

## STUDENT DISPUTES, COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

This procedure is governed by its parent policy. Questions regarding this procedure are to be directed to the identified Procedure Owner.

<b>Category:</b>	D. Student & Academic
<b>Parent Policy:</b>	D25
<b>Approval Date:</b>	March 16, 2023
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 16, 2023
<b>Procedure Owner:</b>	Vice President, Student Experience Registrar & Director, Student Services

<b>Overview:</b>	Olds College recognizes that disputes, complaints and disagreements may arise from actions, decisions and outcomes including: Academic Disputes for Assignments, Course Final Grades, Academic Integrity Decisions, Non-Academic Complaint Outcomes and Code of Conduct Outcomes.
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<b>Procedures:</b>	Students have the right to appeal decisions and outcomes that affect them. Allowable appeals and processes available for students are captured below (also enlarged at the end of this document):
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Allowable Appeals and Process for Students						
Responsibility:	Dean / School			Vice President Responsible for Student Experience		Appeals Committee
Type of appeal:	Academic Disputes for Assignments	Course Final Grade	Academic Integrity	Non-Academic Complaint	Code of Conduct	Expulsion
Initial decision maker:	Instructor	Instructor	Associate Dean in consultation with Instructor	Dean, Associate Dean or Director responsible	Registrar	Registrar
Appealable:	Yes	Only if conditions are met	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Addressed to:	VPA, Student Association	Dean	Dean	Vice President responsible for Student Experience	Vice President responsible for Student Experience	Chair of Appeals Committee
Timeline:	Within 10 business days of receiving the related grade	Within 10 business days of receiving the related grade	Within 5 business days or receiving notification	Normally within 10 business days	Within 10 business days of receiving notification	Within 5 business days of receiving notification of decision leading to expulsion
Decision maker:	Alternate instructor or Dean	Dean	Dean	Vice President responsible for Student Experience	Vice President responsible for Student Experience	Appeals Committee
Final decision:	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes*	Yes

\*except expulsion

### **Academic Dispute Process for Marked Assignments:**

- In the event of a disagreement over a marked assignment, exam or project, the student should address the complaint directly to the instructor involved.
- It is expected that most issues can be resolved through discussion held in good faith.
- Students may contact their Associate Dean if they have questions or require support navigating the academic dispute process.
- If no consensus can be achieved about a mark through speaking with the instructor, the student may choose to pursue the Student Associate Olds College (SAOC) administered **re-evaluation process**.
- Only individual assignments, exams and projects worth 15% or more of a student's final mark will be eligible for re-evaluation.
- Within 10 business days of receiving the related grade, the student must make a request in writing to the Academic Vice President of the Students' Association of Olds College stating that they want to initiate the re-evaluation process.
- A \$40.00 re-evaluation fee is payable to the SAOC and must be paid in advance to start the process. The fee is reimbursed only if the mark/grade is raised.
- The re-evaluation package should include: the marking rubric(s) or answer sheet(s), the unchanged assignment(s), as well as the re-evaluation form provided by the Students' Association of Olds College. It is the student's responsibility to compile these documents.
- The Student Association is responsible for submitting it to the Dean.
- The re-evaluation package will then be reviewed by one of: an alternate instructor or Dean of the school.
- The academic department has 10 business days to arrange marking and return the revised grade to the student.
- The newly revised mark becomes the final mark regardless of whether the result is a higher or lower grade.

### **Final Grade Appeals**

A final grade may be appealed to the Dean of the School on one or more of the following grounds:

1. One or more of the following was not properly applied.
  - College policy governing evaluation and grading
  - The criteria for evaluation as outlined in the Course Outline
2. Course evaluation criteria were not clear or specified.
3. The final grade was miscalculated.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Dean no more than 10 working days after receiving notification of the final decision. The decision of the Dean is final.

### **Academic Integrity Decision Appeals**

1. Appeals should be made in writing to the Dean within 5 working days. The Dean will arrange a meeting with the student within 5 working days of receiving the appeal.
2. The Associate Dean will provide the Dean with a copy of all materials pertaining to the original decision.

3. After reviewing the Appeal, the Dean will notify in writing the following people of their decision: the student, the Registrar, the Associate Dean, and the instructor.
4. The decision of the Dean is final (with the exception of expulsion).

#### **Non-Academic Complaints Resolution**

Disputes and disagreements may arise from time to time. Where possible and where students feel safe, students should address the complaint directly with the college staff member or student involved and seek to resolve the matter.

