

Academic Appeal and Grievance Procedure Guidelines

The following procedures address those student appeals and grievances arising from suspension, termination/dismissal based on unsatisfactory academic performances as reported to the Graduate School by affiliated graduate programs. The Graduate School cannot reverse academic decisions made by programs, schools or colleges. The Graduate School is not involved in grievance processes related to issues not related to suspensions or dismissals, but will be happy to assist with mediating discussions or grievances between students and programs or schools/colleges.

The intent of the academic appeal procedure is to assure fairness and due process to all involved parties. Good faith efforts should always be made by students, faculty, and administration to settle all appeals, complaints, and grievances on an informal basis. These efforts will include conferences between those people who are directly involved in the conflict as well as others who are perceived as possibly helpful for solving the issue at hand.

Definitions

Suspensions and Terminations can be issued for a variety of reasons (see below) including lack of progress.

Lack of Progress: Students failing to meet program progression criteria, such as failure to pass courses, not completing remaining work related to grades of incomplete in time, or some other programmatic issues, would fall into this category. Students in this category may be suspended or terminated/dismissed as defined by the corresponding criteria below.

- **Suspension:** Removal of the student from the graduate program for a defined period of time and/or the specification that a student must fulfill certain requirements before re-admission or re-instatement will be considered. While suspended, the student is not entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed as a student by the University. Special conditions may be stipulated for reinstatement at the conclusion of suspension. The student is not in good standing with the University during the term of the suspension. Per this policy, students terminated have the right to appeal their suspension in writing within one week.
- **Termination/Dismissal:** Terms used synonymously to refer to a student being withdrawn from a graduate program and Graduate School. Official notification is sent to students by email, on request or as necessary. Per this policy, students terminated have the right to appeal their dismissal in writing within one week. As with a suspension, the student is no longer entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed by the University as a student.

Graduate programs and students should be in continuous communication. To assist this process, graduate programs have developed programmatic handbooks and students are responsible for following the policies and procedures outlined in program handbooks and in the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures. Ignorance of the guidelines and procedures will not constitute an affirmative defense in an appeals process.

General procedures

1. Students should be informed in writing by the relevant instructor, faculty committee, Program Director, or appropriate Dean that he/she is not meeting the academic requirements to continue in the graduate program. Written notices of course failures, unsatisfactory program progress, and intent to request dismissal or suspension from the Graduate School are distributed by the specific Program Director to the involved student, the student's academic advisor, the program progression's committee (if available), and appropriate Deans.
2. Should the student disagree with the decision to terminate progression in the program based on unsatisfactory academic performance, the student should initiate a conference with the involved person(s) to determine if the disagreement can be resolved within 2 weeks.
3. If the results of the first conference are not acceptable to the student, the student informs the involved faculty within 1 week and requests a conference with the involved faculty and Program Director or school administrator. NOTE: This step is required only in situations in which the Program Director and/or school administrator have not already approved or concurred with the initial notice of failure or intent to suspend or dismiss from the program. If the student still does not agree with the decision of the graduate program, the student should follow whatever grievance or appeal procedures are in place within the school or college housing the program. The Graduate School Dean can be called on to advise in this process.
4. If the consensus of the program is still that the student should be terminated/dismissed or suspended, the Program Director or Chairperson notifies the Graduate School and appropriate school Dean and recommends the student's dismissal or suspension. The email or letter should outline the reason for the dismissal or suspension and steps taken up to that date. If suspension is recommended, the recommendation also includes specific criteria for the term of the suspension and requirements for reinstatement.
5. The Graduate School and appropriate school/college Deans will review the student's academic record and the information submitted by the program to ensure that the student has received due process. If the student's academic record and/or submitted information support termination/dismissal, the student will be dismissed from the program and the Graduate School. If suspension is recommended and supported by the academic record and submitted information, the student will be suspended per the request. The student will be notified of any termination/dismissal or suspension decisions by the program via email with delivery and read receipts.

Written Appeal Procedure

1. Should the student wish to appeal the Graduate School's decision, the student should submit a written response to the Dean of the Graduate School within 1 week of receiving the written notice of suspension or termination/dismissal. The appeal should include rationale for the appeal and desired outcome. The student may meet with the Office of Student Affairs and working with them, request a personal interview with the Graduate School Dean to discuss the situation after they have submitted their written appeal.
2. The final decision rests with the Dean of the Graduate School. At the Dean's discretion, he/she may discuss the Graduate School Dean's decision with the involved faculty and student's program, as well as any other persons affected by the recommended resolutions.
3. The Dean of the Graduate School will notify the student of final decision by email with delivery and read receipts. This will normally be within 10 working days of submission of

the appeal or interview with the student (whichever falls last). In cases where consultation with others to mediate the outcome are necessary, this process could take longer and the Dean will notify the student of the reasons and timeline, when known. The decision of the Dean of the Graduate School is final.

4. The Dean shall notify the appropriate CU Registrar of the change in the student's academic status and order the Registrar to suspend the student's registration.