



Procedure

| Procedure Name | <i>Academic Progression Appeals</i> | | |
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| Procedure # | AD 2.5 | Parent Policy | AD 2.0 Academic Progression |
| Policy Owner | Vice President Academic | Effective Date | July 1, 2021 |
| Procedure Owner | AVP Student Progression & Registrar | Next Review Date | July 1, 2026 |
| Approved by | AVP Student Progression & Registrar | Approval Date | June 28, 2021 |

1.0 Purpose/ Background

NAIT recognizes the right of students to appeal academic decisions that impact their ability to progress or graduate, and that the appeal process will follow the principles of “natural justice.” All registered students are entitled to an academic decision appeal process that is fair and treats all parties involved with respect. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and equitable process to appeal an academic decision that a student considers to be contrary to NAIT policies or practices.

This procedure applies to students in certificate, diploma, degree and Board approved non-credit professional learner programs. Apprenticeship students must follow the Alberta Apprenticeship Industry and Training policies & procedures on appeals.

2.0 Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|--------------------------|--|
| Academic Decisions | Formal decisions that impact a student’s academic record. |
| Grade Reappraisal | Formal avenue for students to appeal their final grade. |
| Program Leader | A chair or portfolio manager who is responsible for the educational and administrative leadership of one or more instructional units, including curriculum/program development. |
| Balance of probabilities | The standard for evidence at NAIT. This standard requires that when all available evidence is reviewed, whatever the evidence suggests is most likely to have happened is considered true. |

3.0 Procedures

3.1 General Academic Progression Appeal Procedures

- 3.1.1 All registered students have the option to invite one support person to be present at any stage throughout the appeal process. The support person may be an advisor from NAITSA, a family member, or another third party chosen by

the student. The role of the support person is to provide guidance and moral/emotional support to the student. While the support person may observe meetings or appeal panel hearings during the appeal process, the support person does not play an active role in the proceedings (for example, the support person does not speak on behalf of the student during an appeal panel hearing).

- 3.1.2 An academic appeal can only be filed on one or more of the following grounds.
 - 3.1.2.1 Procedural error: a NAIT policy and procedure has been violated or misapplied. The student must submit a copy of the relevant policy and procedure, as well as a detailed explanation of how the policy and procedure was violated or misapplied.
 - 3.1.2.2 Merit of Work: the academic decision does not accurately reflect the student's performance. The student must submit a detailed explanation of how the grade or academic decision does not accurately reflect their performance.
 - 3.1.2.3 New Information: relevant new information has arisen that could not have been presented earlier and the information may affect the decision being appealed. The student must submit supporting documents to explain why the information could not have been presented earlier, as well as an explanation of how the new information may affect the decision.
 - 3.1.2.4 Course management: A significant departure from the course outline provided at the outset of the semester has impacted the student's ability to meet the course outcomes. The student must submit a copy of the course outline, evidence that the instructor has deviated significantly from the outline, and an explanation of how this has impacted their ability to meet the course learning outcomes.
- 3.1.3 The student must provide supporting documents to demonstrate on a "balance of probabilities" that the academic decision was incorrect. This means that the student must provide evidence to show that it is more likely than not that the original decision was incorrect.
- 3.1.4 All parties are responsible for providing complete and relevant documentation and adhering to the timelines specified.
- 3.1.5 All parties are required to follow the timelines, as indicated. In extenuating circumstances, extensions of timelines may be granted by the registrar, or designate.
- 3.1.6 In instances where the decision maker has pre-existing relationships with complainants or respondents, or any perceived conflict of interest, they should designate an unbiased decision maker, such as another associate dean academic.
- 3.1.7 All communications regarding the appeals will be sent to the email addresses listed on the student record at the time. All e-mail communication is deemed to be received on the date the email was sent.
- 3.1.8 Fees associated with appeals will be refunded upon a successful appeal.
- 3.1.9 Students who believe the academic decision was a violation of their Student Rights as per the Student Rights and Responsibility Policy (SR 1.0) should also consult the Student Resolution Office Activation Procedure (SR 1.1).

3.2 Grade Reappraisal Procedures

- 3.2.1 Grade reappraisals are considered after the final grade of the course has been released to the student.
 - 3.2.1.1 The student can appeal their final grade or the grade of a specific assessment.
 - 3.2.1.2 If there are reasonable grounds for the appeal and the student's work cannot be re-assessed due to the nature of the work, such as work-integrated learning, laboratory, shop, or presentation, the associate dean academic/director will consult with the program leader to propose an alternative approach to assess student's ability to successfully meet the applicable learning outcome(s).

