

# Utah Tech University Policy

## 553: Student Academic Appeals



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### I. Purpose

- 1.1 To establish guidelines and procedures for the Academic Appeals Committee charged with reviewing appeals of graduation requirements, General Education requirements, and academic actions at Utah Tech University (“the University”).

### II. Scope

- 2.1 Applies to all degree-seeking students and/or faculty members who submit appeals, as well as all University employees involved in the process.

### III. Definitions

- 3.1 **Academic Action:** The recording of a grade or issuing of credit in a class; on an exam, activity, or assignment; or for a course or culminating project. It also includes a decision by a program or department to place a student on academic probation, or to suspend or dismiss a student from an academic program because the student failed to meet the relevant academic standards of the discipline or program.
  - 3.1.1 The term “academic action” does not include the decision by a department or program to refuse admission of a student into an academic program.
  - 3.1.2 Academic action also does not include academic sanctions imposed for academic misconduct or for professional misconduct.
- 3.2 **Academic Calendar:** The academic year consists of three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Traditional semesters are the Fall and Spring 15-week semesters. Fall and Spring semesters are 15 weeks long and are followed by a 5-day final exam period. Fall Semester has a two-day Fall

Break around the middle of the semester and a three-day Thanksgiving Holiday. Spring Semester includes a week-long Spring Break, usually near the middle of the semester. Summer Semester has various terms from six to fourteen weeks long, with schedules adjusted to equal the time required in Fall and Spring schedules. Summer Semester does not have a separate final exam period.

- 3.3 **Dean/Department Chair:** An academic or associate administrator assigned to supervise a particular program, department, or academic unit, or a specified designee.
- 3.4 **Faculty/Faculty Member:** Any member of the faculty or the University faculty as a whole, including full and part-time instructors at all levels.
- 3.5 **Notice/Notification:** The written action of informing a student or other entity, of a decision or outcome.
- 3.6 **Respondent:** The student and/or faculty member bringing an appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee.
- 3.7 **Student:** A person who is currently, or was at the time of the issue or incident, matriculated and/or registered in any course or program of instruction or training offered by the University at any level, whether or not for credit.
- 3.8 **Student Association:** The official University student organization consisting of six branches: President's Cabinet, Clubs and Organizations, Academics, Marketing, Student Life, and Service.
- 3.9 **University Business Day:** Any day the University is open for administrative business, excluding weekends, holidays, and closures.
- 3.10 **Vice President of Academic Affairs:** The University Official with responsibility over Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs is also known as the Provost.
- 3.11 **Written Decision of the Academic Appeal Committee:** Written decision of the Committee's findings and recommendations that is emailed to the student.

#### IV. Policy

##### 4.1 Academic Appeals Committee

- 4.1.1 The Academic Appeals Committee reviews appeals of graduation requirements, General Education requirements, and appeals of

academic actions after an appeal has first been addressed by each of the following: the appropriate faculty member, the appropriate Department Chair, and the Dean of the appropriate College.

- 4.1.2 Faculty members are qualified as professionals to observe and judge all aspects of a student's academic performance. An academic action implemented by a faculty member may be overturned on appeal only if the academic action is determined to be arbitrary or capricious.
- 4.1.3 In order to ensure that the highest standards of academic performance are promoted and supported at the University, students must:
  - 4.1.3.1 Meet the academic requirements of the course, relevant discipline, program/major, and/or University requirements.

## **V. References—N/A**

## **VI. Procedures**

### **6.1 Academic Appeals Committee**

#### **6.1.1 Academic Prerequisite, Placement, and Substitution Appeals**

- 6.1.1.1 Course prerequisite and placement appeals are approved or disapproved by the Chair of the Department offering the course.
- 6.1.1.2 If the Department Chair does not approve the course prerequisite and placement appeal, the student may appeal to the appropriate Dean supervising that department.
- 6.1.1.3 Course substitutions for courses required in a program or major that are not general education or University graduation requirements must be approved or disapproved by the Department Chair and Dean, not the Academic Appeals Committee.
- 6.1.1.4 A student who wishes to petition for an exemption to the University's general education or graduation requirements or appeal the Dean's decision must go through the Academic Appeals Committee after the student receives letters of support or denial in either written form or email from the Department Chair and the Dean.

## 6.1.2 Committee Composition and Persons Present at Meetings

- 6.1.2.1 The Academic Appeals Committee consists of at least four (4) voting faculty members chosen by the Faculty Senate President and the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost, and at least three (3) students selected by the Student Association President. A non-voting faculty member chairs the Committee. A non-voting Administrative Assistant and a non-voting staff member from the Registrar's Office are also part of the Committee. Committee members shall be selected for broad representation from the University's colleges, divisions, departments, and programs.
- 6.1.2.2 At least three (3) voting members of the Committee must be present at any meeting to form a voting quorum, and there must be representation from faculty at all Committee meetings.
- 6.1.2.3 If any member of the Committee has a conflict of interest regarding an appeal to be considered, either self-disclosed or determined by the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost, that Committee member will be excused from consideration of said appeal.

