

Appeals Policy

School of Rehabilitation Therapy

Approved by Academic Council: May 10, 2018

Revised: September 19, 2019

Effective Date: September 19, 2019

Administratively updated: June 11, 2021 to reflect alterations in University policies and URLs

Rationale and background

The students of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy (SRT) are also students in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) at Queen's University. Therefore, policies relating to student appeals within SGS and across the University as a whole apply to the students of SRT. The SRT has several programs, each of which monitors and makes academic decisions about the progress of its own students. These decisions have academic consequences and are appealable by the student. To ensure clarity in process for all parties involved in the appeals launched by students of SRT, this policy was developed.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all students enrolled in academic programs in the SRT.

Policy statements

1. This policy immediately supersedes all previous SRT policies related to student appeals, unless a student appeal is already in process.
2. The SRT is committed to ensuring that students receive fair treatment in the process of making academic decisions and determining consequences of those decisions. To this end, the processes used in the SRT are aligned with:
 - a. Queen's University Senate Student Academic Appeal Policy (SAAP), approved April 13, 2021, which is available at: [Student Academic Appeals Policy | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel \(queensu.ca\)](#)
 - b. General Regulations of the School of Graduate Studies, which are available at: [General Regulations | School of Graduate Studies \(queensu.ca\)](#). The specific policies relevant to appeals in the SRT include:
 - i. Appeals of an Assigned Grade in a Graduate Course:
 - ii. Appeals Against Academic Decisions:
3. Academic decisions made within the SRT take into account performance on assignments, examinations, clinical placements (as applicable), and/or professionalism as per the School's professionalism policy (<http://rehab.queensu.ca/programs/policies/professionalism>).
4. Academic decisions made within the SRT may only be appealed on the grounds of an alleged lapse of procedural fairness. A lapse of procedural fairness includes such things as failing to:
 - a. permit a student to be heard by an unbiased decision-maker;
 - b. follow applicable rules, regulations or university policy in a way that adversely affected a student's right to a fair process;
 - c. make a reasonable decision. A "reasonable" decision is one that is rational, thought out and supported by logical inferences from findings of fact. To be reasonable, the decision

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must contain adequate reasons for the conclusion; but, if there is more than one conclusion that may be reasonably drawn from the same facts, the choice of one conclusion over another does not make the decision unreasonable. A decision is unreasonable only if there is no line of analysis in the reasons for the decision that could reasonably have led the decision maker from the evidence before them to the conclusion they reached.

5. There are four levels of appeal internal to the SRT:
 - a. Instructor
 - b. Associate Director responsible for the student's program
 - c. Program-specific Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent
 - d. School of Rehabilitation Therapy Appeals Committee
6. The first two levels of appeal are considered informal, and are strongly encouraged. Informal appeals are intended to be collegial, professional interactions where students and instructors and/or an Associate Director attempt to resolve issues related to an academic decision through discussion and consensus.
7. Possible results of an informal appeal include:
 - a. Uphold the original academic decision (i.e., deny the appeal)
 - b. Uphold the appeal (i.e., agree that there was a lapse of procedural fairness that led to an unfair academic decision) and modify the original academic decision and/or agree to an alternative approach to resolve the issue (e.g., submit a new assignment, regrade an exam).
8. The second two levels of appeal are considered formal and should only be pursued when informal appeals and associated discussions do not result in a satisfactory resolution of procedural fairness.
9. Possible results of a formal appeal include:
 - a. Uphold the original academic decision (i.e., deny the appeal)
 - b. Uphold the appeal (i.e., agree that there was a lapse of procedural fairness that led to an unfair academic decision) and refer the matter back to the student's instructor or program (as appropriate) with specific recommendations for resolution.
10. At all levels of internal appeal, communications between students and faculty, and students and committee chairs must be timely. *Normally*, timely would be considered:
 - a. For students:
 - i. Student request for an appeal (formal or informal): within 5 working days of receiving an academic decision.
 - ii. Student submission of formal appeal documentation: within 5 working days of appeal request.
 - b. For instructors or Associate Directors involved in informal appeals:
 - i. Acknowledge request for an informal appeal/discussion of an academic decision: within 2 working days of receiving the request.
 - ii. Set up of informal meeting: within 5 working days of receiving a student request for an informal appeal.
 - iii. Documentation of any meeting (informal or formal): within 3 working days of the meeting.
 - c. For Progress and Awards Committee or SRT Appeals Committee:
 - i. Acknowledge request for a formal appeal: within 2 working days of receiving the request.

