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## Student Academic Appeals Procedures

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### Guiding Policy:

[Student Appeals Policy \(079\)](#)

### Effective Date

September 1, 2009

### Definitions

Refer to the [Student Appeals Policy](#) for additional definitions applicable to these procedures

### **Marker**

The marker is the individual who is responsible for marking a submitted piece of course work by the student. This can be a tutor, an instructor, a coach, an academic expert or other designated individual by the University.

### Procedures

#### **1.0 Appeals Procedure for Assignment of Grades**

An Appellant may appeal any grade assigned to essays, examinations and assignments, or exercises that contribute to the final grade. Appeals of both failing and passing grades may be considered.

The Appellant must follow the procedures outlined in the appropriate section of this document. If the appeal is misdirected, the University Officer in receipt of the appeal shall redirect the appeal to the appropriate University Officer. Where there is disagreement as to which procedures should be followed or which University Officer should review the appeal, the Chair of the Student Academic Appeals Committee shall make the final decision.

The appeal of a grade and subsequent remarking, if appropriate, shall result in one of three possible outcomes:

1. the grade remains the same;
2. the grade is raised; or
3. the grade is lowered.



## 1.1 Appeal for the Assignment of Grades on Substantive Grounds

[Appendix D](#) provides a visual flow chart of this procedure.

An appeal for the assignment of grades on substantive grounds can be made when:

- a. an Appellant believes a grade to coursework was assigned on some basis other than academic achievement;
- b. the published evaluation standards in the course syllabus differ from the evaluation standards applied to the assigned grade;
- c. the evaluation standards applied to the assignment of the grade are unreasonable or differ from the evaluation standards described in the student manual for the course.

### **Step One – Request for an Informal Review by Marker**

The Appellant must request an informal review of the assigned grade with the marker. This request must be made within thirty (30) days of receiving the grade.

The marker can:

- a. remark the coursework in question and assign an outcome as described in Section 5.1 of the [Student Appeals Policy](#); or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

The marker must discuss the matter with the Appellant and provide a decision, in writing, to the Appellant within ten (10) business days of receiving the informal review request.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used by the marker for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

### **Step Two – Appeal to Course Coordinator:**

An Appellant who is not satisfied with the Step One decision may appeal in writing to the Course Coordinator within thirty (30) days of receiving the Step One decision. The appeal must be in writing, specify the reasons for making a further appeal and include all additional information or documentation the Appellant wishes to be considered. When the Course Coordinator is the individual who has assigned the grade and/or is the individual who completed the Step One review, then the Centre Chair responsible for the course shall assign an alternate Course Coordinator or competent marker to review the Step Two appeal.



The Course Coordinator shall review the case, consulting with staff, faculty, the Appellant concerned, or any other person considered appropriate, providing it is practical to do so.

The Course Coordinator can:

- a. remark the coursework in question and assign an outcome as described in Section 5.1 of the [Student Appeals Policy](#); or
- b. arrange to have the coursework remarked by an alternate competent marker; or
- c. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

The Course Coordinator must discuss the matter with the Appellant and provide a decision, in writing, to the Appellant within ten (10) business days of receiving the Step Two appeal request.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

### **Step Three – Appeal to the Dean (or designates):**

An Appellant who is not satisfied with the Step Two decision may appeal in writing to the Dean (or designates) responsible for the course within thirty (30) days of receiving the Step Two decision. The appeal must be in writing, specify the reasons for making a further appeal and include all additional information or documentation the Appellant wishes to have considered.

The Dean (or designates) shall review the case, consulting with staff, faculty, the Appellant concerned, or any other person considered appropriate, providing it is practical to do so.

The Dean (or designates) can:

- a. arrange for remarking of the coursework in question by an individual who has not been involved in the step one or two decision and assign an outcome as described in Section 5.1 of the [Student Appeals Policy](#); or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

The Dean (or designates) must discuss the matter with the Appellant and provide a decision, in writing, to the Appellant within ten (10) business days of receiving the Step Three appeal request.

