



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

DOCUMENT ID: <b>SOP-066</b> <b>VERSION #3</b>	TITLE: <b>EDUCATION COUNCIL - APPEAL OF FINAL GRADES</b>	DOC TYPE:
		SEARCH KEY:
PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To outline the process for a student appeal of his/her final grade in a credit course.</li> </ul>	POST TO: Public Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DC Connect <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SCOPE (Applies To):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DC STUDENTS IN CREDIT COURSES</b></li> <li><b>DEANS/ASSOCIATE DEANS/DIRECTORS</b></li> <li><b>EDUCATION COUNCIL</b></li> <li><b>FACULTY MEMBERS</b></li> <li><b>REGISTRAR</b></li> <li><b>STUDENT SERVICES</b> (i.e., COUNSELLORS, ABORIGINAL STUDENT SERVICES, CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, WOMEN'S CENTRE)</li> <li><b>VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST</b></li> </ul>	
STATUS: <b>FINAL</b>	AUTHOR: <b>TODD HARPER, EDUCATION COUNCIL CHAIR</b> CONTACT INFORMATION: <b>604-527-5384</b>	CREATED: <b>2015/02/13</b> (yyyy/mm/dd)
	RESPONSIBLE OWNER: <b>VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST</b>	
PROCESS REVISIONS:	REVISION AUTHOR: <b>C. MAHOOD, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST</b>	REVISED: <b>2016/08/24</b> (yyyy/mm/dd)
RELEVANT FORMS:	<b>Grade Appeal Form</b> (located in the Registrar's Office)	REVISED: (yyyy/mm/dd)
ACCORD/POLICY APPROVAL BODY:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDUCATION COUNCIL</li> <li>STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES</li> </ol>	DATE APPROVED: <b>2015/04/20</b> (yyyy/mm/dd)
QUALITY ASSURANCE FORMAT APPROVAL: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ADMINISTRATORS' COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (ACP) SOP SUBCOMMITTEE</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>THOR BORGFORD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH &amp; ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION</b>		DATE APPROVED: <b>2015/04/29</b> (yyyy/mm/dd)
RELEVANT POLICY:	Douglas College: <a href="#">Appeal of Final Grades Policy</a>	
RELEVANT ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS:	<b>EDCO:</b> Education Council <b>GA:</b> Grade Appeal <b>GAC:</b> Grade Appeal Committee	

**STEPS: For a list of timelines, see APPENDIX B – STUDENT APPEALS TIMELINE CHART in this document.**

**PREAMBLE:**

Wherever possible, the **student** should attempt to resolve a concern over a grade informally, through a meeting with the instructor. At the request of either party, the **Department Chair/Coordinator** (or, if the instructor is the Department Chair/Coordinator) and the **Responsible Administrator** (i.e., Dean, Associate Dean, Director, etc.) may attend the meeting to facilitate communications. If the **student** is unable to contact the instructor, s/he will contact the **Responsible Administrator**.

**STEP I: GROUNDINGS REVIEW BY THE RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR**

1. If the concern is not resolved informally, the **student** will complete a *Grade Appeal* form (available from the **Registrar's Office**) outlining the nature of the concern, the grounds for the appeal, and the desired outcome. Students are encouraged to consult with a support person (see Policy Statement 5 in the Appeal of Final Grades policy) when preparing the Grade Appeal form. This form and any supporting documents must be submitted to the **Responsible Administrator** on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the end of the term in which the grade was awarded (or the first following business day).
2. If the **Responsible Administrator** has a perceived bias, she/he will disqualify her/himself and request the **Vice President, Academic and Provost** to name another **Responsible Administrator** as a replacement.
3. The **Responsible Administrator** will review the documentation submitted by the **student** and request a response from the **instructor**, and may request additional information if necessary. The purpose of the review is to determine whether there are grounds for a Grade Appeal Committee hearing.

