

Senate Policy #134: Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals - Students

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

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1) What if I need accommodations for religious observance?

- a) Complete/submit the form at: www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf.
- b) Attach a clear explanation of the observance, and explain what your requested accommodation is.
- c) File a form, normally within the first two weeks of the beginning of the term for each scheduled test and assignment in your course, or as soon as possible in advance of the event. For exams, file them within five working days of when the final exam schedule is posted.

If you and your instructor cannot agree on an appropriate accommodation, you may contact your Chair/Director or their designate. For complete details, see Policy 150 at <http://ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf>.

2) What if I need accommodations for a disability?

- a) Register with the Ryerson Access Centre – they will consider your request and assess your needs. If warranted, they will provide you with documentation outlining the accommodation you require.
- b) Give this documentation to your instructor(s) *before* a graded assignment, test, or exam as it will not be accepted if submitted late. Your instructor may consult with the Access Centre about the accommodation.

For complete details & instructions, go to <http://ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf>.

3) What if I will miss a test/assignment for medical and/or compassionate reasons?

- a) Inform your instructor (email is preferred), in advance, if you know that you will be missing a graded assignment deadline/test. If circumstances prevent you from doing so in advance, inform your instructor as soon as reasonably possible. The arrangements made will be based on the severity of the circumstances and amount of work missed.
- b) Medical: If your instructor requires it, a Ryerson Medical Certificate or a letter on letterhead from a physician with the student declaration portion of the Ryerson Medical Certificate attached must be submitted within three (3) working days of the missed work, unless there are extraordinary circumstances where your illness (including documented mental health issues) prevents you from seeking medical attention or documenting your illness on time.
- c) Compassionate: Your instructor will determine whether documentation is required. It is recognized that compassionate grounds may be hard to document, but you should try and get as much as possible (e.g. death certificate or a notice from a funeral home in the case of a death). Submit documentation within three (3) working days of the missed work, unless there are extraordinary circumstances.
- d) Once you accept the offered arrangement, it is final unless subsequent events interfere with its fulfillment. You may not appeal the grade in the course by claiming that the original arrangement was unfair.

- 4) What if I miss a final exam for medical and/or compassionate reasons?**
- a) If you have the appropriate documentation, you may request an incomplete grade (INC) and will be required to complete a make-up exam as soon as possible (within a three-month period). Unless you get an INC grade, your instructor will not give you an extension past the deadline for submission of grades.
 - b) If you have any issues with arrangements with the instructor, you may consult with the Chair/Director of your program.
- 5) What if I am having a problem that impacts my work in more than one course?**
- a) Contact your Chair/Director as soon as possible. If you fail to do so, you may jeopardize the possibility of accommodation or your ability to launch an appeal in the future.
 - b) Submit the required documentation, and the Chair/Director will decide what to do on a course-by-course basis. Document everything yourself through email.
 - c) Inform your instructor about the Chair/Director's decision to verify that they find everything acceptable. A copy of the decision will be kept in the Department/School, and your instructor should not require documentation as your Chair/Director will have already made a decision. If the instructor does not find the arrangements acceptable, speak with the instructor and the Chair/Director to discuss alternatives.
 - d) If you drop a course, try and speak with your instructor, but you may also drop your courses when consulting with the Chair/Director. However, the Registrar will review documentation and it has the final decision about late course withdrawals without academic penalty or resulting financial arrangements.
- 6) What if I want my instructor (or someone else) to regrade something?**
- a) If you think a test/assignment has been improperly graded or that there has been a miscalculation (e.g. improper addition), contact your instructor within 10 working days from when the graded work was returned to the class, even if you pick up the work late.
 - b) You may be required to submit a written request containing your reasoning for a reassessment with documentation showing where the grading is in error (e.g. from notes, test, course outline). You cannot just claim that you want a higher grade.
 - c) If you don't think there will be enough time for your instructor to review your grade (e.g. if you think the work won't be reassessed before you receive your final grade), schedule a meeting with your instructor as soon as possible.
 - d) Certain assignments or tests may not be independently reassessed (e.g. performances or presentations).
 - e) If you don't accept your instructor's reassessment, haven't received a response or reassessment from your instructor within 5 working days, or feel that you cannot discuss the matter with your instructor, you may submit a formal request to your Chair/Director. You must submit the reason why the original grade (or, if applicable, instructor's reassessed grade) was improper with evidence such as the course outline, textbook, etc. Just claiming that you deserve a higher mark is not sufficient cause for a reassessment, and the Chair/Director may deny the request if your rationale is not based on the merit of your work.

