

32.01	Student Appeals	POLICY
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1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 NSCC is committed to a fair, transparent and timely approach to a student's right to challenge academic decisions and non-academic decisions that affect academic progress and standing.
- 1.2 The Student Appeals Policy brings definition and clarity to the appeals process for both students and NSCC staff.
- 1.3 Stewardship and application of the Student Appeals Policy is the responsibility of the Director, Enrolment and Registrar, in partnership with the Vice-President, Academic, academic schools and Student Services.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 The Student Appeals Policy addresses recourse on academic decisions related to final grade, academic discipline, academic probation, restricted enrolment, graduation, recognition of prior learning and decisions related to the Academic Accommodations Policy.
- 2.2 The Student Appeals Policy also applies to non-academic decisions made under the Student Code of Conduct that have academic impact for the student.
- 2.3 The Student Appeals Policy does not include appeals of individual grades, tests or other assessed work that are components of a final grade.
- 2.4 The Student Appeals Policy does not include application and assessment decisions made under the Admissions Policy, 21.01.
- 2.5 Any student in good financial standing has the right to appeal.
- 2.6 Employees are responsible to use their academic and professional judgement in making decisions about the performance and progress of students.
- 2.7 Employees will support the student's right to appeal decisions outlined in this policy.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **ACADEMIC DECISION** refers to a decision that has an impact on a student's academic record or standing, in a course or program.
- 3.2 **ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE** refers to sanctions imposed due to academic or behavioural misconduct or unsatisfactory academic performance.
- 3.3 **ACADEMIC PROBATION** refers to an official transcript notation indicating a student has failed two (2) or more courses in a single semester.
- 3.4 **COLLEGE STANDING APPEAL COMMITTEE** refers to a group of people appointed to represent the College in matters and decisions related to student appeals.

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- 3.5 **EMPLOYEE** is an individual who is currently employed with NSCC to perform work for the College. This includes all employees, regardless of status, as well as current employees who are on a leave of absence (paid/unpaid).
- 3.6 **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT** refers to the measure of learning attached to a student related effort in a course or program. Examples include, but are not limited to: quizzes, tests, exams, assignments and projects.
- 3.7 **FINAL GRADE** refers to course grades posted on the student’s permanent record, official transcript, and in our database.
- 3.8 **FORMAL APPEAL** refers to a submission, review and decision process as the result of challenging a final grade or other appealable academic decision.
- 3.9 **GOOD FINANCIAL STANDING** refers to a student whose tuition, fees and financial requirements of being a student are up to date and not outstanding.
- 3.10 **GROUND**s refer to the reasons used to challenge an academic decision and/or launch an appeal. Acceptable grounds for appeal are outlined in section 4.3 of this policy.
- 3.11 **NON-ACADEMIC DECISION** refers to a decision or sanction imposed under the Student Code of Conduct. Non-academic decisions can result in sanctions that have academic impact.
- 3.12 **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING** is also known as PLAR or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. It is a process that assesses learning from formal and non-formal environments for the purpose of recognizing said learning for credit in a course or program.
- 3.13 **RESTRICTED ENROLMENT** refers to an official academic status that limits a student to a part-time course load in a program of study. It is the result of a student failing courses while on academic probation.
- 3.14 **STUDENT** is a person who is registered and attending or undertaking a course of study at NSCC. This includes students who are full-time, part-time, online, apprenticeship, etc.
- 3.15 **WRITTEN RECORD** refers to all written documentation and records included by all parties, related to the submission, review and decision of a Student Appeal.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Appeals Parameters

- a. A student must be in good financial standing to be eligible to appeal.
- b. A student must first attempt to resolve concerns regarding academic decisions through an informal appeals process, outlined in Grounds for Appeal, 4.3 of this policy.
- c. All parties must meet timelines, documentation requirements and authorized signatures outlined in the accompanying Student Appeals Procedures document.

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- d. Exceptions to timelines may be made at the mutual agreement of the Director, Enrolment and Registrar, and the student appellant.
- e. Only documentation relative to permitted appealable decisions will be considered in a student appeal.
- f. Pending an appeal outcome, a student may enrol in a next level course or program requirement, except where that would threaten the safety or integrity of employees, students, the learning environment or the College. The College may impose conditions to be met by a student if they continue in their program while awaiting the outcome of an appeal.
- g. The onus is on the student to establish/prove, through the appeals process, that the original decision was not reasonable and fair under the parameters of appealable decisions, as outlined in this policy.

4.2 Decisions Eligible for Appeal

- a. A student may initiate an appeal on the following academic decisions only: final grade, academic discipline, academic probation, restricted enrolment, graduation, recognition of prior learning and decisions related to the Academic Accommodations Policy.
- b. A student may initiate an appeal for a non-academic decision or sanction imposed under the Student Code of Conduct.
- c. Work, field and clinical placements and co-op experiences are assigned a grade of P (pass) or F (fail). A grade of F is eligible for appeal, but may not be eligible for reassessment, due to the applied nature of the learning that it relates to. In some circumstances, it may be possible to repeat the placement associated with the appealed grade.

4.3 Grounds for Appeal

- a. A student who believes they have defensible grounds to appeal an academic decision or a non-academic decision with academic impact, have the right to formally appeal after attempting to resolve the matter informally. Steps in the informal appeal process are outlined in the Student Appeals Procedures document.
- b. A student cannot proceed to a formal appeal until an informal process has occurred, and resolution has not been reached.
- c. A student may proceed to a formal appeal only if grounds can be established under one or more of the following:
 - i. A procedural error was committed by the original decision maker.
 - ii. Documentation or evidence supplied by the student shows that the original decision is not accurate or not reasonable.
 - iii. New evidence is available that, through no fault of the student, was not available at the time of the original decision.

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- iv. The academic decision is sound, but the penalty imposed is unduly harsh given the circumstances.

4.4 College Standing Appeal Committee

- a. The College Standing Appeal Committee will be appointed by the Vice-President, Academic.
- b. The Director, Enrolment and Registrar is an ex-officio member of the committee.
- c. The membership of this committee may include but is not limited to: deans, academic chairs, principals, faculty and students.
- d. Membership on the committee will be of term length, determined by the Vice-President, Academic.
- e. The committee will apply quorum rules; a minimum number of committee members must be present to make proceedings and decisions valid.
- f. The work of the committee will be guided by the Detailed Terms of Reference for the College Standing Appeal Committee and all accompanying procedures and documents associated with this Policy.
- g. The committee will engage in training and development to bring competency and experience to the appeals process.
- h. No member of the committee will participate or hear any part of a student appeal where his/her involvement could be considered a conflict of interest in the proceedings or decision.

4.5 Student Appeal Decisions

- a. The decision of the College Standing Appeal Committee is final and binding.
- b. The student will receive an official appeal decision, in writing, from the Registrar's office.

5.0 POLICY SUPPORTS

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- 31.01 Academic Integrity Policy
- 34.02 Academic Accommodations Procedures
- 75.11 Confidentiality of Student Information
- 22.01 Evaluation Policy
- 33.01 Graduation Requirements & Program Progression Policy
- 22.21 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- 41.01 Respectful Workplace & Learning Environment Policy
- 33.01 Student Code of Conduct

RELATED MATERIALS

- Nova Scotia Human Rights Act
- www.disabilityservices.nscC.ca

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