The decision of the Dean (or designates) is final.



[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

## 1.2 Appeal for the Assignment of Grade on Procedural Grounds

[Appendix E](#) provides a visual flow chart of this procedure.

An appeal for the assignment of a grade on procedural grounds can be made when an Appellant believes a university policy or procedure has not been followed in the assignment of a grade. When it is determined, in accordance with this procedure that university procedure and policy have been followed an appeal using procedural grounds as its basis will be dismissed.

The Appellant must submit their appeal in writing to the Chair of the Student Academic Appeals Committee (see Section 6.0 of this procedure) setting out the grounds for their appeal, including details as to the university policy or procedure they believe was not followed, and how that impacted on the grade assignment within thirty (30) days of receiving the grade. The Chair shall review the case, consulting with staff, faculty, the Appellant concerned, or any other person considered appropriate providing it is practical to do so.

The Chair may:

- a. present the appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review; or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

In cases where the appeal has been presented to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review, the committee may consult with the Appellant if desired or delegate the Chair to consult with the Appellant in the event the Appellant is not available at the time of the committee's review of the appeal. The Chair shall inform the Appellant of the committee's decision, in writing, within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Student Academic Appeals Committee is final.

In cases where the appeal has been declined based on insufficient grounds the Chair shall inform the Appellant, in writing, within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal and include specific reasons for the decision to decline. The decision of the Chair is final.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.



## 2.0 Appeals Process for Transfer Credit Evaluations and Assessments

[Appendix F](#) provides a visual flow chart of this procedure.

An Appellant may appeal any decision concerning the awarding of transfer credit for previous education. Appeals to change the designation of certain credits, to obtain more credit or to reduce the credit granted may be allowed. Appellants should review and are expected to be familiar with the section entitled "[Admissions and Academic Regulations](#)" in the current [Athabasca University Calendar](#) prior to appealing any decision regarding the award of transfer credits.

### **Step One – Appeal to Coordinator of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services**

An Appellant submitting an appeal to any decision concerning the evaluation and assessment of transfer credit must contact the Coordinator of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services to discuss the award and to set out the reasons for their appeal. Such contact must be made within thirty (30) days of receiving the letter containing the transfer credit decision.

The Coordinator of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services can:

- a. change the transfer credit award; or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

The Coordinator of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services must respond to the Appellant within five (5) business days and provide a decision, in writing, to the Appellant within thirty (30) business days of receiving the request.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

### **Step Two – Appeal to Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services**

An Appellant who is not satisfied with the Step One decision may appeal in writing to the Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services within thirty (30) days of receiving the Step One decision. The written appeal must identify precisely the decision(s) the Appellant wishes to have reconsidered. All supporting documentation or evidence that the Appellant wishes to have considered must be submitted at this stage of the appeal.

The Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services shall review the file and any supporting documentation that has been submitted, and may consult with faculty members, committee members, staff members, program directors, the Appellant concerned, or other persons considered appropriate.



The Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services can:

- a. change the transfer credit award; or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

The Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services shall inform the Appellant in writing of the decision, within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal.

The decision of the Associate Registrar of Admissions and Transfer Credit Services is final.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

### **3.0 Appeals on Matters of Institutional Procedure or Policy**

[Appendix G](#) provides a visual flow chart of this procedure.

An Appellant may appeal any decision based upon institutional procedure or policy provided that the policy allows for an appeal. The Appellant may ask that the decision be rescinded, or that it be varied.

