

School of Graduate Studies Student Grievance and Appeal Procedure

A student in the School of Graduate Studies who has a grievance* has the right to seek resolution according to the following procedure:

1. The student shall first attempt to resolve the issue at the lowest level beginning with the person or persons involved. If an unsatisfactory outcome results, the student should make a formal initial complaint, in writing, to the Department Chairman. The Chairman will review the complaint and act on it according to the department/graduate program's policy and procedures.
2. In the event of an adverse departmental decision, the complainant, within five working days of the departmental decision, may appeal the departmental decision to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The written appeal should include the following information: date, time, place, names of any witnesses, and the facts of the complaint.
3. The Dean will forward the written complaint to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will be appointed by the Dean and consist of at least three graduate faculty members not associated with the student's program or the faculty member's program. After receiving the complaint, the committee will determine whether the complaint should be considered further. The Appeals Committee will review all existing materials presented with the departmental decision. At the first meeting, the committee will decide on the specific data collection and review procedures to be followed.
4. The Appeals Committee may take additional testimony from any party involved on an individual basis.
5. The committee will meet separately with the student and individual(s) against whom the complaint was made in an attempt to resolve differences. Both parties are entitled to have a school friend (excluding lawyers) present at the hearing. Each party should be prepared to present clear, concise, complete information to the committee and be prepared to answer questions from the committee members.
6. Oral testimony will be tape recorded.
7. All Appeals Committee meetings/deliberations are closed.
8. All written and tape recorded materials as well as minutes of committee deliberation will be submitted to the Dean along with the recommendation within three working days of the conclusion of the hearing.
9. Final action in the case will be taken by the Dean after full consideration of the committee's recommendation. The Dean shall have authority to take actions as is deemed necessary by the case and shall so inform the parties involved and the departmental chair.
10. Following action by the Dean, if the student is still dissatisfied he/she may appeal the Dean's decision in writing to the Director of Campus Life Services within five working days of notification of the Dean's action.

* If the complaint is based on alleged discrimination or harassment, the appeal will be addressed according to the institutional *Student Procedures for Filing Discrimination and Harassment Complaints*, described at www.mcg.edu/students/handbook/documents/AppendixD2009-2010Handbook.pdf . Appeals of academic or conduct sanctions will be directed to the MCG Campus Review Body for review according the procedure described at www.mcg.edu/students/Registrar/campusrb.htm .