

COLLEGE POLICY

POLICY:	Student Academic Appeals Policy
APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE:	August 25, 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 8, 2026
SUPERSEDES POLICY:	Grade Appeals Handbook 2025-26

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair, transparent, and timely process for students to appeal grades and academic integrity decisions where a student believes an established ground for appeal may exist.

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Academic decision-making is an important part of the learning process and relies on communication, feedback, and the expertise and informed professional judgment of professors. Students are encouraged and expected to take an active role in addressing academic concerns, recognizing that many concerns can be resolved through discussion, clarification, or correction.

Professors are the primary academic decision-makers and are responsible for evaluating student learning. Academic decisions, including assigned grades and academic integrity decisions, are presumed to be appropriate unless there is evidence that an established ground for appeal may have affected the outcome. An appeal is not intended to routinely replace the academic judgment of a professor or provide a different academic opinion.

As an appeal progresses, the focus shifts from the original academic decision toward determining whether the grounds for appeal have been demonstrated and whether College policy, procedures, and principles of procedural fairness have been appropriately applied.

Throughout the appeal process, the College is committed to fairness, respect, consistency, transparency, and timely decision-making.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in Sault College academic programs regardless of delivery method or location, who are requesting an appeal of:

- a) a final course grade that represents an unsuccessful course outcome;
- b) an assessment grade that prevents progression in a program; or
- c) an academic integrity decision.

This policy does not apply to:

- a) requests for grade changes on individual assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, or examinations), unless they meet the criteria above;
- b) decisions made by external placement, practicum, clinical, or co-op providers, however, failing grades resulting from such decisions are subject to appeal;
- c) grades arising out of disputes over the provision of academic accommodation(s) due to an identified disability; or
- d) requests based solely on a desire to improve a grade or grade point average.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. **Right to Appeal:** Students have the right to appeal academic decisions within the scope of this policy.
2. **Fair Process:** Students are entitled to a fair, transparent, impartial appeal process and may exercise their right to appeal without fear of retaliation.
3. **Attempted Resolution:** Students and their professor will attempt to resolve concerns through discussion and review of original academic decisions prior to filing a formal appeal. Many concerns can be resolved at this stage through clarification, correction of an administrative error, or reconsideration of information that may have been overlooked.
4. **Burden of Proof:** Appeals must identify an applicable ground for appeal, and the appeal must be supported by evidence. On appeal, the burden lies with the student.
5. **Timeliness:** Appeals will be considered through the stages and within the timelines established in this policy, unless communicated otherwise.

RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy establishes the responsibilities of students, professors, Chairs/Deans, and the College in providing a reasonable avenue for students to challenge academic decisions. Together, these responsibilities guide the fair and consistent application of this policy.

Students are responsible for:

- communicating concerns directly with their professor whenever appropriate;
- submitting appeals within established timelines;
- identifying the applicable grounds for appeal (listed below);
- providing supporting evidence and requesting it where it is not available;
- attending scheduled meetings or hearings related to the appeal;
- communicating respectfully throughout the appeal process; and
- accepting final decisions.

Professors are responsible for:

- evaluating student learning fairly and consistently;
- communicating assessment expectations;
- maintaining appropriate academic records;
- explaining academic decisions when requested;
- reviewing concerns raised by students in accordance with this policy;
- respecting a student's right to confidentiality and privacy
- respecting a student's right to file an appeal, without retaliation
- participating in appeal processes where required; and
- implementing appeal decisions where applicable.

Chairs/Deans are responsible for:

- supporting the consistent application of this policy;
- reviewing appeals within their authority;
- ensuring procedural fairness; and
- communicating decisions and supporting rationale.

The Sault College Students' Union (SCSU) is responsible for:

- providing support (eg. advocacy, guidance on policy and procedure) to students interested in filing an appeal;
- helping students to understand what is, and is not, grounds for appeal under this policy;
- helping to provide a person of support for a student where requested (eg. in any meetings, hearings, etc. related to their appeal); and
- serving on the Stage 2 Review Panel and maintaining a list of students willing to serve on the Stage 3 Appeals panel, and sourcing appropriate student volunteers when required.

