

**Queen's University
School of Rehabilitation Therapy**

Appeals Against Academic Decisions

The School of Rehabilitation Therapy (SRT) follows the general policies and procedures for *Appeals Against Academic Decisions* that have been documented by the School of Graduate Studies. Below is a summary of this documentation, customized for the SRT and its administrative structure and titles.

General

Academic problems sometimes arise because of misunderstandings that are resolvable through informal discussion. Before pursuing formal appeal process, the administration of SRT encourages the speedy resolution of academic problems informally and through normal administrative routes (e.g., Program Chairs, Director of the School). If you are concerned about academic problems, you are encouraged to first seek advice and support from someone who you feel will be sympathetic and fair minded (e.g., a trusted faculty member, your academic supervisor/mentor, a friend, a colleague or a University Dispute Resolution Advisor). If this informal approach does not lead to a resolution of the academic problem, then you may request that your academic appeal be heard by the Academic Appeal Board. This Board is operated by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), not SRT. Academic assessments, decisions or regulations may be appealed only on procedural grounds. Course marks or exam committee decisions cannot be overturned; however alternative actions (including the possibilities of further exams) may be ordered. If you appeal to the SGS Academic Appeal Board, you should be aware that material you submit in support of your appeal will be distributed to other parties participating in the appeal. Those individuals may include a course instructor, faculty members in the Program, the Program Chair, and the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy.

Note: Throughout this document, 1 week = 5 work days; 2 weeks = 10 work days.

Structure of the Academic Appeal Board

For any appeal, the Appeal Board shall comprise two faculty members, one of whom will be the Chair, and a graduate student. At least one faculty member and the graduate student shall be from the same general domain as the appellant (i.e., Faculty of Health Sciences). Please refer to the School of Graduate Studies document *Appeals Against Academic Decisions* for details about the selection and structure of the Appeal Board.

Normal Steps in the Appeal Procedures

Step 1: Students wishing to question an academic decision, other than those relating to thesis outcomes or an allegation of academic dishonesty, an appeal must first be made informally to the instructor or Program Chair whose decision is being questioned. Student must ensure that the instructor or Program Chair is aware of all the facts which they believe are relevant to the reconsideration of the decision. This informal appeal should be done within two weeks of the receipt of the decision. If students are reluctant to approach the instructor or Program Chair personally, they may seek the assistance of a University Grievance Advisor or other university advisor to do so on their behalf.

Step 2 – Part A: If students are unable to resolve the problem by informal discussion, and are not satisfied with the outcome of Step 1, an appeal may be lodged with the appropriate Student Progress and Awards Committee (i.e., Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Sciences) who will immediately inform the Director of School of Rehabilitation Therapy. The Student Progress and Awards Committee must respond to the appeal within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

Step 2 – Part B: If students are not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2 – Part A, they may appeal to the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy. Students may also proceed directly to Step 4. If students opt for Step 2 – Part B, the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy will convene a committee made up of two SRT faculty members who have not participated in Step 2 - Part 1 and one other faculty member from another School or Faculty. If students opt for Step 2 – Part B, then any request to subsequently proceed to Step 3 or, if Step 3 is skipped, Step 4, must take place within two weeks of receiving the written response from the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy (i.e., Step 2 – Part B).

Step 3: If students are not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2 – Part B, they may seek the assistance of the Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies for a further attempt at informal resolution. Students may also proceed directly to Step 4. If students opt for Step 3, any request to subsequently proceed to Step 4 must take place within two weeks of receiving the written response from Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Step 4: If students are still not satisfied, they may request that the Secretary of the Academic Appeal Board of the School of Graduate Studies convene an Academic Appeal Board to hear their appeal. This request must occur within two weeks of receiving the written response from the Student Progress and Awards Committee (Step 2 – Part A), the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy (Step 2 – Part B), or the Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (Step 3). Once the request is made, students must follow-up with a submission of a written statement of appeal within one week. Specific instructions about the content of the written statement are provided in the SGS policy on *Appeals Against Academic Decisions*.

The Academic Appeal Board may decide not to consider the appeal if the document/evidence submitted is substantially incomplete, defective, or inaccurate. If the decision is that the document/evidence submitted is substantially incomplete, defective, or inaccurate and if the student can rectify the issues within two weeks from the date of receipt of this notice from the Chair, then the appeal proceedings will resume.

The Secretary of the Academic Appeal Board of the School of Graduate Studies shall inform the Student Progress and Awards Committee and the Director of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy of the student's appeal. An opportunity to respond in writing to the student's request for appeal will be provided. Instructions about the content of the response are provided in the SGS policy on *Appeals Against Academic Decisions*.

Refer to the SGS policy on *Appeals Against Academic Decisions* for further details on deadlines and documentation.

Step 5: For details of Step 5, refer to the SGS policy on *Appeals Against Academic Decisions*.

Appeal of Thesis Examination Committee Decision

If the appeal is concerned with the decision of a thesis examination committee the appeal should be made in writing to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies or, if the Dean was a member of the examining committee, to an Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The appeal should be made in writing and within two weeks of the examination. If the person to whom the appeal is sent is unable resolve the problem within two weeks and students are not satisfied, they have one week to submit a written request to the Secretary of the Academic Appeal Board of the School of Graduate Studies to convene an Academic Appeal Board to hear the appeal. The appeal procedure will then continue as described in Step 5 above.

Disposition of Appeals

Upon completing its review, the Academic Appeal Board may make one or more of the following dispositions:

- **Uphold the Appeal:** If the Academic Appeal Board upholds the students' appeal, it shall refer the matter back to the Program concerned with specific recommendations for settlement of the appeal. The Program shall report back to the Academic Appeal Board on the resolution of the appeal. The Academic Appeal Board shall retain jurisdiction over the appeal pending receipt of a report from the program.
- **Deny the Appeal:** If the Academic Appeal Board denies the appeal, it shall report to the parties to the appeal that no action shall be taken with respect to the appeal and dismiss the appeal. The decision of the Academic Appeal Board shall be final, unless the appeal is based on grounds of unfair procedures or allegations of bias. In this event, students may appeal further to the University Student Appeal Board.
- **Make Recommendations or Policy, Procedures and Principle to the School of Graduate Studies:** If the Academic Appeal Board, in hearing a case, identifies matters of policy, procedure or principle that have broad implications for the School of Graduate Studies, it should draw these to the attention of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.