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- ii. Set up of and communication about formal appeal meeting: within 10 working days of receiving student request for a formal appeal.
 - iii. Documentation of formal appeal decisions: within 5 working days of committee meeting.
11. All parties recognize that normal timelines for communications and decisions regarding internal appeals should be reduced, to the extent possible, in situations where academic decisions have a direct impact on a student's ability to progress in their respective programs (e.g., a course failure may prevent progress to a fieldwork/clinical placement in a professional program).
12. Specific to the MScOT and MScPT programs, instructors and committee members involved in appeals have a professional responsibility to ensure that students have the necessary skills and competencies to deliver safe patient/client care, at a level appropriate to the student's level in the program. Therefore, in situations where an academic decision may impact a student's ability to continue to a fieldwork/clinical placement, appeals processes must carefully balance the student's right to continue while an appeal is in process against the potential risks to patients/clients, preceptors, placement sites and the University if the student continues.
13. The composition of each program's Student Progress and Awards committee is specified in the School's governance document. The composition of the SRT Appeals Committee includes the Director (or delegate) as Chair, a member of faculty from a program other than the one in which the student is enrolled, and a member of faculty from outside of the SRT who has no involvement with the student.
14. All documents related to academic decisions and student appeals shall be maintained in a secure location, separate from the student's primary academic file. Any electronic files shall be maintained on the School's shared drive in a restricted folder, indexed by program. At minimum, individuals with access to the restricted folder will include the Associate Director of the student's program and Program Assistant for the student's program. Additional individuals may be granted access, depending on the nature and level of appeal, and consequences imposed. In all cases, individuals with access must be minimized to maintain security of the information.
15. Appeal-related documents will be maintained for one year post-graduation or 5 years after withdrawal from the program.
16. Students shall be provided with copies of all documents related to academic decisions and related appeals.
17. Students will be provided with information about resources on campus available to support them during their appeal process, either verbally or in writing, including but not limited to:
 - a. School of Graduate Studies resources: [Staying Well | School of Graduate Studies \(queensu.ca\)](#)
 - b. Student Wellness: <https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/home>
 - c. Ombudsman: [Home | Office of the University Ombudsperson \(queensu.ca\)](#)
 - d. Link to the Queen's University Senate Student Academic Appeals Policy: [Student Academic Appeals Policy | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel \(queensu.ca\)](#).

Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities

Figure 1 summarizes the levels of appeal available to students, based on this policy, as well as SGS and Senate policy.

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Table 1 outlines the responsibilities of the student who has received an academic decision and is considering or launching an appeal.

Tables 2 and 3 outline the sequential roles and responsibilities of course instructors, Associate Directors, Progress and Awards Committees (or equivalent), and the Director of the SRT as they pertain to academic decisions and their appeals.

Appendices provide guidelines for documentation of student meetings and preparation of letters to convey decisions made for an appeal.