#### **Step One – Appeal to Unit Supervisor/Coordinator**

An Appellant who is dissatisfied with any decision based upon institutional procedure or policy, provided that the policy allows for an appeal, must contact the unit supervisor/coordinator where the initial decision was made to discuss the decision before an appeal is made. Such contact must be made within thirty (30) days of the notification of the decision.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

#### **Step Two – Appeal to Department Head**

An Appellant who is not satisfied with a Step One decision may appeal the decision in writing to the head of the department, or designate, of the unit where the original decision was made, within thirty (30) days of notification of the decision. The written appeal must identify precisely the decision(s) the Appellant wishes to have reconsidered. All supporting documentation or evidence that the Appellant wishes to have considered must be submitted at this stage of the appeal.

The department head (or designate) shall review the case and any supporting documentation that has been submitted, and may consult with faculty members, committee members, staff members, program directors, the Appellant concerned, or other persons as considered appropriate. After a thorough investigation of the circumstances and particulars of the case, the department head (or designate) shall



inform the Appellant in writing of the decision, within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that should be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

### **Step Three – Appeal to Student Academic Appeals Committee**

An Appellant who is not satisfied with a Step Two decision may appeal a decision based on institutional procedure or policy, provided that the policy allows for an appeal, by submitting a letter of appeal to the Chair of the Student Academic Appeals Committee (see [Section 6.0 Student Academic Appeals Committee Written Appeal](#) for these procedures) within thirty (30) days of receiving written notification from the department head (or designate). The letter of appeal must specify in detail the reasons for making a further appeal.

The Chair shall review the case, consulting with staff, faculty, the Appellant concerned, or any other person considered appropriate, providing it is practical to do so.

The Chair may:

- a. present the appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review; or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

In cases where the appeal has been presented to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review, the committee may consult with the Appellant if desired or delegate the Chair to consult with the Appellant in the event the Appellant is not available at the time of the committee's review of the appeal. The Chair shall inform the Appellant, in writing, of the Committee's decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Committee is final.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

## **4.0 Appeals of Penalties Arising From the Academic Misconduct Policy**

[Appendix H](#) provides a visual flow chart of this procedure. The Academic Misconduct Policy provides rights and procedures for appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee. An appeal from the assignment of a penalty for academic misconduct can be based on the following:

- a. denial that the offence occurred; or
- b. the Appellant believes the assigned penalty is too severe.



## Step One – Consult Policy

An Appellant who wishes to avail them self of these rights is expected to be familiar with the policy in question and must follow the procedures for appeal as outlined below. Links to the policies and disciplinary procedures follow.

[Student Academic Misconduct Policy \(087\)](#)

[Student Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures \(087a\)](#)

## Step Two – Appeal to Student Academic Appeals Committee

An Appellant may appeal a penalty by submitting a letter of appeal to the Chair of the Student Academic Appeals Committee within thirty (30) days of receiving notification of the decision (see [Section 6.0 Student Academic Appeals Committee Written Appeal for these procedures](#)). This letter must specify in detail the reasons for making a further appeal and the remedy the Appellant is seeking.

The Chair shall review the case, consulting with staff, faculty, the Appellant concerned, or any other person considered appropriate, providing it is practical to do so. The Chair shall then present the appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review.

The Chair may:

- a. present the appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review; or
- b. decline to proceed if sufficient grounds have not been established.

In cases where the appeal has been presented to the Student Academic Appeals Committee for consideration and review, the committee may consult with the Appellant if desired or delegate the Chair to consult with the Appellant in the event the Appellant is not available at the time of the committee's review of the appeal. The Chair shall inform the Appellant, in writing, of the Committee's decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Committee is final.

[Appendices A](#) and [B](#) are templates that may be used for the purposes of notifying the Appellant in writing.

## 5.0 Time Limits

Time limits for submitting appeals under these Procedures as set out in section 3.0 of the [Student Appeals Policy](#).



## 6.0 Student Academic Appeals Committee Written Appeal

A written appeal can be sent via a formal letter to the Chair of the Student Academic Appeals Committee by fax, by post or by email.