- f) Either you or the instructor (whoever has it) is responsible for providing the original graded assignment, test, or exam to the Chair/Director. Provide a clean copy of the work with all grading notations and student identifiers deleted to the Chair/Director – if it is a paper, assignment, or test that has been returned to you, it is your responsibility to supply the copy.
- g) If you request that there only be a partial reassessment, the Chair/Director will decide whether or not it is appropriate. The whole work may be regraded if it is appropriate.

Please note that your grade may go up, down, or stay the same. A reassessed grade will become the official grade for the work, and the revised grade cannot be subsequently appealed. You will be given supervised access to graded unreturned work or your graded final exam for a reasonable amount of time to assess the work and possibly prepare an explanation for a grade reassessment request. However, if the reassessment is not completed in accordance with this policy, you may appeal based on grounds of procedural error.

7) What happens if my reassessment isn't done before the appeals deadline, or if I don't receive a response?

If you have attempted to have your work reassessed or grades recalculated, but have not resolved the matter prior to your appeal deadline or failed to receive a response from an instructor/Chair/Director, you may submit a formal appeal by the deadline. You may withdraw the formal appeal at a later date if the matter has been resolved. See question 11 about formal appeals.

8) What if I have issues about the way a course is being taught or managed?

- a) Bring them up with the instructor.
- b) If they are not resolved with the instructor, or if you do not feel you can discuss them with the instructor, speak with the Chair/Director.
- c) You can file an appeal on Course Management grounds at any time if the matter has affected a grade.

9) What if I can't resolve issues about my final course grade or academic standing informally with my instructor or Chair/Director?

You can file a formal appeal. Note that your grade will not be changed as a result of an appeal, but rather you may be allowed to demonstrate your knowledge in that course.

10) What happens if I submit more than one appeal?

If you initiate more than one appeal, they may be heard either at the same time or one after another, depending on their nature.

11) I want to submit a formal grade/standing appeal, what do I do?

- a) Consult with your instructor and/or Chair/Director if you have an issue regarding a final course grade. If the matter cannot be resolved, and you believe that you have grounds for a formal appeal, you should consult the *Academic Consideration and Appeals Policy (policy #134)*. Appeals must be filed by the deadline published in the Ryerson calendar. Grade appeals begin with the Department/School in which the

course is taught, standing appeals with your program Department/School. Follow the instructions and fill in the forms on the Senate and Registration and Records websites. Attach all documents to be presented as evidence.

- b) If you file a standing appeal, you must show why you should be treated differently from other students, or why your standing is inappropriate. If you have both a grade and a standing appeal, depending on the circumstances, the grade appeal will normally be considered first. If you are appealing a Required to Withdraw/Permanently Withdrawn standing, you may continue in your program on the basis of a probationary contract until the appeal is resolved. If the appeal is denied and your standing remains at Required to Withdraw or Permanently Withdrawn, you will be removed from your courses and given a full refund of the fees.
- c) Appeals must be filed in person unless you have made alternate arrangements, in which case you still have to submit the original documents at a later date.
- d) You must keep a copy for yourself. Bring the complete copy with you to get it date stamped.
- e) If you believe you have grounds to appeal the Department/School's decision, you must do so with the Dean (of the teaching faculty for a grade and with your program faculty for a standing) within ten (10) working days from the date on the decision letter. You must indicate in the letter where you disagree with the decision.
- f) You must complete the Faculty level form, and submit ALL of the documents you submitted to the department/school, the decision letter, and a new letter to the Dean addressing where the decision was in error. You must present a complete copy for date-stamping for your own records. Incomplete and late documents will not be accepted. If you fail to receive a response from the Faculty within five (5) working days, or wish to appeal their decision, your appeal can proceed to the Senate level.
- g) Unless you make other arrangements, you must submit your appeal in person to the Senate, with a complete copy for your file. You must file your appeal within 10 working days of the date of the decision from the Faculty. Incomplete and late documents will not be accepted.
- h) Respond promptly to any emails from the Senate for your availability to attend your hearing, and be sure to attend the hearing. Normally, even if you do not attend, the hearing will still proceed. You will be notified of the decision within five (5) working days of the appeal. Decisions from the Senate are final and may not be appealed.
- i) Chang School: Appeals regarding grades in continuing education (CE) courses must be submitted to The Chang School. The appropriate program director will coordinate the response with the appropriate Department/School.