Informal Appeal

- 3.2.2 The student must initiate an informal grade appeal by contacting the instructor as soon as possible. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's decision or if they don't receive a timely respond, they can forward the informal appeal to the program leader or designate within 7 business days from the date the final grade was posted. If the instructor is also the program leader, the student will forward the informal appeal to the associate dean academic, who may designate an alternative reviewer.
- 3.2.3 The program leader or designate has five (5) business days to provide a written response to the student after receiving the informal appeal request.

Formal Appeal

- 3.2.4 If the student is not satisfied with the program leader or designate's informal appeal decision, they must initiate a formal appeal by submitting the grade appeal package to the Office of the Registrar within three (3) business days from the date of the program leader or designate's written response.
- 3.2.5 Only complete appeal packages will be considered. Incomplete appeal packages will be declined, and the grade reappraisal fee will not be charged. The grade reappraisal package must include:
 - A completed Grade Reappraisal Form, including a written statement outlining the reason for the appeal. The reason must be related to the grounds for appeal as outlined under 3.1.2.
 - A copy of the program leader or designate's informal appeal decision
 - Original written components to be re-evaluated (unless being held in program area)
 - Any available supporting documentation (examples: marking rubrics, course outline, relevant procedures, copy of written communications, etc.). Note: any documentation submitted after the student's appeal package has been turned in will not be taken into consideration.

- 3.2.6 The Grade Reappraisal fee will be posted within two (2) business days after the complete appeal package is received. The fee must be paid within two (2) business days after being posted or the grade reappraisal request will be cancelled.
- 3.2.7 Once the Grade Reappraisal fee has been paid, the Office of the Registrar will forward the appeal package to the associate dean academic/director or designate within two (2) business days.
- 3.2.8 The associate dean academic/director or a designate will review the appeal package and determine whether there is sufficient evidence and reasonable grounds for the appeal to proceed.
 - 3.2.8.1 If there is not sufficient evidence or reasonable grounds, the appeal will be declined, and the grade reappraisal fee will not be refunded. The associate dean academic/director will notify the student of the decision, with a copy sent to the Registrar, within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the appeal. A copy of the appeal decision will be kept on the student's record.
 - 3.2.8.2 If there is sufficient evidence and at least one reasonable ground, the associate dean academic/director or designate will determine the best process for assessing the request. Proper assessment may require the associate dean academic/director or designate to meet with the student. The associate dean academic/director or designate will notify the student and the Office of the Registrar of the decision within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the appeal. Additional time may be required for courses that end during December, June, July, and August based on the availability of appropriate faculty. The Office of the Registrar will update the grade and initiate the refund for the appeal fee within two (2) business days of receiving the decision from the associate dean academic/director or designate. The appeal fee is only refunded when the appeal results in an increase in the official final grade of the course. A copy of the appeal decision will be kept on the student's record.
- 3.2.9 The revised grade can be higher, lower, or equal to the original grade.
- 3.2.10 If the grade appeal includes a group academic assessment, the revised grade is attributed only to the student(s) who filed the formal grade appeal. If more than one group members wish to appeal the grade, they must submit individual appeal package.
- 3.2.11 When the course with the grade being appealed is a prerequisite to another course, the student will be allowed to enroll in the subsequent course unless the subsequent course is a clinical placement. If the subsequent course is a clinical placement, the student must seek the program's approval to enroll. The student must pay all applicable fees. If the appeal result favours the student, the student may continue in the subsequent course. If not, the student must withdraw from the subsequent course and any applicable refund for the tuition of the subsequent course will be issued.
- 3.2.12 The decision of the associate dean academic/director, or designate, is final.

3.3 Deferred Exam Appeal Procedures

- 3.3.1 The student has ten (10) business days from the date of receiving the program leader or designate decision to submit a formal appeal to the associate dean academic/director.
- 3.3.2 Only complete appeal packages will be considered. Incomplete appeal packages will be declined. The appeal package must include:
 - A completed Deferred Exam Appeal form, including a written statement outlining the reason for the appeal. The reason must be related to the grounds for appeal as outlined under 3.1.2.
 - A copy of the program leader or designate's decision
 - Any available supporting documentation (examples: copy of relevant procedures, relevant written communications, any new evidence that couldn't be submitted before, etc.). Note: any documentation submitted after the student's appeal package has been turned in will not be taken into consideration.
- 3.3.3 The associate dean academic/director, or designate, will review the request, information provided by the program leader or designate, and any other evidence deemed to be warranted. The associate dean academic/director will notify the student of the decision, with a copy sent to the Registrar, within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the appeal. A copy of the letter will be kept on the student's record.
- 3.3.4 The decision of the associate dean academic/director is final.

