

Ryerson University International College Policy

Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy

Document

Policy Number	4
Responsibility	College Director and Principal, RUIC
Initial Issue Date	19 March 2021
Related Documents	4.1 Academic Grievance Policy Procedures

Version Control

Issue Date:	Summary of Changes	Review Date
19 March 2021	Initial Release	19 March 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy has been developed to ensure all current students of Ryerson University International College (RUIC) are given access to equitable, effective, and fair complaints resolution and appeals processes for all academic related issues, including but not limited to:
 - 1.1.1. Program progression (probation and exclusion)
 - 1.1.2. Curriculum content and delivery
 - 1.1.3. Conferral of awards
 - 1.1.4. Academic credits
- 1.2. The process outlined in this policy is applicable when there is an academic complaint or appeal relating to any activity; review of marks, including assignments, mid-terms, final assessments. For complaints or appeals relating to non-academic issues, refer to policy **Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct (Policy 3)**.
- 1.3. This policy and related documentation are accessible through the RUIC policy library found on the RUIC Student Portal.
- 1.4. This policy and related procedures will be communicated to staff via email and ongoing staff information sessions.

2. Scope and Application

- 2.1. This Policy applies to the following students who believe they have experienced incorrect, inappropriate, or unfair treatment:
 - 2.1.1. current students enrolled in full-time or part-time classes, credit or non-credit;
 - 2.1.2. students on a leave of absence; or
 - 2.1.3. alumni when the misconduct occurred prior to transfer to the University.
- 2.2. This Policy applies to those defined in Section 2.1, who qualify based on one of the following grounds:
 - 2.2.1. **Course Management:** Appeals may be filed when students believe that a final grade has been adversely affected because an instructor deviated significantly from course management, from the course outline, or the instructor has demonstrated personal bias or unfair treatment.
 - 2.2.2. **Procedural Error:** Appeals may be filed when it is believed that there has been an error in the procedure followed in the application of either this policy or any applicable policy of the College that has impacted a student's grade or standing. Appeals granted on this ground will resolve the procedural error.
 - 2.2.3. **Prejudice:** Appeals may be filed on the ground of Prejudice when it is believed that that the student's final grade or standing has been impacted by prejudice based on a ground protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code:

3. Definitions

3.1. Complainant

a person lodging a complaint or appeal.

3.2. Respondent

a person responding to a complaint or appeal; this may also be the person who made the original decision under dispute.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1. All complaints and appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness which respect the right of a complainant to be heard by an impartial party.
- 4.2. All attempts will be made to resolve complaints and appeals as close to the source as possible.
- 4.3. Complainants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in any academic grievance resolution process.
- 4.4. Staff shall make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits specified in this policy.
- 4.5. All procedures relating to this policy will be available to the public.
- 4.6. All communications arising from the complaints process, together with the proceedings of the appeals and grievance committee, will remain confidential except to the extent necessary to give effect to this policy.
- 4.7. Where the appeal relates to suspension of enrolment, students may maintain their enrolled status whilst awaiting the outcome of the appeal.
- 4.8. If at any time during the internal or external grievance process a decision is made which supports the complainant, RUIC will immediately implement the decision and advise the complainant of the outcome.

5. Administrative Procedures

- 5.1. Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept at the institution.
- 5.2. All records relating to an academic grievance will be kept in strict confidence and filed separate from student files.
- 5.3. All academic grievance records will be under the responsibility of the Associate Director Student and Academic Success and VP Corporate Services.

6. Academic Grievance Process

6.1. The academic grievance policy is a staged process:

6.1.1. Information Resolution

6.1.2. Formal Investigation

6.2. Refer to **Student Academic Grievance Policy Procedures (4.1)** on how the process shall be carried out.

6.3. Students who require assistance understanding this policy, its scope and procedures may contact an RUIC Student Experience advisor or coordinator for support.

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Academic Grievance Policy Procedures

Document

Policy Number	4.1
Responsibility	College Director and Principal, RUIC
Initial Issue Date	19 March 2021
Related Documents	Academic Grievance Policy (Policy 4)

Version Control

Issue Date:	Summary of Changes	Review Date
19 March 2021	Initial Release	19 March 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of these procedures is to describe the process that will be followed to resolve academic grievances and appeals.

2. Definitions

2.1. Student Success Team

a person lodging a complaint or appeal

3. Procedures

3.1. Making an Academic Grievance to the College

- 3.1.1. Academic grievances should be made to the SST as soon as possible after the alleged incident occurs and, normally, within 10 days of the incident having occurred. In cases where no Grievance has been brought forward, the College may act as the Complainant. A member of the SST will conduct a Preliminary Review of the Complaint.
- 3.1.2. The SST may receive Complaints outside of the 10 day limitation period but will undertake a Preliminary Review (see Section 3.3) to assess its ability to proceed, which may include considerations relating to the availability of witnesses and evidence.

3.2. Preliminary Review

- 3.2.1. The Student Success Team (SST), based on available information, may reject a Complaint on the grounds that:
 - i) the Complaint lies outside the scope and jurisdiction of the Policy;
 - ii) the Complaint is false, vexatious, trivial, or repetitious;
 - iii) the alleged conduct is minor and does not require corrective action; or
 - iv) an investigation is unlikely to find facts that would result in disciplinary action.
- 3.2.2. In such circumstances, the SST will communicate its decision in writing to the Complainant with reasons for the decision. All written responses are to be relayed to the complainant within 10 business days barring extenuating circumstances.
- 3.2.3. The Complainant will not necessarily be identified to the Respondent during a Preliminary Review.
- 3.2.4. If the SST determines through a Preliminary Review that a Complaint should proceed, the SST will, inform the Associate Director, Student & Academic Success for the case to be assigned to an Investigator. Whenever possible, and appropriate, the SST will attempt to find an amical resolution.

