

## 9. ACADEMIC APPEALS

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The aim of the academic appeal process is to provide you with a fair, efficient and consistent path to appeal academic decisions which have an impact on their academic standing or progression within their program. Although the academic appeal process is available to you, it is recommended that you always engage in an informal process prior to investigating a formal appeal process.

### 9.1 Circumstances for an academic appeal

You can appeal the following:

- A mark on an evaluation, test, examination, or work-integrated learning semester due to unacceptable conditions such as bias, whimsy, mechanical error, or a grade inconsistent with those assigned to other students <sup>1</sup>
- Missing or incorrect assessment information on a grade report and/or transcript
- A charge of academic misconduct
- A final admission decision <sup>2</sup>
- A final transfer credit evaluation or prior learning assessment recognition <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> You cannot appeal a final grade. It is the grade on the academic work/learning that is appealable leading to the final grade, e.g., final test, exam, assignment, or work/skills in a co-op, practicum, field/clinical placement.

<sup>2</sup> If you have been refused admission to the college, you have the right to submit an appeal if you believe that equal consideration with other applicants was not provided. The admission appeal process starts at step 7. Applicants appeal directly to the Office of the Registrar.

<sup>3</sup> If you have received a final evaluation on transfer credits or prior learning, you have the right to submit an appeal if you believe that you were not evaluated fairly or process was not followed. The credit transfer and prior learning appeal process starts at step 4.

### 9.2 Academic appeal process

You are encouraged to exhaust all informal steps before moving to the formal appeal process. It is the aim of Georgian College to ensure faculty and students work together in a collegial manner to resolve issues prior to the exploration of the formal academic appeal process. Informal steps, which can be taken to resolve an academic issue, include:

- You may meet with the appropriate faculty member to discuss the issue and to understand the academic decision of the faculty member.
- You may meet with your student success advisor and/or program coordinator to review the situation and support you to build your self-navigation and self-advocacy skills as it relates to the appeal process.

Though encouraged, if you complete these informal steps, you must do so mindful of the timeline to initiate the formal appeal process.

Appeals follow a logical progression. If you and the academic area/department come to a joint resolution, the appeal will not proceed to the next step.

The Academic Appeal form (AAF) is used to guide the appeal process. Each step within the academic appeal process must be completed by the owner prior to the subsequent step being taken in the process. You are expected to continue your term/semester while the process is taking place unless otherwise advised by a dean/associate dean, registrar/associate registrar in writing.

If you are taking a course through [Ontario Learn \(https://ontariolearn.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ACAD-001-Academic-Appeals.pdf\)](https://ontariolearn.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ACAD-001-Academic-Appeals.pdf) and wish to make an academic appeal you will still follow the Georgian College Academic Appeal process. As a first step please be sure to work with your faculty from the host institution to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved please complete the [Georgian College Academic Appeal form \(https://content.georgiancollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/office-of-the-registrar-academic-appeal-form-georgian-college.pdf\)](https://content.georgiancollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/office-of-the-registrar-academic-appeal-form-georgian-college.pdf) and submit to your Associate Dean / Deans office. You will then begin at step 5 of the process.

#### 9.2.1 The appeal statement

You are responsible for submitting the appeal statement as part of the appeal process along with the appeal form (AAF). The appeal statement should include:

- The grade/decision/issue you are appealing. Include relevant dates and events or conduct that occurred

- Full details of the grounds on which you are submitting the appeal
- Your desired outcome of the appeal
- Copies of all relevant documents.

## 9.2.2 Appeal process

The process for an academic appeal is outlined below. Georgian College partner institutions may use their own processes for academic appeal. Please be sure to consult your home institution website for process information.

Steps 1 through 6 occur between you and the academic area/department.

If the process reaches step 7, the process continues between you and Office of the Registrar. Conditions to support proceeding with step 7 may include:

- The decision made by the dean/associate dean was unreasonable
- The evidence presented did not adequately support the decision
- There was an error in process such as incorrect evidence or misinterpretation
- The process was biased
- A lack of disclosure of evidence does not constitute as grounds for an appeal. A lack of disclosure may be considered as dishonesty leading to a review under the Student Code of Conduct.