1. If the initial steps fail to produce a resolution or if the complainant feels unable to approach the other party directly, the complainant may refer a formal complaint to the Dean, Associate Dean or Director responsible for the activity of decision giving rise to the complaint.
2. Formal complaints will only be accepted if received in the office of the Dean, Associate Dean or Director within 10 business days of the occurrence giving rise to the issue.
3. Upon receiving the complaint, the Dean, Associate Dean or Director will attempt to resolve the matter and may address the issue through a mediated discussion with all parties, conducting an investigation or using other means that may be appropriate to the situation.

Note that Code of Conduct and Sexual Violence reports are addressed through these respective policies and related procedures.

#### **Appeals to the Vice President responsible for Student Experience**

Decisions related to a Non-Academic Complaint or the Student Code of Conduct may, under specific circumstances, be appealed to the Vice President responsible for Student Experience. Appeals will be considered on the following grounds:

- The previous decision was unreasonable given the weakness of evidence presented and new evidence can be presented by the appellant that has the potential to alter the original decision.
  - The previous decision made was not congruent with existing College policies.
1. Appeals must be made in writing to the Vice President, responsible for Student Experience no more than 10 working days after receiving notification of the final decision.
  2. If there is a conflict of interest with the Vice President, responsible for Student Experience, the appeal will be handled by an alternate Vice President.
  3. The written appeal must include the following:
    - Documentation related to the decision or sanction being appealed
    - All correspondence between the Student and the person who made the decision or imposed the sanction
    - The Grounds for the Appeal:
      - Errors or omissions related to previously submitted evidence; or
      - Previous decision is inconsistent with College policies

- New evidence can be presented by the appellant that has the potential to alter the original decision
  - The student's desired outcome
  - The names of any witnesses whom the student intends to present at a hearing (if called, see below)
4. Where warranted, the Vice President responsible for Student Experience may choose to hear the appeal in person and is free to contact and interview anyone involved or named in the investigation to determine the final outcome of the appeal.
  5. The Vice President responsible for Student Experience will provide the appellant with a written decision within 10 business days of receiving the notification.
  6. With the exception of two scenarios of allowable appeals listed below, the decision of the Vice President responsible for Student Experience shall be final.
    - Expelled from the College for violations of the policy on Academic Integrity (in this case the appeal can go to the Appeals Committee of Academic Council, see below).
    - Expelled from the College for a breach of the Olds College Code of Conduct (in this case the appeal can go to the Appeals Committee of Academic Council, see below).

#### **Appealing of Decisions and Outcomes Resulting in Expulsion**

The provision of a final appeal, in cases of decisions and outcomes leading to expulsion, may be made to the Appeals Committee of the Academic Council.

1. This appeal must be made in writing to the Office of the Registrar and addressed to the Chair of the Appeals Committee within 5 business days of a previous decision.
2. The written appeal must include the following:
  - Documentation related to the decision or sanction being appealed
  - All correspondence between the Student and the person who made the decision or imposed the sanction
  - The Grounds for the Appeal:
    - Errors or omissions related to previously submitted evidence; or
    - Previous decision is inconsistent with College policies
  - New evidence can be presented by the appellant that has the potential to alter the original decision
  - The student's desired outcome
  - The names of any witnesses whom the student attends to present at a hearing (if called, see below)
3. The Registrar will determine if the student is deemed to have the required documentation in place and notify the Chair of the Appeals Committee.
4. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will schedule an Appeals Committee Hearing to take place within 10 business days.
5. The appellant and representative(s) from the school/department involved in the appeal may be asked to appear at a hearing to present their case(s) directly to the Committee.

	<p>6. The appellant and the representative(s) may also be subject to cross-examination regarding the information presented to the Committee.</p> <p>7. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.</p>
<b>Definitions:</b>	<b>Appellant:</b> The student bringing an appeal forward.
<b>Related Information:</b>	<p>D25 Student Code of Conduct Policy  D31 Academic Integrity Policy  Freedom of Expression Policy  <a href="#">Student Academic Dispute Form for Final Grade Appeal</a>  <a href="#">Academic Appeal Package Submission for Marked Assignments Only</a></p>
<b>Review Period:</b>	3 Years
<b>Revision History:</b>	<p>New: February 2012  Revised: June 2015  Revised: June 2019  Revised: June 2021  Revised: March 2023</p>

### Allowable Appeals and Process for Students

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<b>Final decision:</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes*	Yes

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