3.4 Advanced Credits Appeal Procedures

Informal Appeal

- 3.4.1 If the student disagrees with the program leader's decision regarding their request for advanced credits (transfer credits or PLAR credits), they must initiate an informal grade appeal by contacting the program leader within seven (7) business days from the date the advanced credits decision was issued.
- 3.4.2 The program leader has five (5) business days to provide a written response to the student after receiving the informal appeal request.

Formal Appeal

- 3.4.3 If the student is not satisfied with the program leader's informal appeal decision, they must initiate a formal appeal by submitting the Advanced Credits appeal package to the Office of the Registrar within three (3) business days from the date of the program leader's written response.
- 3.4.4 Only complete appeal packages will be considered. Incomplete appeal packages will be declined, and the advanced credits appeal fee will not be charged.

The appeal package must include:

- A completed Advanced Credit Appeal Request form, including a written statement outlining the reason for the appeal. The reason must be related to the grounds for appeal as outlined under 3.1.2.
- A copy of the program leader or designate informal appeal decision.

- Any available supporting documentation (examples: course outlines, PLAR evidence, relevant procedures, relevant written communications, etc.). Note: any documentation submitted after the student's appeal package has been turned in will not be taken into consideration.
- 3.4.5 The Advanced Credit Appeal fee will be posted within two (2) business days after the appeal package is received. The fee must be paid within two (2) business days or the appeal will be cancelled.
- 3.4.6 Once the fee has been paid, the Office of the Registrar will forward the appeal package to the associate dean academic/director or designate within two (2) business days.
- 3.4.7 The associate dean academic/director, or designate, will review the package and notify the student of the decision, with a copy sent to the Office of the Registrar, within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the appeal. The Office of the Registrar will update the advanced credit posting and initiate the refund for the appeal fee if the appeal was successful within five (5) business days of receiving the decision from the associate dean academic/director. A copy of the Advanced Credit Appeal Request Form will be kept on the student's record.
- 3.4.8 The decision of the associate dean academic/director, or designate, is final.

3.5 Program Withdrawal or Program Suspension for Academic Reasons Appeal Procedures

This procedure applies to students who wish to appeal a program withdrawal or suspension decision for academic reasons. If the student wishes to appeal non-academic suspension decisions, they must follow the [SR 1.5 Student Appeals Procedure](#).

Initiating an Appeal

- 3.5.1 Students must initiate an informal appeal by contacting the program leader within seven (7) business days from the date of withdrawal or suspension decision.
- 3.5.2 The program leader has five (5) business days to provide a written response to the student after receiving the informal appeal request.
- 3.5.3 If the student is not satisfied with the program leader's response, they must initiate a formal appeal by submitting the academic progression appeal package to the Office of the Registrar within three (3) business days from the date of the program leader's written response. Failure to submit an appeal within this timeline shall result in the forfeiture of the right to appeal.
- 3.5.4 Only complete appeal packages will be considered. Incomplete appeal packages will be declined, and the academic progression appeal fee will not be charged. The appeal package must include:
 - A completed Academic Progression Appeal form, including a written statement outlining the reason for the appeal. The reason must be related to the grounds for appeal as outlined under 3.1.2.
 - A copy of the program leader's informal appeal decision.
 - Any available supporting documentation (examples: copy of relevant

procedures, relevant written communications, course outlines, grading rubrics, etc.) Note: any documentation submitted after the student's appeal package has been turned in will not be taken into consideration by the registrar.