Appeals to the Student Academic Appeals Committee can be addressed as follows:

Chair, Student Academic Appeals Committee  
c/o Office of the Registrar  
1 University Drive  
Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3

Fax: (780) 675-6174 E

mail: registrar@athabascau.ca

All appeals to the Student Academic Appeals Committee should be addressed to the Chair of the committee and contain the following information:

- a. The Appellant's name
- b. The Appellant's student ID number
- c. The Appellant's return mailing address
- d. What is being appealed. If the appeal is in relation to a grade, then the course name and number must be included. If the appeal is in relation to a policy, then the policy must be identified.
- e. Full details regarding the grounds for appeal and copies of all supporting documents.
- f. The signature of the Appellant. If the appeal is being sent by email, it must be sent as a PDF attachment and contain the Appellant's signature.

[Appendix C](#) is a template that should be used to submit a written appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee.

### **Related References, Policies, and Procedures**

[Student Academic Misconduct Policy \(087\)](#)

[Student Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures \(087a\)](#)

[Student Appeals Policy \(079\)](#)

### **Applicable Legislation/Regulation**

[The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)



**Responsible Position/Department**

Registrar – Office of the Registrar

**Keywords**

Grade Appeal  
Academic Appeal  
Transfer Credit Appeal  
Policy Appeal  
Student Academic Appeals Committee  
Appeal

**History**

Office of the Registrar, October 26, 2016 (revised)  
Athabasca University Academic Council, April 29, 2009, Motion # 217-7 (revised)



## **Appendix A – TEMPLATE TO ADVISE APPELLANT ON APPEAL DECLINE TO PROCEED**

Further to your appeal received on [insert date appeal received] regarding [insert appeal details].

Please be advised that I have reviewed your appeal in accordance with Athabasca University's Student Appeals Procedures and have determined that sufficient grounds have not established to proceed (provide reasons).

Choose one of the following:

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to appeal this matter further. Please follow (insert step) of Section (insert section number and section name) of the Student Appeals Procedures (insert html address)

**Or**

In accordance with (insert section and section name) of the Student Appeals Procedures I am the University Officer responsible for making a final decision in this matter. Consequently, this matter will not be pursued any further.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention so that we could investigate the matter. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,



## **Appendix B – TEMPLATE TO ADVISE APPELLANT ON APPEAL ALTERNATE OUTCOME**

Further to your appeal received on [insert date appeal received] regarding [insert appeal details].

Please be advised that I have reviewed your appeal in accordance with Athabasca University's Student Appeals Procedures and have decided that (provide alternate outcome).

Choose one of the following:

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to appeal this matter further. Please follow (insert step) of Section (insert section number and section name) of the Student Appeals Procedures (insert html address)

**Or**

In accordance with (insert section and section name) of the Student Appeals Procedures I am the University Officer responsible for making a final decision in this matter. Consequently, this matter will not be pursued any further.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention so that we could investigate the matter. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,



## Appendix C – TEMPLATE FOR APPELLANT ON TO SUBMIT WRITTEN APPEAL

(insert name)

(insert address)

(insert date)

(insert student ID number)

**RE:** (insert subject of appeal)

Dear Chair, Student Academic Appeals Committee;

I am submitting an appeal of (insert nature of appeal).

I am basing my appeal on (insert reasons and/.or grounds that will support your case).