Figure 1: Levels of appeal available to students

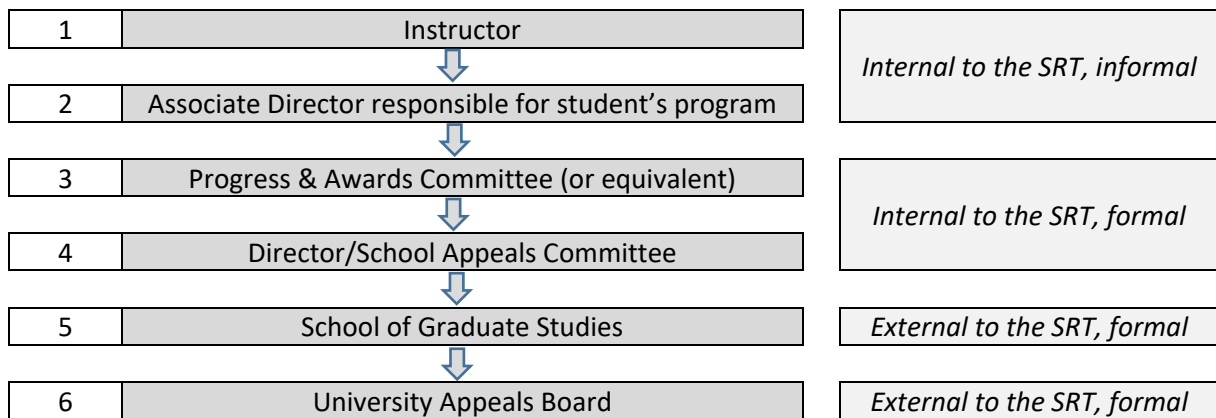


Table 1: Responsibilities of the student who has received an academic decision and is considering or launching an appeal

Academic Decision Received	Student Responsibilities
Departure from Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the meeting with the course instructor • Complete the remediation or training required by the instructor • Recognize that SGS may recommend different sanctions or impose additional sanctions
Lapses in Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the meeting with the course instructor • Complete the remediation or training required by the instructor or Progress and Awards Committee (See Professionalism Policy) • Recognize that a critical lapse in professionalism may lead to a recommendation to withdraw from the program
Grade on an assignment or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a meeting with the course instructor to request clarification and express concerns • Provide evidence of lapse of procedural fairness on the part of the instructor, TA or proctor that support reconsideration of the grade • Meet all timelines specified in this policy if an appeal is launched • Use resources offered in the process

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Academic Decision Received	Student Responsibilities
Final grade in a course (including placement courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request a meeting with the course instructor to request clarification and express concerns• Provide evidence of lapse of procedural fairness on the part of the instructor, TA or proctor that support reconsideration of the grade• Meet all timelines specified in this policy if an appeal is launched• Use resources offered by the course instructor and Associate Director• Prepare a written appeal based on appealable grounds, if a formal appeal is launched. Provide evidence.
Lack of acceptable progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request a meeting with the Associate Director to obtain information about the appeals process• Use resources offered by the Associate Director• Meet all timelines specified in this policy if an appeal is launched• Prepare a written appeal based on appealable grounds, if a formal appeal is launched. Provide evidence.• Seek clarification about the process, as required and in a timely manner.
Consequences of lack of acceptable progress	<p>Note: It may be that the student accepts that they are not making acceptable progress but wishes to appeal the specific consequences that have been determined by the Progress and Awards Committee (or equivalent)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request a meeting with the Associate Director to obtain information about the appeals process• Use resources offered by the Associate Director• Meet all timelines specified in this policy if an appeal is launched• Prepare a written appeal based on appealable grounds, if a formal appeal is launched. Provide evidence.• Seek clarification about the process, as required and in a timely manner.

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Table 2: Sequential Roles and Responsibilities for Academic Decisions regarding (a) Departure from Academic Integrity, (b) Lapses of Professional Conduct, (b) Assignment of a Grade on an Assignment or Exam, and (c) Assignment of a Final Grade in a Course.