**Possible outcomes of STEP I (Groundings Review by Responsible Administrator):**

- The **Responsible Administrator** refers the appeal back to the **instructor** and **student** with a proposal for informal resolution. If informal resolution cannot be reached, one of the following outcomes will apply.
- The **Responsible Administrator** determines that there are no grounds for a Grade Appeal Committee hearing, and informs the **student** of the process for appealing this decision.
- The **Responsible Administrator** determines that there are grounds for a Grade Appeal Committee hearing and notifies the **student** of the next steps in the process.
- If the **student** has complied with the timeline but has not received a response within the required timeframe, the **student** may contact the **Vice President, Academic and Provost** to request a hearing by a Grade Appeal Committee.

In any of these cases, the **student** may decide to withdraw the Grade Appeal at this step.

4. The **Responsible Administrator** will communicate the decision to the **student** in writing, by letter or email, with a copy to the **instructor**, including the reason(s) for the decision, within ten (10) working days of receiving the **student's** Grade Appeal form.

**STEP I: GROUND REVIEW BY THE RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR (cont.)**

5. If the **Responsible Administrator** determines that there are not grounds for a Grade Appeal hearing, the **student** may appeal this decision by contacting the **Registrar** within five (5) working days of receiving the **Responsible Administrator's** decision. The **Registrar** will appoint one **Dean or Associate Dean** and one **Associate Registrar** to serve as a **Grounds Review Committee** to review the materials and determine whether there are grounds for a Grade Appeal hearing. To reverse the **Responsible Administrator's** decision, the decision of the **Grounds Review Committee** must be unanimous.
6. The **Registrar** will communicate the **Grounds Review Committee's** decision in writing to the **student**, including the reason(s) for the decision, within ten (10) working days of receiving the **student's** request. If this review determines that there are grounds for a Grade Appeal hearing, the deadline for completing STEP II will be extended by fifteen (15) working days.

**STEP II: GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE HEARING**

7. If there are grounds for a Grade Appeal hearing, the **Responsible Administrator** will notify the **Vice President, Academic and Provost**, who will select a **Chair** for the **Grade Appeal Committee** (*see Appendix A*). The **Responsible Administrator** will forward all documentation to the Chair, who will provide copies to all **Grade Appeal Committee** members, the **student**, and the **instructor** in advance of the hearing.
8. The **Grade Appeal Committee** hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) working days of notification by the **Responsible Administrator**. The hearing will be audio-recorded, except for the **Grade Appeal Committee's** deliberations, which are private, and the recording and all documentation related to the Grade Appeal, including any notes made by Committee members, will be returned to and kept by the **Responsible Administrator** for one calendar year.

**Possible outcomes of Step II (Grade Appeal Committee Hearing):**

- The **Grade Appeal Committee** denies the appeal and the original grade stands; the **Committee Chair** will inform the **student** of the grounds and procedures for an appeal to **Education Council**.
  - The **Grade Appeal Committee** grants the appeal and, where appropriate, the **Committee Chair** directs that some of the **student's** coursework be reassessed by another qualified **instructor** with no prior involvement in the grade appeal (selected by the **Chair/Coordinator** in consultation with the **Responsible Administrator**); the grade may be raised, lowered, or unchanged as a result of this reassessment. A deadline for reassessment must be specified.
9. The **Grade Appeal Committee Chair** will communicate the decision to the **student** in writing, by letter or email, with copies to the **instructor** and **Responsible Administrator**, including the reason(s) for the decision, within five (5) working days of the **Grade Appeal Committee** hearing. Where the decision includes the reassessment of coursework, the **Chair** will communicate the result of that reassessment to the **student, instructor, and Responsible Administrator**.

If the Final Grade is to be changed, the **Responsible Administrator** will complete a *Change of Grade* form. (Note: *Change of Grade* forms are stored in most Faculty areas, and/or the **Registrar's Office**.)

### **STEP III: APPEAL TO THE EDUCATION COUNCIL APPEAL TRIBUNAL**

If the Final Grade Appeal is denied by the **Grade Appeal Committee**, the **student** may appeal to the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal**. The grounds for a review by the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal** are as follows:

- Due process was not followed in STEPS I &-II
- The Grade Appeals Policy was not properly applied in STEPS I &II
- Evidence that might reasonably change the outcome of the appeal was not available at the Grade Appeal hearing, or the **student** was not allowed to present such evidence.

Dissatisfaction with the **Grade Appeal Committee's** decision is not a ground for review.