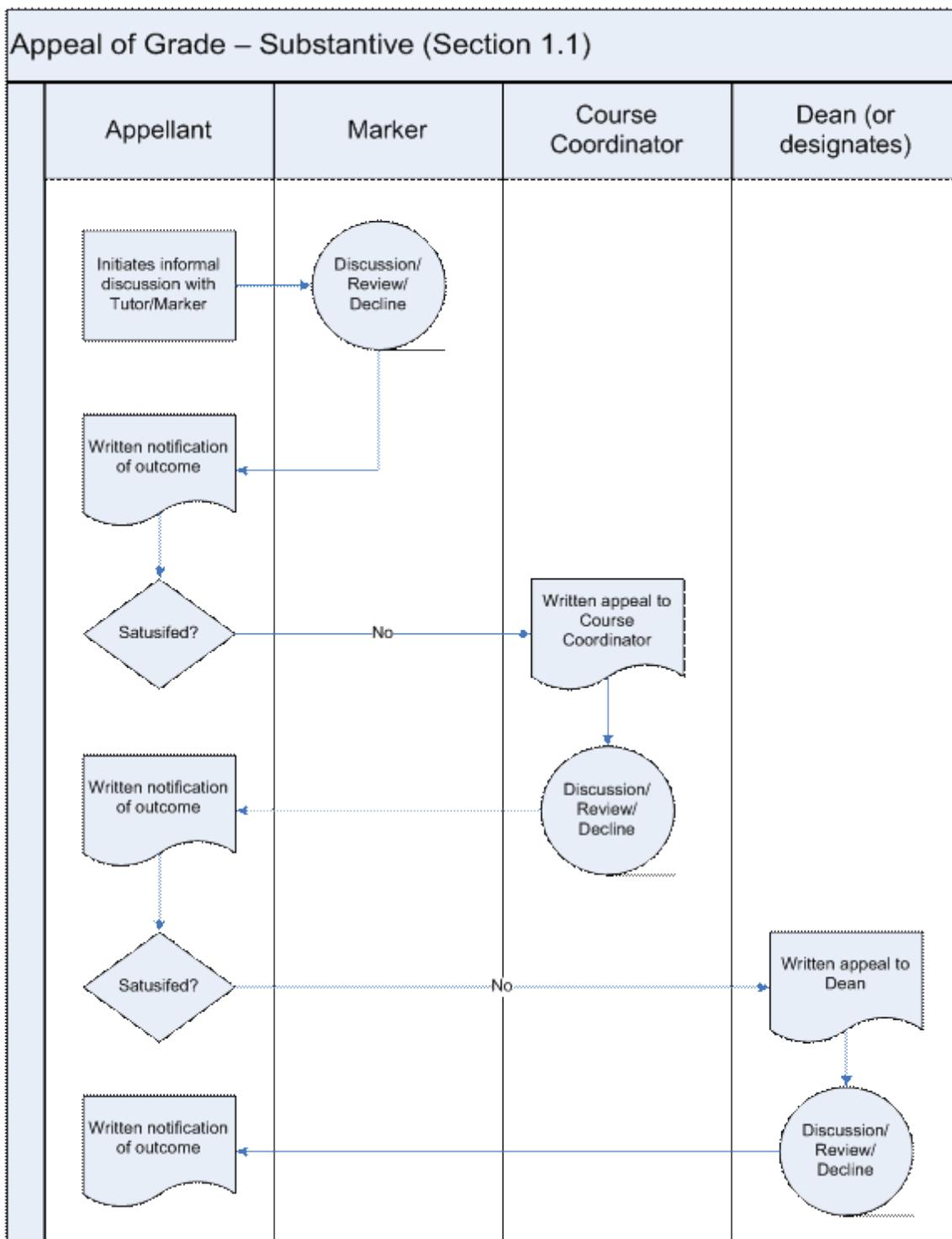
I am attaching the following supporting documents: (list and attach all supporting documents)

I have read the Student Appeals Policy and the Student Appeals Procedures and understand the potential outcomes to my appeal. The outcome I am seeking is (insert outcome).