3.3. Interim Measures

- 3.3.1. The Associate Director, Student & Academic Success may impose interim measures, as outlined in Policy Section 5.3, while an alleged incident of Misconduct is being resolved, investigated, or decided. Such measures will be precautionary and are expressly not disciplinary. Interim measures will be reassessed on a weekly basis and the parties involved will be notified of any changes to interim measures as soon as possible.

3.4. Informal Resolution

- 3.4.1. If the SST believes that there are grounds for the grievance, the SST may discuss the matter with the Respondent to determine possible steps the Respondent could take to correct or resolve the issue. The SST may refer the Respondent to College, University and/or community-based support services.
- 3.4.2. A Respondent may be accompanied by a support person of their choice to the Informal Resolution meeting(s).
- 3.4.3. If the Complaint is not resolved by Informal Resolution within the 10 business days of the preliminary review, barring extenuating circumstances, the matter may proceed to Formal Investigation.
- 3.4.4. If the Respondent agrees to the resolution proposed by the SST, the Associate Director, Academic and Student Success will oversee that the agreed upon resolution is achieved.
- 3.4.5. If a resolution cannot be determined, the case will proceed to the Formal Investigation.

3.5. Formal Investigation

- 3.5.1. When an informal resolution could not be reached, the SST shall inform the Associate Director, Student & Academic Success who will initiate a Formal Investigation to obtain all information necessary to decide if there was a breach of the Policy.
- 3.5.2. The Associate Director will notify the Complainant and Respondent in writing that a Formal Investigation is being initiated.
- 3.5.3. A Complainant or Respondent may be accompanied by a support person of their choice to the Formal Investigation meeting(s).
- 3.5.4. The Associate Director, Student and Academic Success will take the following actions in the formal investigation:
- i) interview whomever they determine might have relevant information and who is willing to participate in the process. They may request one or more interviews with the Complainant and Respondent and will consider any evidence they decide is relevant for the Investigation Report.

- ii) If the Complainant or Respondent refuses to cooperate with the Formal Investigation, the Associate Director may proceed with the Formal Investigation without the Complainant or Respondent.
- iii) Upon conclusion of the Formal Investigation, complete the Investigator's Report, which will include the findings of facts in the case, disputed and undisputed.
- iv) In their capacity as an Investigator will decide whether, on a balance of probabilities, there was a breach of the Policy.
- v) If there was no breach of the Policy, they will dismiss the Grievance.
- vi) If there was a breach of the Policy, they may impose one or more of the Decisions set out in the Policy Section 3.6.3.

3.5.5. The Formal Investigation will normally be completed within 10 business days.

3.5.6. In deciding upon the appropriate response to a finding of a breach of the Policy, consideration must be given to the Principles in Section 1.0 of the Policy and to the following factors:

- i) the extent of the conduct;
- ii) the impact of the conduct on members of the community;
- iii) the inadvertent or the deliberate nature of the conduct;
- iv) if it is an isolated incident or part of repeated acts; and
- v) any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

3.5.7. The Respondent will receive the outcome in writing including:

- i) their decision, with reasons, as to whether there was a breach of the Policy;
- ii) the disciplinary measures imposed or remedies, if any; and

3.5.8. The student will, where appropriate, be provided a copy of the decision, including any relevant academic or administrative departments of the College or University.

3.5.9. Upon request, the Complainant will be provided a written decision outlining the outcome of their Complaint.

3.6. Decisions

3.6.1. The Decision maker at any level of appeal may:

- i) Deny the appeal
- ii) Grant the appeal
- iii) Grant or deny the appeal in part

3.6.2. If the appeal is granted and the student proceeds with the remedy proposed, a grade appeal outcome may result in the final grade being increased, decreased, or unchanged and cannot be further appealed.

- 3.6.3. The following are examples of possible additional remedies:
- i) rewrite of an exam or assignment
 - ii) make up of an exam or assignment
 - iii) re-weighting of other course components
 - iv) an INC grade with the opportunity to submit outstanding work or FS grade (if applicable)
 - v) standing changes to academic probation
 - vi) recommend a 4th attempt at a course (or 3rd attempt based on grade variations) (which must be approved by the College Director and Principal)
 - vii) recommend a final grade review (see Appeal of Final Results)
 - viii) Only in rare cases, the decision maker may recommend a retroactive course withdrawal in the appeal decision. This recommendation is subject to approval by the College Director and Principal.

3.7. Ground for Appeals

- 3.7.1. Appeals can be submitted on one or more of the following grounds:
- i) that a procedural error occurred of sufficient magnitude that it may reasonably be said to have affected the fairness of the process or altered the outcome of the case;
 - ii) that a factual error occurred of sufficient magnitude that it may reasonably be said to have altered the outcome of the case; or
 - iii) that new material evidence is available which, despite the exercise of due diligence by the Respondent wishing to appeal, could not have been made available.

3.8. Appealing a Decision

- 3.8.1. Appeals to the College Director from Associate Director Decisions
- i) A Student may appeal all or part of a decision made by the Associate Director to the College Director within ten (10) Working Days of the day the email containing the decision was sent. The Student is then known as the Appellant.
- 3.8.2. A written statement of appeal can be lodged with the College Director and Principal
- i) The written statement is to be presented to the front desk and date stamped or submitted electronically to the College Director and Principal or most appropriate proxy
- 3.8.3. The appellant will receive a decision from the College Director and Principal within 10 working days of submission.
- 3.8.4. All decisions made by the College Director and Principal are final