10. The **student** will submit to the **Education Council Secretary** a written request for a hearing by the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal** within ten (10) working days of receipt of the **Grade Appeal Committee's** written decision (or of written notice of the result of a reassessment). The request should briefly explain the nature of the original appeal and the grounds for a hearing by the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal**.

#### **A. Grounds Review Meeting**

11. The **Education Council Chair** will request copies of all **Grade Appeal Committee** hearing materials from the **Responsible Administrator**, and will circulate copies of all documents to the **Appeal Tribunal**. Within ten (10) working days of receiving the **student's** request for review, the **Appeal Tribunal** will meet to review the material, including the audio recording of the Grade Appeal hearing if necessary, and determine whether there are grounds for a review of the **Grade Appeal Committee's** decision. This meeting is not recorded and the **student** may not attend.
12. If the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal** determines that there are not grounds for review, the **Chair** will communicate the decision to the **student** in writing, by letter or email, with copies to the **instructor** and **Responsible Administrator**, including the reason(s) for the decision, within five (5) working days of the Grounds Review meeting.

#### **B. Hearing by the Appeal Tribunal**

13. If the **Appeal Tribunal** determines that there are grounds for review, the **Appeal Tribunal** will schedule a hearing within ten (10) working days of the Grounds Review meeting. The hearing will be audio-recorded, except for the Tribunal's deliberations, which are private, and the recording and all documentation related to the **Appeal Tribunal** hearing, including any notes made by Tribunal members, will be kept by the **Education Council Secretary** for one calendar year.

**STEP III: APPEAL TO THE EDUCATION COUNCIL APPEAL TRIBUNAL** (cont.)

**Possible outcomes of Step III B (Hearing by the Appeal Tribunal):**

- The **Appeal Tribunal** upholds the decision of the **Grade Appeal Committee** to deny the appeal.
- The **Appeal Tribunal** grants the appeal and, where appropriate, the **Chair** directs that some of the **student's** coursework be reassessed by another qualified **instructor** with no involvement in the appeal (selected by the **Chair/Coordinator** in consultation with the **Responsible Administrator**); the grade may be raised, lowered, or unchanged as a result of this reassessment. A deadline for reassessment must be specified.

14. The **Chair** will communicate the decision to the **student** in writing (with copies to the **instructor**, **Responsible Administrator**, and **Vice President, Academic and Provost**), including the reason(s) for the decision, within five (5) working days of the Appeal Tribunal hearing. Where the decision includes the reassessment of coursework, the **Chair** will communicate the result of that reassessment to the **student**, **instructor**, and **Responsible Administrator**.

If the final grade is changed as a result of the decision, the **Responsible Administrator** will complete a *Change of Grade* form. (Note: *Change of Grade* forms are stored in most Faculty areas, and/or the **Registrar's Office**.)

All decisions of the **Education Council Appeal Tribunal** are final.

## APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### GRADE APPEAL COMMITTEE

#### MEMBERS

All non-administrative members serve in the Grade Appeal pool for a specified term. A **Grade Appeal Committee (GAC)** is selected from the members of the pool when a hearing is necessary, ensuring that this responsibility is rotated among members and excluding any members who may have prior knowledge of the specific appeal or a conflict of interest.

- One **student** from a pool selected by the **Douglas Students' Union** (to serve for one year)
- Two **faculty members** from a pool comprising two members elected from each Faculty, to serve for two years
- One **administrator** (a Dean, Associate Dean, or Director), who will act as **Chair** and is non-voting.

#### PROCEDURES

- 1) The **Vice President, Academic and Provost** will appoint a **GAC Chair** when a request for a hearing is received.
- 2) The **GAC Chair** will select the additional members (in rotation and depending on availability).
- 3) The **GAC Chair** will schedule the hearing in consultation with all parties and will ensure that all documentation is circulated to the **Committee members, student** and **instructor** in advance of the hearing.
- 4) The **GA Committee** may invite any additional members of the College community to provide evidence, including faculty members to provide content expertise.

#### QUORUM AND VOTING

All members must be present for a Grade Appeal hearing to proceed. Decisions are reached by a simple majority of votes.

## GROUNDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

### MEMBERS

- One **Dean** or **Associate Dean**
- One **Associate Registrar**

### PROCEDURES

- 1) The **members** will be selected by the **Registrar** when a **student** requests a review of the **Responsible Administrator's** decision that there are no grounds for a Grade Appeal hearing.
- 2) The **Registrar** will ensure that neither member has prior knowledge of the appeal or a conflict of interest.
- 3) The **Registrar** will provide the members with copies of all materials related to the Grade Appeal.

### QUORUM AND VOTING

Both committee members are voting. Meetings may be held electronically. To reverse the decision of the Responsible Administrator, the decision of the **Grounds Review Committee** must be unanimous.

## EDUCATION COUNCIL APPEAL TRIBUNAL

### MEMBERS

- The **Education Council Chair**, who will chair the Tribunal
- The **Education Council Vice-Chair**
- One **additional member** elected from the faculty representatives to Education Council by Education Council at the September meeting (to serve for one year)

If any member has a perceived conflict of interest, the **Education Council Chair** will appoint an alternate from among the faculty representatives to Education Council.

### PROCEDURES

- 1) The **Appeal Tribunal** may invite any additional members of the College community to provide evidence.
- 2) The **Chair** will notify **Education Council** when the **Appeal Tribunal** receives a request for a review, and when the review is complete. This notification may take place at a regular Education Council meeting.

### QUORUM AND VOTING

All members are voting members. All members must be present for a Grounds Review meeting or Appeal Tribunal hearing to proceed. Decisions are reached by a simple majority of votes.

## APPENDIX B: TIMELINES

**STEPS I & II** of the Grade Appeal procedures must be completed by the following dates, or the first following working day, unless all parties have agreed to an extension.

<b>Term in Which Grade Was Awarded:</b>	<b>Deadline for Completing STEPS I &amp; II:</b>
Fall (Sept. – Dec.)	February 15
Winter (Jan. – Apr.)	June 15
Spring (Apr. - May)	July 15
Summer (May – Aug.)	October 15

For courses not scheduled during these terms, the deadline will be six (6) weeks following the deadline for submission of final grades.

See attached table for all deadlines.



**APPENDIX B - STUDENT APPEALS TIMELINE CHART**

<b>Student Action</b>	<b>College Action</b>	<b>Deadline Fall Course Grade</b>	<b>Deadline Winter Course Grade</b>	<b>Deadline Summer Course Grade</b>
Attempt informal resolution with instructor	Attempt informal resolution with student	Before Jan. 10	Before May 10	Before Sept. 10
Submit Grade Appeal to Responsible Administrator		By Jan. 10	By May 10	By Sept. 10
	Written decision; notify Vice President, Academic if hearing needed	Within 10 working days Jan. 24	Within 10 working days May 24	Within 10 working days Sept. 24
Appeal Responsible Administrator A decision to Registrar		Within 5 working days Jan. 31	Within 5 working days May 31	Within 5 working days Sept. 31
	Grounds Review Committee meeting and written decision	Within 10 working days Feb. 14*	Within 10 working days June 14*	Within 10 working days Oct. 14*
Attend hearing	Hold Grade Appeal hearing	Within 10 working days Feb. 7	Within 10 working days June 7	Within 10 working days Oct. 7
	Written decision	Within 5 working days Feb. 14	Within 5 working days June 14	Within 5 working days Oct. 14
Appeal to Education Council Appeal Tribunal		Within 10 working days Feb. 28	Within 10 working days June 28	Within 10 working days Oct. 28
	EdCo Appeal Tribunal Grounds Review meeting	Within 10 working days Mar. 14	Within 10 working days July 14	Within 10 working days Nov. 14
	Written decision	Within 5 working days Mar. 21	Within 5 working days July 21	Within 5 working days Nov. 21
Attend hearing	Hold EdCo Appeal Tribunal hearing	Within 10 working days of Grounds Review meeting Mar. 28	Within 10 working days of Grounds Review meeting July 28	Within 10 working days of Grounds Review meeting Nov. 28
	Written decision	Within 5 working days Apr. 4	Within 5 working days Aug. 4	Within 5 working days Dec. 5

For all deadlines, if the date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is the next working day.

\*If the Grounds Review Committee rules that a Grade Appeal Hearing should be held, timelines for Step II will be extended by 15 working days.