, the dean or academic standing committee shall receive a report of the findings of the investigation of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity for incorporation into its own report on matters left unresolved by that finding that were referred to it. The dean or committee shall be without authority to reverse or modify the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity finding or resolution.

Step 4

If the student or the involved faculty member is not satisfied with the dean's disposition of the matter or if the appeal has not been resolved within thirty days after originally submitted to the dean pursuant to Step 1, he or she may further pursue the matter by requesting in writing

within fourteen calendar days that the University convene an academic appeals resolution committee to review the issue. Students may obtain information on this process in either the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (104 Ell) or the Provost's Office (112 HA). This committee has been designated as the final authority on these matters. This request must be made within ten working days of the finding of the academic standing committee in Step 3.

1. The academic appeals resolution committee includes:
 - the vice president for Student Affairs or a designee,
 - the student's faculty advisor, or in a case in which the faculty advisor is involved in the dispute, a faculty member from the student's major college, department, or area of specialization,
 - two faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee (if the appeal is based on a cooperative education determination, one of the faculty members shall be a member of the cooperative education faculty, but not from the student's area of study), and
 - a representative of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity (if the appeal had at any point involved a matter of sexual harassment/discrimination).The chairperson shall be elected from among the committee's three faculty members, except that in the case where the student's faculty advisor agrees to sit on the committee, the advisor shall be ineligible to serve as committee chair.

2. Preliminary Matters
If the academic appeals resolution committee determines, by a majority vote, that the appeal is patently without substance or merit, it may dismiss the appeal.

3. Investigation
The academic appeals resolution committee shall investigate the matter under appeal as quickly as possible by studying the relevant documents, interviewing the parties (especially the student and the involved faculty member), and taking any other action it deems appropriate. At no time shall the committee be bound by rules of evidence but shall at all times conduct itself in a manner that is not arbitrary or capricious. The academic appeals resolution committee may, but is not required to, hold a hearing prior to resolving the issue(s). However, in all instances, the student and the involved faculty member shall have the right to appear and testify separately and privately before the academic appeals resolution committee. The student shall have the right to have an advocate from the University community present during his/her testimony to the academic appeals resolution committee.

4. Authority to Act
The academic appeals resolution committee has been designated as the final authority on these matters. At the conclusion of its investigation, the academic appeals resolution committee shall by majority vote resolve the issue(s) by either upholding the finding of the academic standing committee or dean, in which case no further appeal is available, or granting such relief to the student as the academic appeals resolution committee deems appropriate.

- a. The academic appeals resolution committee may not determine a resolution that contradicts the prior findings or actions of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity with respect to elements of this appeal.
- b. In the event of a tie vote, the action of the academic standing committee or dean shall be considered upheld.

5. Resolution
All direct parties to the appeal shall be promptly informed in writing of the decisions and actions taken (i.e., the Report) during this academic appeals procedure.

6. Report
A written Report of the appeal and its resolution shall be submitted by the chairperson of the academic appeals resolution committee to the student, the involved faculty member, the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee, the vice president, the vice provost for undergraduate education, the registrar, and the dean.
7. Action
The dean(s) or his/her designee in the involved college(s) shall take whatever action is necessary to implement fully the resolution of the academic appeals resolution committee. This includes reporting the change of grade to the registrar.
8. Appeal
No further appeal can be instituted by the student or the involved faculty member with respect to the issue(s) raised at any level of the formal appeals resolution procedure once adjudicated.

Code of Student Conduct

www.osccr.neu.edu

(Northeastern University reserves the right to amend or change the Code of Student Conduct as needed. Adopted November 12, 1971; last revised in March 2008.)

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to set expectations of behavior that promote the safety and welfare of the Northeastern University community. The University seeks to provide a supportive environment that is conducive to learning, the pursuit of truth, the exchange of knowledge, the intellectual development of students, and the general good of society. In those instances where violations of the behavioral expectations occur, Northeastern University has developed policies and procedures to protect the rights of members of the University community, individually and collectively.

Applicability of Code

The Code of Conduct applies to all registered undergraduate and graduate, full- and part-time students as well as continuing education and online students enrolled at Northeastern University, as well as all student groups and organizations. Student behavior occurring off campus that is in violation of the Code or local, state, or federal laws and could adversely affect the educational mission of the University or its relationship with the surrounding community may subject students to discipline pursuant to the Code of Student Conduct. It applies to students acting on their own volition as well as in recognized student groups and organizations.

Violations of the Code of Conduct are handled through the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

When a student withdraws or takes a leave of absence from the University after engaging in conduct that may violate any of the University's policies, rules, regulations, or standards of conduct, but before the alleged violation has been adjudicated through the conduct process, a block will be placed on the student's record. The block will prevent a student from re-enrolling at the University until the violations have been resolved.

General Expectations

As citizens and as members of an academic community, students enjoy the same basic rights and are bound by the same responsibilities as all citizens. The campus cannot be considered a sanctuary from the general law. Therefore, the University reserves the right to inform police or other appropriate authorities when student behavior appears to violate criminal laws.