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The College is responsible for:

- maintaining fair and transparent appeal processes;
- ensuring appeal procedures are applied consistently;
- protecting the integrity and credibility of Sault College credentials; and
- ensuring that appeal records are maintained and managed in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and College policy.

GROUNDINGS FOR APPEAL

Students filing an appeal must meet certain criteria, called “grounds for appeal”, for their appeal to progress. Students must file under one of the following criteria and make their case accordingly. Students should refer to the Student Appeals Handbook for more detailed explanations of the criteria, including examples of documents to submit.

Final Grade Appeal Criteria

A final grade appeal may proceed where there is evidence of:

- a) procedural unfairness;
- b) calculation error;
- c) failure to apply published assessment criteria;
- d) unfair or inconsistent assessment; or
- e) exceptional circumstances.

Academic Integrity Outcome Appeal Criteria

An academic integrity appeal may proceed where there is evidence of:

- a) procedural unfairness;
- b) new evidence that could not have been presented previously;
- c) an unreasonable decision, based on the available evidence; or
- d) an outcome that is disproportionate to the circumstances.

PROCEDURE

The College encourages academic concerns to be resolved at the earliest possible stage. Students are expected to discuss concerns directly with their professor before requesting a formal appeal.

An appeal progresses only where the student demonstrates that the applicable grounds for appeal have been met.

Appeals of final course grades are to be filed at the end of a course. Appeals of an assessment grade that prevents progression in a program or academic outcomes arising from an academic integrity decision must be appealed at the time the grade and/or outcomes are received. See Appendix A for timelines.

Stage 1 – Appeal to the Professor (Grade Appeals)

It is the College's expectation that the student and professor will have shared all relevant and available information with each other prior to the student filing the formal Stage 1 Appeal. Students should only file a Stage 1 Appeal after this exchange has taken place.

Students wishing to appeal will submit their [Stage 1 Grade Appeal Form](#), providing:

- course information, including the course name, code, term, as well as the Professor's name and email address;
- the academic decision being appealed;
- the grounds for appeal;
- supporting evidence; and
- the requested resolution.

For grade appeals, all supporting evidence MUST be submitted at Stage One; there is no opportunity for the student or professor to provide additional information at subsequent stages, except for new evidence that could not have been presented previously. Students looking for support with filing their appeal should visit the SCSU office.

Outcomes of Stage 1 Appeal

The professor will receive the formal Stage 1 Appeal, review the information, and determine whether the grounds have been established. They will then decide on an outcome, which they will communicate via email to the student and cc: appeals@saultcollege.ca.

In their response, the professor will explain the original decision and add any missing and relevant information to the case file. As an outcome, the professor will:

- correct an administrative or calculation error;
- revise the academic decision where appropriate; or
- uphold the original decision.

Stage 2 – Appeal to the Chair/Dean (Grade Appeals & Academic Integrity Appeals)

Where the student believes the professor's review did not appropriately address the stated grounds for appeal at Stage 1, Stage 2 provides an independent review by the Chair/Dean of the Stage 1 decision.

Academic integrity appeals of professor decisions commence at Stage 2. For Stage 2 Grade Appeals, the student is only able to provide new information that was not available at the time of the Stage 1 submission.

To file a Stage 2 Appeal, the student submits a [Stage 2 Appeal Form](#).

Stage 2 consists of two separate phases:

- a) the Stage 2 Review Panel
- b) Review by the Chair/Dean

The Stage 2 Review Panel

The Stage 2 Review Panel convenes to determine whether the submission establishes sufficient grounds to proceed with a Stage 2 review. Where the submission does not identify an applicable ground for appeal or provide supporting evidence, the appeal will not proceed further. The decision of the Stage 2 Review Panel is considered final.

Where the Stage 2 Review Panel determines that there is enough evidence to support the grounds for appeal, they will refer the appeal to the Chair/Dean for review.

The Stage 2 Review Panel will communicate the decision to both the student and professor via email, cc:ing appeals@saultcollege.ca.

