Graduate Student Appeals

13.7. Graduate Student Appeals Committee

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome at prior levels, the student may bring the appeal to the Graduate Student Appeals committee by submitting the appeals form and all documentation generated in the prior steps to the Graduate Dean within 10 business days of the most recent date on the documentation. The dean, in turn, informs the committee of the appeal and provides them with all documentation.

The graduate student appeals committee has five members and is constituted by the Graduate Dean each academic year to handle all appeals for that year. Four of the members must be graduate faculty who are members of the Graduate Council. A graduate student member of the committee will be selected from a pool of graduate students that includes the student members of the Graduate Council and four students nominated by the Graduate Student Council. Two additional graduate faculty members of the Graduate Council and one graduate student from the pool must be designated as alternates when the committee is formed. Any member of the appeals committee who had a role in a previous level of the appeals process must recuse themselves from the committee for that appeal. They must be replaced by an alternate member for that appeal. The graduate student and the party or parties against whom the complaint has been brought each have the right to challenge, with cause, to the Dean of the Graduate College one member of the graduate student appeals committee. If a challenge is deemed to have merit, that member is replaced by an alternate for that appeal. The five committee members elect the chair of the committee from its membership.

The burden of proof shall be with the appealing graduate student. The appealing graduate student has the right to 1) be given due notice by the Dean of the Graduate College in sufficient detail that the accusation is clear and the circumstances of the accusation are detailed enough for meaningful response by the accused and 2) be heard by an impartial body. Each contending party may, if it wishes, be accompanied by one counsel, but any counseling is restricted to 1) what to ask, 2) when not to respond to a question, and 3) how to answer a question. Counsel may not intrude on the hearing. The appeals committee is not bound by rules of legal evidence or procedure and may develop procedures that its members consider to be fair and equitable to the particular circumstance(s).

The chair of the committee will preside over the hearing. The hearing will include an opening statement by both the student and the party or parties against whom the complaint has been brought, questioning by the appeals committee, and brief closing statements by the student and the party or parties against whom the complaint has been brought.

Committee members make decisions on available information; non-response to questions is available information, i.e., a negative inference can be drawn from the lack of a response. The hearing will be closed unless the student signs a release waiving their rights to a closed hearing. The hearing, but not the appeals committee's deliberations, will be audio recorded.

The decisions and recommendations of the appeals committee shall be by majority vote. Depending on the type of grievance (see table), the committee’s decision is either final or is advisory to the Dean of the Graduate College. In either case, the Dean is responsible for taking appropriate action to implement the decision. Any further appeal shall be directed to the Provost of the University.