## 6.1.3 Meeting Guidelines

- 6.1.3.1 A written appeal shall be filed by a student with the Committee Chair via an online form located on the University Registrar's Office website:  
<https://registration.utahtech.edu/academic-appeal/>.
- 6.1.3.1.1 It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the appeal submitted is complete for the Committee with all requisite documents.
  - 6.1.3.1.1.1 Requisite documents include the completed online appeal form on the Registrar's website along with any documentation of the situation from each of the following: advisor, faculty member, University's Disability Resource Center, Department Chair, and Dean.
    - 6.1.3.1.1.1.1 If a student is unable to get a response for documentation from the advisor, faculty member, University's Disability Resource

Center, Department Chair, or Dean the student should notify that individual's supervisor and solicit the supervisor's help.

6.1.3.1.1.1.1.1 If the student is unsure who the supervisor is, they can seek help at the Dean of Students Office.

6.1.3.1.1.2 The Academic Appeals Committee may seek out any additional information from the student, advisor, faculty member, University's Disability Resource Center, Department Chair, Dean, or any other University employee as necessary to ensure that all aspects of the appeal are fully understood by the Committee before making a decision on the appeal.

6.1.3.1.2 A student may submit and have an appeal considered by the Academic Appeals Committee after the student's academic appeal has been denied by the appropriate faculty member, Department Chair, and Dean.

6.1.3.1.3 The Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee must receive notification in writing of an appeal not later than ten (10) University Business Days after the appropriate Dean's notification to the student denying the student's appeal to the Dean.

#### 6.1.3.2 Committee Meeting Deliberations and Voting

6.1.3.2.1 Committee meetings are closed to the public.

6.1.3.2.2 Committee meetings may be audio recorded as a reference and maintained by the Committee and will not be released to anyone except a University Vice President, the Office of General Counsel, or University President.

6.1.3.2.2.1 No transcript or copy shall be made of the audio recording.

6.1.3.2.3 Committee deliberations and voting shall take place in closed session and will not be recorded.

6.1.3.2.4 Committee decisions are based on a majority vote.

6.1.3.2.4.1 In case of a tie vote, the Committee Chair will cast a vote to break the tie.

6.1.3.2.5 The Committee Chair shall prepare a Written Decision of the Academic Appeal Committee and email the decision to the student within ten (10) University Business Days after the conclusion of the Committee's deliberation meeting.

6.1.3.2.6 If the student's appeal is granted, the Committee Chair will direct the Registrar's Office, or other University office as appropriate, to implement the approved action.

6.1.3.2.7 The Committee may consult with the Office of General Counsel at any time during or after the appeal.

6.1.3.2.8 The student may appeal the Committee's decision to the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost.

6.1.3.2.8.1 A student may submit an appeal for consideration under one of the following circumstances:

6.1.3.2.8.1.1 A procedural irregularity in the process substantially impacted the decision.

6.1.3.2.8.1.2 New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the sanctions were imposed has since become available.

6.1.3.2.8.2 Written notification to the student of the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost's decision shall be made within ten (10) University Business Days of the issuance of the Committee's written decision.

6.1.3.2.8.3 The Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost's decision shall be final.

#### 6.1.4 Meeting Schedule

6.1.4.1 The Academic Appeals Committee shall consider written appeals in a scheduled formal Committee meeting without

the student present, and render a decision based on the written appeal, supporting documents, and any other information the Committee has obtained. The Committee's decision on the appeal shall be communicated to the student in writing within ten (10) University Business Days following the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations on the appeal.

- 6.1.4.1.1 Committee meetings are held once per month during the Fall and Spring semesters of the academic calendar, and meetings are set at the beginning of each semester.
- 6.1.4.1.2 The Committee does not meet during recognized University breaks or holidays, per the University Academic Calendar, when faculty are not required to be on campus due to contractual status. As such, an appeal will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.
- 6.1.4.1.3 During the Summer Semester, regular Committee meetings are not held. Instead, once per month, the Committee Chair will email appeals and related documents to Committee members for deliberation and an email vote. If the Committee discerns an appeal requires more discussion that can reasonably take place over email, the appeal will be postponed until the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

## **VII. Addenda—N/A**

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Policy Owner: Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Policy Steward: Associate Provost for Academic Success and Dean of University College

History:

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