Sincerely,

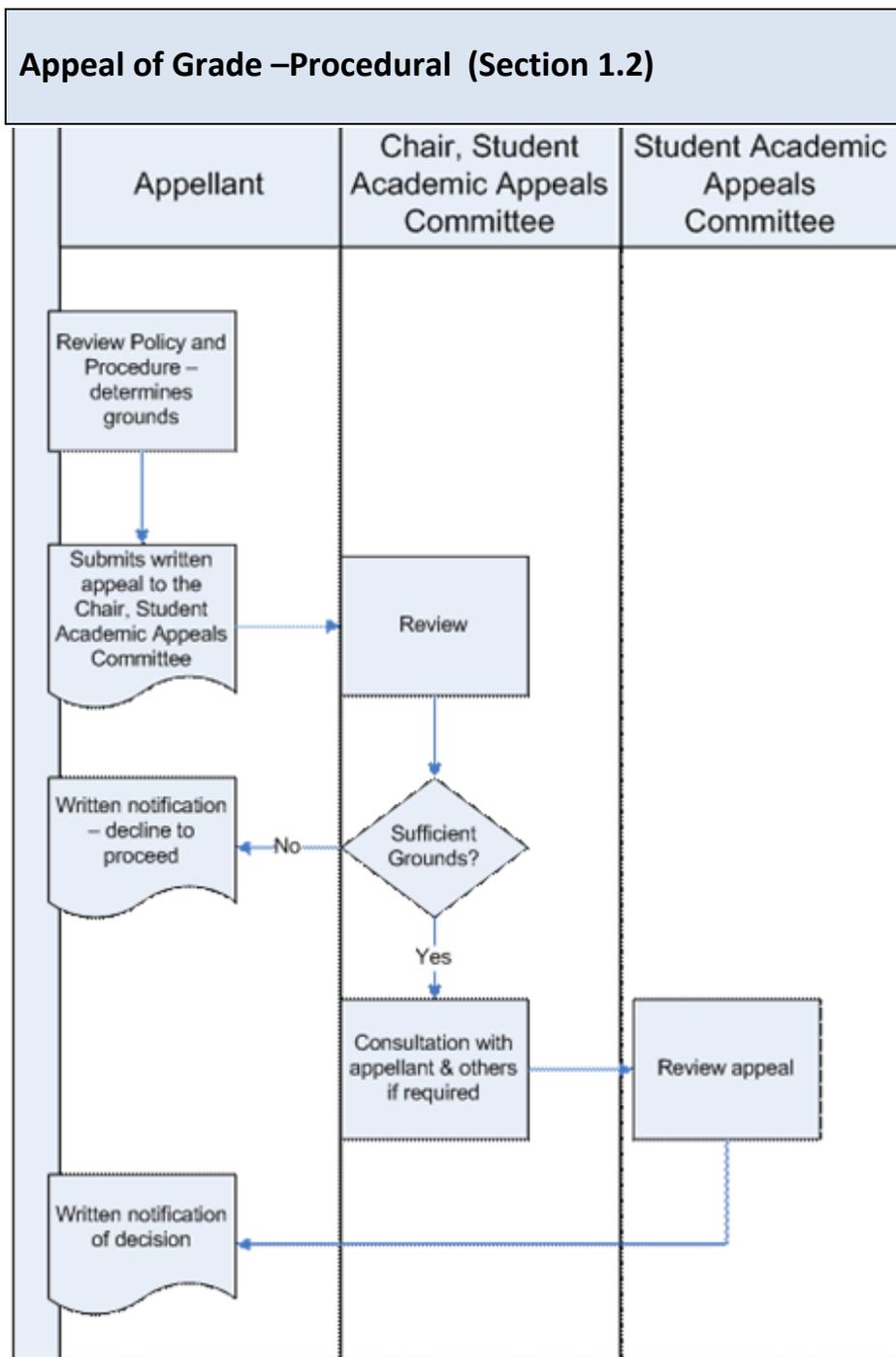


## Appendix D - Substantive Grade Appeal



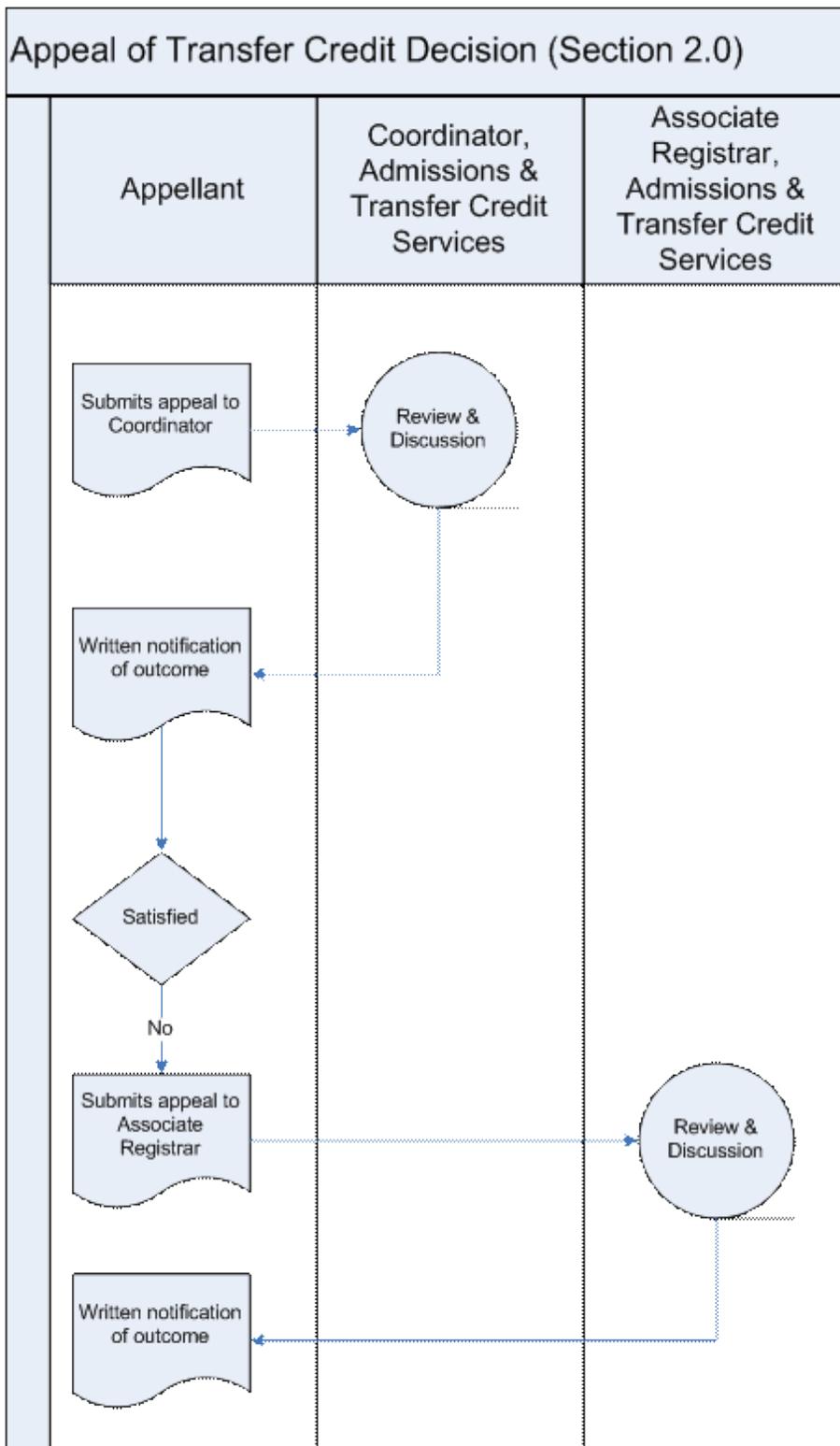


