

**College of Visual and Performing Arts
Student Formal Complaint and Appeals Procedures
September, 2009**

Appeals of Academic Procedures:

See Academic Policies in George Mason University's *University Catalog*.

CVPA Procedures for Grade Appeals:

Although faculty members are generally the best judges of student performance in their classes, circumstances may cause a student to believe that a professor is unfair. Grade appeals are not accepted after the last day of classes of the following semester, as indicated in the Schedule of Classes (spring for fall grades, fall for spring and summer grades). The following are the College's steps in grade appeals:

1. The student meets with the professor to discuss the grade and class performance; this meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting; if the instructor is no longer affiliated with the University, the appeal is made to the Department or Program Chair.
2. The professor (Chair) responds to the student within three days of the meeting.
3. If the student were to continue the appeal, the student must submit a written appeal to Academic Affairs Office. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reviews all undergraduate appeals, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs reviews all graduate appeals.

The decision of the CVPA Senior Associate Dean (undergraduate students), or Associate Dean (graduate students), is final.

CVPA Procedures for Appeal of an Academic Action:

In exceptional circumstances a student may request a meeting to review the decision of an academic action. An appeal must be submitted no later than one calendar year after the decision was rendered.

1. The student must state in writing the reasons for requesting further appeal of an academic action, and provide documentation for any additional or new information relevant to the appeal.
2. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reviews all undergraduate appeals, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs reviews all graduate appeals.
3. The dean will conduct a review of the documentation provided by the student, and may request additional information in order to make an informed decision.
4. A nonparticipating observer of the student's choice may attend the meeting with the dean, and the dean may also have a nonparticipating observer attend.
5. The student may follow University procedures outlined in the *University Catalog*

CVPA Procedure for Non-Academic Appeals or Complaints:

A student who intends to file a non-academic appeal, or intends to file a formal complaint against a faculty member, another student, or administrator completes the following steps:

1. The student meets with the professor and Department/Program Chair to discuss the non-academic appeal/grievance; this meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting; if the person is no longer affiliated with the University, the request is made to the Department or Program Chair only.
2. The professor (Chair) responds to the student within three days of the meeting.
3. If the student were to continue the non-academic appeal/grievance, the student must submit a written explanation to Academic Affairs Office. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reviews all non-academic appeals and grievances.

Academic Dismissal from a Graduate Program:

The Registrar's Office contacts students via e-mail if they earned an academic warning, or dismissal. Students wishing to appeal should contact the CVPA Graduate Programs Office within three days of the e-mail date. A deadline for the appeal documentation is determined, normally two weeks. Students are to submit:

1. A written statement explaining the circumstances that led to the dismissal, along with supporting documentation from employers, physicians, or other sources as necessary;
2. Evidence that the circumstances precipitating the unsatisfactory academic performance have been remedied;
3. Statements from department or program's graduate coordinator supporting the student's continued enrollment at the University.
4. The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs reviews the appeal.
5. The final decision of the CVPA Associate Dean is forwarded to the student and Registrar's Office.
6. The student may follow University appeal procedures outlined in the *University Catalog*

For these, and any other academic concerns, students are encouraged to contact **George Mason University's Ombudsman for Student Academic Affairs**.

The ombudsman is a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential party who provides assistance to students in resolving university-related concerns. The ombudsman is an advocate for fairness and the equitable treatment of students, operates independently of all formal grievance processes at the university, and considers all sides of an issue in an impartial and objective manner. The ombudsman has no authority to make exceptions or to grant requests but can perform informal investigations and, as a result, may recommend actions that lead to changes in processes and policies at the university. Meetings with the ombudsman are confidential. The ombudsman serves all undergraduate and graduate students at the university. (University Catalog, 2008-09, page 30)