Stage 2 Review Panel composition:

The Stage 2 Review Panel is comprised of one of each of the following members, from outside the student's registered program area:

- An Academic Administrator (Chair of the Panel)
- Academic Support Staff
- Student Representative

Review by the Chair/Dean

Where a Stage Two Appeal proceeds, the Chair/Dean reviews the information provided by the student and professor to:

- confirm that one or more of the established grounds for appeal have been met; and
- determine that those grounds warrant academic intervention.

The Chair/Dean may seek clarification from the student or professor but may not consider new information unless it is new evidence that could not have been presented previously.

Outcomes of Stage 2 Appeal

The Chair/Dean may:

- uphold the original decision;
- direct correction of an administrative or procedural error;
- refer the matter back to the professor for reconsideration with specific direction; or
- determine another appropriate academic remedy consistent with College policy.

The Chair/Dean will communicate the decision to both the student and professor via email, cc:ing appeals@saultcollege.ca.

Stage 3 – Final Appeal

To file a Stage 3 Appeal, the student submits a [Stage 3 Appeal Form](#). A student may request a Stage 3 Appeal only where they believe the Stage 2 review failed to:

- appropriately apply College policy or procedure;
- provide procedural fairness;
- consider admissible new evidence; or
- result in a decision that was reasonable based on the available evidence.

If a Dean/Chair has made a referred or escalated academic integrity decision, an appeal of that decision shall commence at Stage 3.

Chaired by the Vice President Academic (VPA), the Stage 3 Appeal Panel will review the documentation from the previous stages to determine whether the appeal process was conducted fairly and in accordance with College policy. The VPA shall seek input from other members of the panel but is free to accept or reject the input and make the decision alone.

Stage 3 Appeal Panel composition:

A Stage 3 Appeal Panel is comprised of one of each of the following members, from outside the student's registered program:

- Student Representative
- Professor
- VPA

Outcomes of Stage 3 Appeal

The Panel may:

- uphold the Stage 2 decision;
- return the matter to the Chair/Dean for reconsideration with specific direction;
- direct that procedural deficiencies be addressed; or
- determine another appropriate institutional remedy consistent with College policy.

The VPA will communicate the decision to both the student and professor via email, cc:ing appeals@saultcollege.ca. The decision of the Stage 3 Appeal Panel is final.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. An appeal filed under this Policy does not halt, stop, or pause a grade being assigned or give rise to any student privileges other than expressly set out in this policy. The College may, at its discretion, allow a student to continue in a program or participate in a course pending the resolution of an appeal.
2. All time limits under this policy may be extended. The College reserves the right to deny an extension request.

TIMELINES

Timelines are provided in Appendix A.

Students must submit appeals within the timelines established by the College, unless permission is granted in advance, in writing, due to extenuating circumstances. The College will normally respond within the published timelines but reserves the right to extend timelines where necessary.

Concurrent Appeals

At the end of a term, students wishing to appeal a grade resulting from an Academic Integrity decision (eg. On a culminating assignment or final exam) may also appeal their final grade, exclusive of the academic Integrity decision, as stated above. The student must request the appeals separately, and the College reserves the right to conduct both appeals processes either concurrently or consecutively, as it deems appropriate under the circumstances.

RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All records related to grade appeals will be maintained by the College and kept confidential in accordance with Sault College privacy policies.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Grading Policy

Accommodation Policy

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Withdrawal Policy

Student Academic Appeals Handbook

APPENDIX A - TIMELINES

	RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION	TIMING
STAGE 1 – REVIEW BY THE PROFESSOR	Student	Submit Stage 1 Appeal Form	Within 4 College working days of the final grade becoming available on Student Portal (Students may not submit final grade appeals prior to official grade release)
	Faculty	Respond to Appeal	Within 4 College working days of student submission
STAGE 2 – REVIEW BY THE CHAIR/DEAN	Student	Submit Stage 2 Appeal Form	Within 4 College working days of Professor response or Academic Integrity report
	Stage 2 Appeals Panel	Decide on validity of Stage 2 Appeal	Within 6 College working days of student submission
	Chair/Dean	Stage 2 Review	Within 5 College working days of Stage 2 Panel decision
STAGE 3 – FINAL APPEAL	Student	Submit Stage 3 Appeal Form	Within 2 College working days of Chair/Dean response
	VPAISS	Stage 3 Review	Within 2 College working weeks of Student submission