Step	Process	Owner	Resource
1	Informal meeting with faculty and/or program coordinator to resolve issue. If not resolved, you move to formal process mindful of timelines	Student	Phone/email/in-person
2	You complete the Academic Appeal form (AAF) and the a maximum 250-word appeal statement (refer to 9.2.1 for more detail). You submit these documents to the faculty in the academic area/department within five working days of evaluation being communicated. If the AAF is not completed, and/or the maximum 250-word statement not submitted, the appeal will not proceed. If an academic misconduct is being appealed, proceed to step 4	Student	AAF, appeal statement, email
3	The faculty may inform and consult with program co-ordinator/manager. Date and time of meeting with you is determined within two working days of the appeal submission	Academic area/department	Phone/email/in-person

4	The faculty or designate meets with you and records their decision and supporting comments on the AAF. If you and the academic area/department come to a resolution, the appropriate changes are made and the AAF is not pursued or recorded. If there is no resolution the academic area/department returns the AAF to you, no later than 24 hours after the meeting, and the process continues	Academic area/department	AAF, email
5	You submit the AAF and the appeal statement to the dean/associate/director within two working days of the academic area/department meeting. If appealing an academic misconduct, you must also provide a copy of the Academic Misconduct form (AMF)	Student	AAF, appeal statement, AMF, email/in-person
6	The dean/associate dean reviews the AAF and supporting appeal statement and consults as needed with the academic area/department. Meets with you and the academic area/department within two working days of receiving the AAF	Dean/associate dean/director	AAF, appeal statement
7	The dean/associate dean records their decision and supporting comments on the AAF and returns the form to you no later than two working days after meeting with you. If no resolution is found, the dean/associate dean advises you of the next steps and timelines	Dean/associate dean/director/registrar	AAF, appeal statement, in-person
*	Steps 7 through 10 occur between you and the Office of the Registrar. Reference below, section 10.3 for the College Academic Appeal Panel (CAAP) process		
8	If you wish to continue the appeal, you should submit the AAF and relevant documents to the Office of the Registrar indicating the request to have a College Academic Appeal Panel (CAAP) held to resolve the issue within two working days of receiving it back from the dean/associate dean/director. You must ensure all relevant documents are submitted to the Office of the Registrar	Student	AAF, AMF, appeal statement, email, all supporting documents and decision details

9	The Office of the Registrar reviews the information provided by you and the academic area/department and determines a) A CAAP is warranted. The academic issue falls within the scope of the academic appeal policy, timelines have been met, all informal and formal avenues of resolution have been exhausted. b) A CAAP is not warranted. Your academic issue does not fall within the scope of the academic appeal policy, timelines have not been met, all avenues for resolution have not been exhausted. c) It is recommended you and the academic area/department further explore avenues for resolving the academic issue. If no CAAP is warranted, you are advised of a decision within three working days of submitting the AAF, the decision stands and no further action is taken. Notification is provided to the dean/associate dean/director/registrar, and the academic area/department	Registrar/associate registrar	All available evidence, email
10	If a CAAP is warranted, it will convene within five working days of receiving the AAF in the Office of the Registrar. Both the academic area/department and you attend to present your case	Registrar/associate registrar	Phone/email/in-person
11	The Office of the Registrar completes the AAF with the final decision of the CAAP. A copy is provided to you, CAAP participants, the dean/associate dean, and the academic area/department within two working days of the CAAP meeting	Registrar/associate registrar	AAF, AMF, supporting documents
12	The Office of the Registrar makes the appropriate changes to your student record as needed	Office of the Registrar	Banner

## 9.3 College Academic Appeal Panel (CAAP)

Decision(s) made in academic situations are based on Georgian College academic regulations, college policy and administrative directives. Those decisions that are subject to appeal are stated as such and the process for appeal is outlined. Where the opportunity for appeal is not explicitly stated, no appeal is possible under these regulations. You, however, may reasonably request a review of records to check for and restore the effects of a possible error.

Grounds for calling a CAAP may include:

- Error in process or in the application of the regulations
- It is deemed that the decision made within the academic area/department was not based on the evidence that was provided as part of steps 1 through 6 of the process
- Adequate reasons have not been provided outlining the rationale for the decision made during steps 1 through 6 of the process.

Additional grounds may also be applicable to academic appeal situations such as the original decision is deemed unreasonable considering evidence that was not previously available.

