APPEAL OF FINAL GRADES POLICY

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Appeal of Final Grades	Vice President, Academic and Provost	2015 May
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Category: Education	**Replaces:** E.AA01.05 Grade Appeals within the former Student Appeals Policy.	**Next Review:** 2031 May

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. PURPOSE
B. SCOPE
C. DEFINITIONS
D. POLICY STATEMENTS
E. PROCEDURES
F. LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES
G. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS
H. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSES

A. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles and governs the procedures for student appeals of Final Grades in Credit Courses at Douglas College. It does not apply to Continuing Education Courses.

B. SCOPE

Chairs/Coordinators
Deans/Associate Deans/Directors
Education Council
Enrolment Services
Faculty Members
Student Affairs and Services
Students
Vice President, Academic and Provost

C. DEFINITIONS

Appeal Support Person: A member of the Douglas College community who, owing to their knowledge of College policy and procedures and familiarity with students' interests, is able

to offer confidential support to a student during an appeal of an educational decision and who may, upon request, accompany the student to an appeal hearing. An Appeal Support Person is one of the following:

- Accessibility Specialist
- Counsellor
- Douglas Students Union Ombudsperson
- Indigenous Student Services staff
- Student Support Navigator

Credit Course: A course that carries credits counting toward a College credential. It may be a letter-graded or a mastery-graded course.

Final Grade: The official grade for the course recorded on the student's transcript (refer to letter grades and mastery-based grades per the Grading Policy).

Grounds Review: An assessment of the reasons for the appeal to determine whether further action is warranted.

Instructor's Course Outline: A document provided by the instructor for each course and section that outlines, among other information, how a student's performance will be evaluated and any specific criteria regarding how student work will be treated for evaluation purposes. The information required in this document is specified in the Evaluation Policy.

Responsible Administrator: The administrator responsible for the Faculty in which the course under appeal is offered. In a Final Grade appeal process, the Responsible Administrator is usually a Dean or an Associate Dean.

Student: For the purposes of this policy, an individual who has been accepted to the College and has an active student number. A student remains active for one calendar year after the student's last registered semester.

D. POLICY STATEMENTS

Douglas College is committed to the principle of fair and equitable policies and practices, and holds itself accountable for decisions made by its departments/programs and employees that affect students' final grades.

1. A Final Grade may be appealed on the following grounds:
    a. One or more of the following was not properly applied:
        i. College policy governing evaluation and grading;
        ii. program/department-specific academic requirements;
        iii. the official curriculum guideline for the course;
        iv. the criteria for evaluation as detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline and/or individual assignment guidelines.
    b. Evaluation criteria were unclear or were not specified.

c. The grade was assigned on a basis other than evaluation of the student's required coursework, and/or in a manner inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline with respect to such issues as penalties for late assignments or absences.

d. Extenuating personal circumstances were not adequately considered, or could not reasonably be revealed at the time the Final Grade was awarded.

e. The Final Grade was miscalculated.

2. A concern about a Final Grade should be resolved informally with the instructor where possible, and otherwise at the earliest possible step of the formal appeal process outlined in the Douglas College *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*.

3. In appealing a Final Grade, a student may focus on one or more assessments that the student believes was not properly assessed. A Final Grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same as the result of an appeal.

4. Students are encouraged to consult with an **Appeal Support Person** for assistance in understanding the Appeal of Final Grades Policy and procedures and in preparing a written appeal submission.

5. Students have the right to continue their studies while a grade appeal is in process, except where the Responsible Administrator determines that the student's participation in learning activities would impede the learning, health or safety of the student or others. A student who continues in any course or program that requires prior completion of the course under review will be required to withdraw, without refund, from the course or program should the appeal be unsuccessful.

6. Students may be accompanied to an appeal hearing by an **Appeal Support Person** who may help to ensure the student understands the process. An appeal hearing does not constitute a judicial process and legal counsel is not permitted to attend.

7. Information shared as part of a Final Grade Appeal is confidential and all parties to an appeal must respect this confidentiality.

8. Timelines may be extended with agreement of all parties, but should be respected wherever possible.

LIMITATIONS:

1. Students who wish to request a late withdrawal must file a Request for Exception under the Appeal of Educational Decision Policy.

2. A Final Grade appeal cannot consider matters of pedagogy (teaching methods) as long as the instructor was complying with College educational policy, any department- or program-specific educational requirements, and the approved curriculum guideline for the course.

3. Students who wish to appeal Educational Policy decisions other than Final Grades that affect their Academic Standing should refer to the Appeal of Educational Decisions Policy. Students must decide on the central issue(s) contained in their appeal and may pursue only one process related to each issue at a time. Where a student appeals a Final Grade and another educational decision simultaneously, the Responsible Administrator will determine which process will be completed first.

4. A student who has been suspended from the College as a result of disciplinary actions under College Administrative policies on *Violence Prevention and Response, Standards of Student Conduct*, or *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response* may pursue a Final Grade appeal, but that appeal will be held in abeyance until the suspension is complete. The student must initiate the appeal within the standard time limits by notifying the Responsible Administrator in writing, by letter or email, and must reactivate the appeal within 30 calendar days of the completion of the suspension.

5. Students who have a complaint of harassment or inappropriate conduct by an employee should instead refer to the Administration policies on *Violence Prevention and Response*, *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response* or *Respectful Workplace.*

6. A Final Grade appeal is distinct from a complaint about the quality or delivery of a course or program, including a complaint about teaching quality. Such a complaint can be made to the Responsible Administrator.

E. PROCEDURES

Refer to the Douglas College *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).*

F. SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES

- *Grade Appeal Form* (available from Enrolment Services)
- *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*

Administration Policies:

- Human Rights Policy
- Respectful and Inclusive Environment Policy
- Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy
- Student Non-academic Misconduct Policy
- Violence Prevention and Response Policy

Educational Policies:

- Appeal of Educational Decision Policy
- Evaluation Policy
- Grading Policy

G. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS

British Columbia College and Institute Act (1996), section 24 (e)

H. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSES

N/A