

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Course expectations and criteria must be faithful to the catalog descriptions of the course and clearly stated in the course syllabus, outline, or individual study agreement. The faculty member is responsible to correct clerical errors as they occur. There may be instances where you disagree with an instructor's actions. In such cases, your first place of complaint is to the faculty member. Student appeals of faculty decisions must be in writing. The intent is always to resolve the appeal at the most immediate level, and academic appeals are allowed only on grounds of unfair treatment against the stated standards, not against the professional judgment of the faculty member.

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Appeal Process

Seattle Pacific University provides a process whereby you may appeal an academic decision, including, but not limited to, grades on course activities; evaluations; course grades; decisions on program admissions; and decisions on fulfillment of program and graduation requirements.

- You may make an academic appeal only on grounds of unfair treatment against the stated standards, not against the professional judgment of the faculty member(s).
- The intent is always to resolve the appeal at the most immediate level.
- If a resolution cannot be obtained at the first level, the process moves to the next level.

In each case, bring the appeal in writing to the person or committee who made the original decision. If a resolution is not obtained at that level, you may appeal to the next level in the school or University administrative structure.

Guidelines for Academic Appeals

- The student must make the appeal in writing within five calendar days after receiving the decision from the faculty member or committee. (Appeals on final grades must be submitted within one quarter of the grade being awarded.)
- At each level, the parties will attempt to resolve the issue according to ethical practices, accreditation standards, and University policy.
- As the person making the appeal, the student should provide the necessary supportive information to substantiate the appeal.
- If for any reason a case is appealed beyond the faculty member or faculty committee, an appeal file shall be created. This file will contain written documentation related to the case including, but not limited to, the student's written appeal and the faculty response. The appeal file shall be open to all principals in the case, including the student appellant.

Levels of Appeal

For appeals on academic decisions such as grades on course activities, evaluations, course grades, and decisions on program admissions, the levels to be followed in order are:

- Faculty member(s) at the course level
- Department Chair (if applicable)
- Dean (Graduate Director first if graduate student)
- Chief Academic Officer

Academic petitions regarding general University matters such as decisions on graduation requirements or other Catalog academic regulations may be made in the following order:

- Office of the Registrar (Graduate Director if graduate student)
- The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (for undergraduate students) or the Graduate Programs Committee (for graduate students)
- Dean
- Chief Academic Officer

The decision of the Chief Academic Officer in any student appeal shall be final.

Acceptable Evidence

Most academic complaints will be resolved at the level of conference between the student and the faculty member. In the exceptional case when the student appeals a decision, the complaint must be in writing. Before a judgment of error is made against the faculty member, the faculty member will be informed of the appeal and given opportunity to respond. Recollections of advice and agreements can be undependable and may reflect what the individual intended or expected, rather than what actually transpired; therefore, formal evaluations from a class, course syllabi or assignment sheets, the University catalog, or other forms of written documentation to which both the student and the faculty member had access at the time, will be the most acceptable evidence for a student academic appeal.