## Appendix E - Procedural Grade Appeal



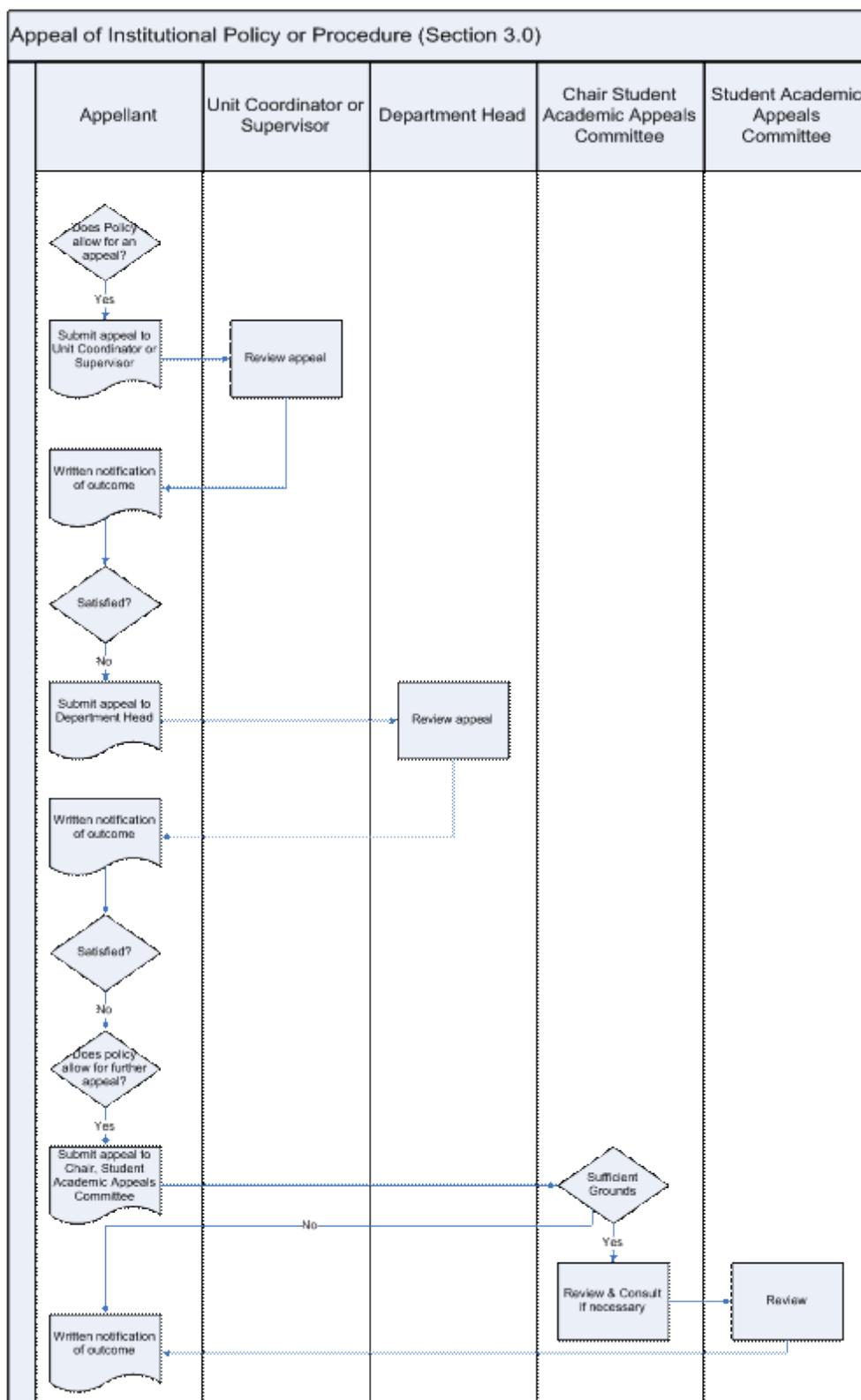


## Appendix F – Appeal of Transfer Credit Decision





## Appendix G – Appeal of Institutional Policy or Procedure





## Appendix H – Appeal of Penalties arising from the Academic Misconduct Policy