When appeals are presented to a CAAP, their role is to formally decide upon a resolution to an appeal in accordance with the following procedures. All aspects of the adjudication process are strictly confidential. The CAAP will have access to all information available concerning the appeal and in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*. Decisions are based on information presented to the CAAP. All CAAP decisions are final and binding.

Timelines noted in the appeal process are expected to be adhered to by all parties. Where there are extenuating circumstances, or if additional time is needed to collect information, the timelines may be altered or extended so long as changes are communicated to all parties and justification is provided. Timeline changes must be reasonable. The process must not take more than 30 business days.

If a College Academic Appeal Panel (CAAP) is determined to be appropriate, by the Office of the Registrar, the registrar/associate registrar selects three members (a member of Georgian College Students' Association (GCSA) (<https://www.georgiancollege.ca/student-life/students-administrative-council/>), a faculty and a dean/associate dean) from academic areas other than yours, to form the CAAP. Each panel member is responsible for declaring any conflict of interest.

A dean/associate dean chairs the CAAP, and both the involved or relevant academic area/department and you attend to present your case. The registrar/associate registrar act as a non-voting recording secretary for the CAAP as well as a resource for process, policies, and regulations. The Office of the Registrar sets a date and time for the CAAP and notifies the panel and you within five working days of receiving the Academic Appeal form (AAF) and confirming it meets the criteria for a CAAP. Supporting documents must be received from you and the academic area/department no later than eight working days after receiving notice of the CAAP. The panel fully reviews the facts and confers with the CAAP chair, who renders a decision in a free and unbiased manner. The process is as follows:

- Before the CAAP meets, the registrar/associate registrar investigates the appeal situation, collects statements from the individuals involved, prepares a preliminary report for the panel summarizing the essential details of the case
- All members of the CAAP are involved in the hearing and the decision
- During the appeal hearing, the academic area/department and you may be accompanied by one support person each (e.g., student success advisor, counsellor, or guardian), if the support person is identified to the registrar/associate registrar two business days prior to the hearing
- Witnesses and other concerned individuals may be invited to the hearing by you or the academic area/department. These persons may be asked by the chair to provide information to the panel during the hearing
- The faculty and you are responsible for arranging your own support persons and witnesses, and for informing them of the schedule and process to be followed. Support persons, witnesses and those directed by the CAAP are the only people allowed to attend the panel sessions, and only as necessary during the hearing. Support persons present are not permitted to speak on your behalf, unless permitted by the chair
- In any situation where an individual's personal interests may be incompatible or in conflict with their responsibilities as a support person, witness or CAAP member in a hearing, which includes actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest, the chair of the CAAP or the registrar/associate registrar has the discretion to decline that individual's involvement in the hearing. Where possible, the notification of the conflict will be provided prior to the CAAP meeting
- The CAAP decides on an outcome to the appeal, a resolution process, and any penalties/actions to be applied
- Decisions are based on information presented to the CAAP. Reasons for a decision must be based on the statements found during the academic appeal process. Decisions regarding the outcome of the case and any penalties/actions should be reached by consensus whenever possible. The chair makes the final decision on behalf of the college if consensus is not reached.

Appeal panels adhere to the principles of fairness. Some basic rules to ensure fairness include the following:

#### **Adequate notice of the CAAP meeting**

Notice of the CAAP meeting must include the time and place of the hearing. All written statements available about the case, such as statements from both the academic area/department and you, the registrar/associate registrar's report and notice of witnesses will be provided to all parties within eight working days prior to the CAAP meeting. The registrar/associate registrar can extend the time limits in this procedure after consulting with both you and the academic area/department to ensure appropriate preparation time.

#### **Opportunity to fully present the case**

Both parties can present your cases and fully disclose pertinent information. Questioning of witnesses is directed through the panel.

#### **Reasons for decisions**

Reasons for decisions made by the CAAP are included in the panel's final communication. A copy of the communication is sent to you, the academic area/department, and the dean/associate dean of your program area. A copy is also kept on your record in the Office of the Registrar.



When it is deemed necessary, the college may designate an employee to act on behalf of persons or positions noted in this document. This is usually done to ensure reasonable timelines are followed in cases in which those college personnel identified are not available, or whose availability is constrained.