Academic Decisions	Sequential Roles and Responsibilities (left to right)			
	Course Instructor	Associate Director	Program Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent	Director, SRT
Departure from Academic Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with student suspected of a departure from Academic Integrity. • Make a decision about whether a departure has occurred and, if so, whether the departure was intentional or not; determine consequences. • If a departure has occurred, document the discussion for student's file, copying Associate Director and SGS. • Report the event on end-of-term survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in meetings between students and faculty about suspected departure from Academic Integrity, if requested by faculty. • Maintain records of Academic Integrity issues experienced within the program on an on-going basis. • Report issues to the Director of SRT annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consultation and advice to course instructors and Associate Director, as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and submit annual reporting forms on behalf of the School and its programs related to Academic Integrity departure.
Lapse in Professional conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with student suspected of a lapse in of professional conduct. • Make a decision about whether the lapse has occurred and, if so, whether the lapse was intentional or not. • Document the discussion for the student and the student's file, copying Associate Director. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in meetings between students and faculty about suspected lapses in professionalism, if requested by faculty. • Maintain records of lapses in professional conduct experienced within the program on an on-going basis. • Call a meeting of the Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent, to classify the lapse and take appropriate action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the instructor's documentation prior to the meeting. • Provide the student with the opportunity to respond to the instructor's documentation at the meeting. • Determine if the lapse is minor, major or critical as per the SRT Professionalism Policy • Determine the appropriate consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No direct involvement unless the student appeals any consequence that is applied by the Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent.</i>

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Academic Decisions	Sequential Roles and Responsibilities (left to right)			
	Course Instructor	Associate Director	Program Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent	Director, SRT
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify student and course instructor of their rights to address the committee at the meeting as soon a meeting is set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the student of the consequences and their right to appeal. 	
Assignment of a grade on an assignment or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the student of grades using typical procedures for the program (e.g., posted on OnQ). Meet with students who have concerns about a grade. Meeting can be in person, or technology supported. Make a decision: Uphold the grade, change the grade, or offer an alternative based on extenuating circumstances. Document the discussion and decision for the student and the student's file, copying Associate Director. Notify students of their right to appeal the decision about the grade both during the meeting and in the documentation about a decision. Notify the Associate Director that an appeal may be forthcoming. If the grade may have consequences for the student's progress in program, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the student has not met with the instructor, redirect the student back to the instructor. Meet with students who have unresolved concerns about a grade in a course after meeting with an instructor, and document discussion. Meeting can be in person, or technology supported. Seek information about potential extenuating circumstances. Seek clarification from the course instructor about the grade before or after meeting with the student, whichever is feasible. Make a decision after meeting with the student. Document the discussion and decision for the student and the student's file. Arrange for a review of the grade, if applicable. Notify student of the findings from a review of the grade, if applicable. Notification must 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive appeals of a grade on an assignment or exam from students. After receiving a student's appeal: (1) Set a Progress and Awards meeting date, and (2) Notify student and course instructor of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. Review student's grounds for appeal, and documentation from the instructor and Associate Director, as applicable. Make and document the decision. Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Director of the SRT. Arrange for a review of the grade, if applicable. Notify student of the findings from a review of the grade, if applicable. Notification must include information about the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No direct involvement unless the student appeals any consequence that is applied by the Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent. If that occurs</i> Receive appeals of a grade on an assignment or exam from students. Acknowledge receipt of appeal. After receiving a student's appeal: (1) Form a SRT Student Appeals Committee, (2) Set a meeting date, and (3) Notify student and course instructor of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. Review student's grounds for appeal and a previous documentation related to the appeal. Make and document the decision. Arrange for a review of the grade, if applicable.