- 3.5.5 The Academic Progression Appeal fee will be posted within two (2) business days after the appeal package is received. The fee must be paid within two (2) business days or the appeal will be cancelled.
- 3.5.6 Once the fee has been paid, the appeal package will be forwarded to the registrar within two (2) business days.
- 3.5.7 While in the appeal process, the student shall be allowed to continue with their studies unless they have received a "no trespass" notice from Protective Services or are deemed, by the dean/director or designate, and in agreement with the registrar or designate, to be a risk to the health and safety of students, staff and/or patients/clients. The student must pay all applicable fees. If the appeal result favours the student, the student may continue in the subsequent course. If not, the student must withdraw from the subsequent course and the standard refund policies will apply.
- 3.5.8 The registrar or designate will review the appeal package and accept/ refuse it based on the standards of an appeal (the filing timeframe, inclusion of the minimum required information, reasonable grounds for appeals, etc.). The registrar or designate will notify the student of the decision to accept or reject the appeal within three (3) business days of receiving the appeal.
- 3.5.9 If a meeting between the registrar, or designate, and the student is required to confirm eligibility of appeal, the registrar or designate will contact the student via email within three (3) business days of receiving the appeal. A meeting will be set up at the first mutually convenient time. If the appeal is deemed not suitable to move forward, the registrar or designate will respond to the student via email within three (3) business days of the last discussion with the student.

Appeal Panel

- 3.5.10 Once the registrar or designate has accepted the appeal and informed the student of the decision, the registrar or designate will gather all relevant documentation from NAIT and the student. Such documentation may contain, but is not limited to, communications between student and NAIT faculty and staff, all course marks that comprise the final grade, decision letter from program leadership denying student request, documents being held by the Student Resolutions Office, and other documentation deemed necessary.
- 3.5.11 The registrar or designate will convene the appeal panel within fifteen (15) business days from the date that the appeal was approved to move forward. The appeal panel will include:
 - Dean/director to act as chair, to vote only in the case of a tie.
 - Associate dean
 - Two students, one NAITSA representative and one student to be selected by NAITSA

- An instructor, to be selected by the associate dean
 - Registrar, or designate, as a resource only with no voting rights
- 3.5.12 Appeal panel members cannot come from the school that the student is attending. Appeal panel members are required to identify to the registrar or designate any conflict of interest, and in the case of such conflict, to withdraw from the panel within three (3) business days of being selected.
- 3.5.13 The student must declare if they plan to bring a support person to the appeal hearing at least five (5) business days before the appeal date.
- 3.5.14 The student will notify the registrar or designate via email at least three (3) business days before the appeal date if they have a conflict of interest with anyone identified as a member of the appeal panel. Such disclosure may result in a delay of the appeal hearing. All efforts will be made to hold the original appeal date.
- 3.5.15 The registrar or designate will provide all documentation concerning the appeal, including the student's appeal package, to appeal panel members and the student at least five (5) business days before the appeal date.
- 3.5.16 A valid reason must accompany any additional information brought forward by the student or program area after the package has been sent out as to why the information was not brought forward earlier. The appeals panel will decide if they will consider it.
- 3.5.17 Both the program leader and the student will have an opportunity to present their case to the appeals panel.
- 3.5.18 The chair of the appeal panel will communicate the appeal panel's decision to the student within five (5) business days of the decision being rendered, with a copy going to the registrar, program leader, and associate dean. Original documentation submitted by the student, except for the appeal letter and form, will be returned.
- 3.5.19 The decision of the appeals panel is final. The decision letter will be kept in the student file as a record of the appeal.

4.0 Exceptions to the Procedure

- 4.1 Exceptions to this procedure must be documented and formally approved by the Procedure Owner or approved designate.
- Procedure exceptions must include:
- The nature of the exception
 - A reasonable explanation for why the procedure exception is required
 - Confirmation that the exception aligns with the general principles
 - Any risks created by the procedure exception and how they will be managed.

5.0 Related Documentation

- SR 1.0 Student Rights and Responsibility Policy
SR 1.3 Academic Integrity Procedure
SR 1.5 Student Appeals Procedure
Academic Progression Appeal Form
Advanced Credit Appeal Request Form

Grade Reappraisal Form

Document History

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Action/ Change</i> |
|------------------|--|
| December 7, 2020 | Added deferred exam procedure Added wording to 3.5.1 to encourage students to consult with program leader before initiating the formal appeal. |
| June 2021 | Added clarified grounds for appeals and the burden of proof. Added wording to allow students to appeal the overall grade or the grade of a specific assignment. Added wording on grade appeal of practical assessments. Added wording on grade appeal of group assignments. Extended timeline for informal grade appeal process and clarified the requirement for written response from program leader. Added wording on student's enrolment status during a grade appeal. Clarified that only complete appeal packages will be accepted. Clarified timeline for posting and payment of appeal fee. |
| December 2021 | Updated 3.2.2 |
| October 2022 | Added an 'approved designate' as someone who can review and approve exceptions to this procedure. |
| March 28, 2023 | Removed reference to Ombuds Office in 3.1.1 |