12) What are the grounds that appeals can be based on?

Your appeal must be based on the same grounds throughout each level (explained in questions 13 through 16) with the exception of procedural error. Reassessment of your work is not grounds for an appeal. See section P-IIA of Policy 134 for complete details.

13) What are medical grounds?

If an unforeseen medical condition occurs during the term that impacts your academic performance, you may appeal based on medical grounds. See question 3 for more details

regarding documentation. However, if you failed to take action when the problem arose, your appeal will be jeopardized.

14) What are compassionate grounds?

If events occur, beyond your control, and seriously impair your academic performance, you may appeal based on compassionate grounds. If you failed to take any action at the time your appeal will be jeopardized. See question 3 for more details regarding documentation.

15) What are course management grounds?

If you believe your grade has been negatively affected because an instructor has deviated from the Course Management policy/course outline or has demonstrated personal bias or unfair treatment, you should raise the issues with your instructor and/or Chair/Director as soon as possible. Note that personal bias is not the same as prejudice (defined in question 16). Provide the course outline or policy reference (if relevant), detail where the deviation, personal bias, or unfair treatment occurred, and explain how your academic performance was affected. Again, you should have done something at the time the problem occurred.

16) What are grounds based on prejudice?

Claims of prejudice are limited to the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g. race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, etc.). Personal bias and unfair treatment for other reasons are related to course management, not prejudice.

- a) Submit a copy of your appeal and consult with the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Office. Your appeal will not proceed until the Office assesses your appeal and makes a recommendation to your Chair/Director.
- b) If the Office determines that there is insufficient evidence to support your claim of prejudice and yet you still want to proceed on the basis of personal bias or unfair treatment, your appeal will be filed on the ground of Course Management.

17) What is procedural error?

If you believe that there has been an error in the procedure (the adherence to Policy 134) or any applicable policy which has impacted your grade or standing, you may appeal on procedural error. You must reference both the policy and alleged error while explaining how this error has affected your academic record (e.g. an instructor failing to reassess your grade for an assignment, if an instructor does not respond in time).

18) Can my appeal be dismissed?

If you do not comply with deadlines (unless there are extenuating circumstances) or submit an incomplete appeal, your appeal will normally not be accepted or processed. Failure to provide appropriate documentation (e.g. letter with sufficient rationale detailing why the decision of Department/School or Faculty was incorrect) may be grounds for dismissal. In other words, you should not rely on repeating your story to each subsequent level without saying why the decision is wrong.

19) My appeal was dismissed, what happens now?

You will be notified within five (5) working days of your appeal's dismissal, and you have the same amount of time to provide a written response as to why your appeal shouldn't be dismissed. At this point the Senate Appeals Committee will decide if your appeal will be heard or not. If your appeal does end up dismissed, there will be no further appeal.

20) Who may I consult about appeals? Is anyone allowed to represent me?

You may consult with student advocates from RSU or CESAR at any time, and they may also represent you in an appeal. You may also speak with an Ombudsperson about issues of fairness at any time. Legal Counsel is allowed to represent you only at the Senate level of appeals.

21) When will I be given details about my hearing?

You will be given ten (10) working-days notice of the date and time, but it can be scheduled with less notice if both parties give written consent. You will receive the appropriate documentation within five (5) working days.

22) Who may I bring to the hearing?

Unless the hearing is closed by the Panel, hearings are open to the public. You may bring a support person but he/she may not participate in any way. You may bring witnesses but you have to declare them in advance on the appeal form. Witnesses from either side are to be present at the beginning of the hearing and will only be present while giving testimony. If the hearing is open, they may return to the hearing only after all witnesses have presented. If the witnesses are not listed on the appeal form, the Hearing Panel will decide if they are heard.

23) Can I record the hearing? What is the official record of the hearing?

The hearing may not be recorded (audio/visual) and no minutes are taken. The decision letter is the official record of the proceedings.

24) What if I have a charge of academic misconduct?

If you appeal a charge of academic misconduct and it is related to your grade/standing appeal, the misconduct appeal will be heard first. You will be assigned a grade of "DEF" while the charge is investigated.