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Academic Decisions	Sequential Roles and Responsibilities (left to right)			
	Course Instructor	Associate Director	Program Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent	Director, SRT
	regardless of whether a student requests a meeting to discuss, report to the Associate Director.	include information about the student's right to appeal to Progress and Awards Committee	student's right to appeal to the Director of the SRT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Dean of SGS.
Assignment of a final grade in a course (including placement courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the student of final grade, including possible consequences, if applicable. Meet with students who have concerns about a final grade. Make and document the decision: Uphold the final grade, change the final grade, or offer an alternative based on extenuating circumstances. Notify students of their right to appeal the decision about the final grade to the Associate Director if the meeting does not resolve the student's concerns. Provide information about the policy. Notify the Associate Director that an appeal may be forthcoming. Notify the Progress and Awards Committee of the final grade to inform deliberations about overall student progress discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the student has not met with the instructor, redirect the student back to the instructor. Meet with students who have unresolved concerns about a final grade in a course, and document discussion. Seek information about potential extenuating circumstances. Seek clarification from the course instructor about the final grade. Make and document the decision. Arrange for a review of the grade, if applicable. Notify student of findings in writing, including their right to appeal to Progress and Awards Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive appeals of a final grade in course from students. Set a meeting date and notify student and course instructor of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. Review student's grounds for appeal and documentation from course instructor and Associate Director. Make and document the decision Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Director of the SRT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No direct involvement unless the student appeals any consequence that is applied by the Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent. If that occurs</i> Receive appeals of a final grade in a course from students. Form a SRT Student Appeals Committee. Set a meeting date and notify student and course instructor of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. Review student's grounds for appeal and a previous documentation related to the appeal. Make and document the decision Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Dean of SGS.

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Table 3: Sequential Roles and Responsibilities for Academic Decisions regarding Student Progress.

Academic Decisions	Sequential Roles and Responsibilities (left to right)			
	Program Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent	Associate Director	Program Progress and Awards Committee, or equivalent	Director, SRT
Determination that student is not progressing, and related decisions about consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the progress of all students at regular intervals to determine whether they are progressing through the program as expected. • Make and document decisions about student progress: Progressing as expected (no concerns) or not progressing as expected. • Determine the consequences for students identified as not progressing as expected (e.g., request to withdraw; remediation; repeat a course) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the letters to those students who are not progressing as expected, based on the initial review of the Progress and Awards Committee. • Invite the student for a meeting to discuss their options. Meeting can be in-person or technology supported. • Explain to the student the process of appealing the progress decision and/or consequences¹, including timelines. • Direct the student to resources on campus about appealing the Committee's decision. • Document the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive appeals about progress-related decisions from students. • Set a meeting date and notify student of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. • Review student's grounds for appeal. • Make and document the decision • If the appeal is granted, decide on the revised consequences for the student. • Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Director of the SRT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive appeals about progress-related decisions from students. • Form a SRT Student Appeals Committee. • Set a meeting date and notify student and the Associate Director (or delegate of the Progress and Awards Committee) of their rights to address the committee at the meeting. • Review student's grounds for appeal, Program materials, and other relevant documentation. • Make and document the decision • If the appeal is granted, make recommendations for resolution back to the Progress and Awards Committee. • Notify the student of decision in writing, including their right to appeal to the Dean of SGS.

¹ Note: students may accept the decision about failure to progress as expected but still appeal the consequences of that failure. For example, the student could agree to remediation but challenge the scope or nature of the remediation.

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for documentation of meetings for informal student appeals

For instructors and Associate Directors involved in informal appeals of an academic decision, discussions with students must be documented, shared with the student, and retained as per the Appeals Policy.

Key points for the documentation include:

- Date, time and length of the meeting
- Who was present at the meeting
- Relevant evidence and how discovered (e.g., exam score, possible plagiarism through Turnitin, etc.)
- Academic decision – which course, what decision,
- Student's rationale for the appeal (e.g., specifics of lapse of procedural fairness)
- Summary of the main points of the discussion
- Result of the meeting
- Information provided to the student about next steps

Appendix 2: Guidelines for documentation of formal student appeals

For Chairs of committees hearing a formal student appeal, decisions must be documented, shared with the student, and retained as per the Appeals Policy.

Key points for the documentation include:

- Date, time and length of the meeting
- Who was present at the meeting
- Details of student's appeal (e.g., which course, what decision) and rationale for the appeal (e.g., specifics of lapse of procedural fairness)
- Documents/evidence reviewed as part of the appeal process (e.g., student's letter and documentation; instructor's documentation)
- Decision (e.g., uphold original academic decision/deny appeal; uphold appeal) and associated recommendations
- Direction for the student about next steps
- Cc to student's file, instructor or Progress and Awards Committee (as applicable), SGS (if applicable).