

AD HOC ACADEMIC POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
INTERIM REPORT
April 5, 2016 Senate Meeting

The Academic Policy Review Committee (APRC), an ad hoc committee of the Senate Academic Governance and Policy Committee (AGPC) , has as its mandate the review of five policies: Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals (134); Graduate Appeals (152); Examinations (135); Course Management (145); and Graduate Course Management (151).

To date, the APRC has met five times. Here are some highlights of the committee's work.

- First, there has been general agreement to consolidate and simplify policies and to separate policies from procedures
- The first APRC subcommittee has developed a statement of values and principles for academic policies.
- Three additional "issues-based" subcommittees have been formed and have met twice: Academic Appeals; Evaluations and Exams; and Academic Consideration.

Here is a summary of issues raised by each subcommittee.

Academic Appeals Subcommittee: Summary of Issues

- The graduate and undergraduate appeals policies (Policies 152 and 134) could be harmonized.
- With respect to graduate student appeals, the roles of the Graduate Program Directors and Associate Deans (Graduate Studies) need to be specified. Should the Associate Deans responsible for Graduate Studies in each Faculty be the decision makers for second-level graduate student appeals?
- The subcommittee identified challenges with the appeal submission process, especially for Chang School students who may be working during the day or taking courses through distance education. Would a move towards electronic (e.g., RAMSS-based) submission of appeals address these challenges?
- It is often difficult to make appeals decisions based on compassionate grounds. The appeals policy should clarify what is meant by compassionate grounds.
- There is a need for faculty development and training on appeals policies and procedures.

Academic Consideration Subcommittee: Summary of Issues

- The subcommittee identified three areas worthy of review and consideration: (1) alternate arrangements for missed tests or deadlines; (2) the practice of requiring that students submit medical notes in order to be provided with alternate arrangements; and (3) re-grading and grade reassessments.
- The issue of medical notes has been the main focus of initial discussions.
 - There was recognition that the current system does not work well for students who are actually sick and allows for potential abuse by students who are not sick.
 - The subcommittee discussed “root causes” for students submitting notes when they are not actually sick (e.g., their exam schedule, course load, work obligations, etc.).
 - An initial survey revealed varying policies at other universities. Some universities use student self-declarations of illness, whereas others have more rigid policy requirements than are currently in place at Ryerson.

Evaluation and Exams Subcommittee: Summary of Issues

- There is a need to work towards consistent nomenclature re. exams, tests, midterms, etc.
- The subcommittee will recommend the consolidation of Policies 135 and 145 and 151.
- How much student work should be graded and returned before the drop date?
- Issue of variation across sections of the same course—who decides?

Next Steps: Consultation

- APRC outreach/consultations to date include discussions at the following meetings: Chairs, Deans and Directors (February 11, 2016); Senate (March 1, 2016, Committee of the Whole discussion); and Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (March 7, 2016).
- An email address has been created for community feedback: policyreview@ryerson.ca
- Each subcommittee has developed a consultation plan, along with questions to ask the identified stakeholders including faculty, Associate Deans responsible for graduate studies in each Faculty, students (including RSU and CESAR), staff, etc. The Academic Appeals Subcommittee, for example, has scheduled consultations this month with Associate Deans (Undergraduate Programs), Associate Deans (Graduate Programs), Department/School-level Appeal Decision Makers, and Graduate Program Directors.

The APRC’s work will continue over the 2016-2017 academic year. However, if the Committee identifies urgent/necessary revisions to these policies, it would forward recommendations to Senate for the May 31, 2016 meeting.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of the Academic Policy Review Committee,

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Co-Chairs, Academic Policy Review Committee