

REGIS ST. MICHAEL'S Faculty of Theology

CONJOINT BASIC DEGREE ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY

November 20, 2023

1.0 ACADEMIC APPEALS - PREAMBLE

In accord with the *TST Basic Conjoint Degree Handbook*, a conjoint basic degree student of a member college of the TST may appeal (a) a decision by their college or by the TST as to their success or failure in meeting an academic standard or other academic requirement of the college or the TST; (b) a decision by a college concerning guidelines for course marking; and (c) a decision as to the applicability to their case of any academic regulation of a college or the TST, including University academic regulations that are administered by the college or the TST. This right of appeal occurs after the student has exhausted all levels of academic appeal at the college level.

An appeal may also be made by a person not currently registered who was registered at the time the adverse grade was submitted or the adverse decision was taken unless the student has since graduated from the degree program (and subject to the timelines noted in the sections below).

1.1 Exceptions

Recourse under this section does not apply to a sanction imposed on a student as a matter of academic discipline; nor to any admissions decision; nor to issues arising within a course that concern the pedagogical relationship of the instructor and the student, such as the organization of a course, the method of evaluation of a student's work, or the conduct of instructors. Non-conjoint students can not submit appeals beyond the Dean of the college.

In the case of a conflict of interest in the appeals processes, the Advanced Degree Director may substitute for the Basic Degree Director or the Dean.

1.2 Standard

The standard of review is reasonableness.

1.3 Guiding Principles

The implementation of all appeals shall be informed by the principles identified in the policy document of the Governing Council of the University of Toronto entitled *Policy on Academic Appeals within Divisions*, which is available from the website of the Governing Council.

These principles may be summarized as (a) diversity, equity, and accommodation; (b) consistency; (c) flexibility; (d) transparency and timeliness; (e) fairness and confidentiality; (f) the goal of academic excellence. Deadlines defined in this section may be adjusted to accommodate the particular circumstances of the appeal and to avoid inappropriate prejudice to the student, the college or colleges involved, and the TST. The student may raise matters of concern at any time during the process of appeal without fear of disadvantage.

1.4 Timely resolution

All parties involved in an appeal have the right to expect timely progress of an appeal through its several stages and a timely resolution. Accordingly, students, faculty members, administrative bodies and any others involved in an appeal have a responsibility to be aware of the pertinent timelines and to respond appropriately.

1.5 Confidentiality

Students are assured that throughout the process they can raise matters of proper concern to them without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be appropriately respected. Documentation and other evidence related to the appeal are confidential, meaning that only those persons have access who require it for the performance of their duties in respect of the appeal.

1.6 Where only one college is directly involved

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student at an initial stage of this college appeal, and if the faculty or staff member responsible for the decision is a faculty or staff member of the college in which the student is enrolled, the student shall next seek recourse according to this policy.

1.7 Where more than one college is directly involved

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student at an initial stage, and if the faculty or staff member responsible for the decision is not a faculty or staff member in which the student is enrolled, then the student shall seek the assistance of the Basic Degree Director or other designated official in their college. That official may be able to address the matter effectively in an informal way. Otherwise, the student shall submit an appeal seeking redress in the following manner: if the matter primarily involves a course, then the appeal will be submitted to the college in which the course is taught for disposition according to the policies and procedures of that

college; if the matter does not primarily involve a course, the colleges involved shall decide which college will take jurisdiction.

1.8 Right of Withdrawal

The student may withdraw the appeal at any time.

1.9 Withdrawal Due to Non-Response

If the student initiates an appeal, but does not respond to a request for revision of the appeal or to attempts to schedule an appeal hearing within fourteen days, the appeal will be considered withdrawn. The Basic Degree Director or Dean will notify the student in writing that the college has withdrawn the appeal because of non-response.

2.0 APPEAL STEPS

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Appeal Matter</i>	<i>Informal Resolution</i>	<i>College Appeal</i>	<i>College Appeal</i>	<i>TST Appeal</i>	<i>UofT Appeal</i>
Success or failure in meeting an academic standard or other academic requirement of the college	Basic Degree Director	Basic Degree Committee (or Committee on Admissions & Academic Standards)	n/a	Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council	UofT Governing Council – for students in UofT conjoint programs
Course assignments and course grade	Instructor of the course	Basic Degree Director	Dean	Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council	UofT Governing Council – for students in UofT conjoint programs
Grade related to a thesis or any other final program paper	Thesis Director or Mentor	Basic Degree Director. This step only applies where there is only one faculty examiner	Dean. This step only applies where there is only one faculty examiner	Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council	UofT Governing Council – for students in UofT conjoint programs

Application of an academic regulation	Basic Degree Director	Basic Degree Committee (or Committee on Admissions & Academic Standards)	n/a	Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council	UofT Governing Council - for students in UofT conjoint programs
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2.1 Course assignments and course grade

2.1.1 Informal Resolution (Step 1)

A conjoint basic degree student in a TST college seeking recourse under this section ought in the first instance to consult with the instructor of the course responsible for the decision. In an issue regarding the academic aspects of a course, the person responsible is the instructor. Such consultation should be initiated in writing within two months (60 days) of the matter or decision complained of, or within two months of the end of the course, whichever is later. Both the instructor and the student are advised to record memoranda of such consultation.

- i. With respect to written work (including coursework exams and essays), the student must first request a rereading of the written work by the instructor who assigned the grade. With respect to non-written work, the student must first request a reassessment of the work by the instructor who assigned the grade. The instructor shall reread the written work or reassess the non-written work, and discuss it with the student, explaining the reasons for the grade in writing, within 30 days of receiving the request for rereading or reassessment.
- ii. The instructor should apply, as nearly as possible, the same standard on the reread or reassessment as they applied originally. The purpose of the reread or reassessment is to provide clarification and context to the grade assigned. The instructor should change a grade only if they are convinced that it is wrong. An instructor may change a grade only by increasing it. Where an instructor decides to change a grade, the instructor shall submit the new grade to the Dean for approval prior to communicating the new grade to the student.
- iii. If a student has made reasonable efforts to request a rereading or reassessment of their work and has been unable to make contact with the instructor or if the instructor has not provided timely and relevant comments, then the student may contact the Basic Degree Director to either to facilitate obtaining the instructor's comments within the prescribed timeframe, to extend the deadline or, failing that, the Basic Degree Director may decide that the appeal proceed directly to formal resolution.
- iv. If the student does not feel that sufficient explanation has been given for the grade, or if the student is not satisfied with the new grade given by the instructor, the student may submit an appeal to the Basic Degree Director under the next step. The appeal must be accompanied by written grounds and must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the

date on which the instructor communicated to the student the outcome of their reread or reassessment.

2.2.2 Formal Resolution

If the attempt of informal resolution is unsuccessful, then the matter may proceed to a formal appeal under Step 2. This step must be initiated in within 30 days, as noted in the previous clause.

- i. Where the appeal is of a grade based on written work, the Basic Degree Director, shall arrange for an assessment of the written work by a second reader, chosen by the Basic Degree Director, after consultation with both the instructor and the student. The second reader shall have appropriate expertise in the subject matter of the written work. The Basic Degree Director shall give the student's written reasons for the appeal to the second reader and a copy shall be provided to the Instructor. The Basic Degree Director shall also give the instructor's written explanation of the grade to the second reader and a copy shall be provided to the student.
- ii. When reviewing the written work, the student's written reasons for the appeal and the instructor's explanation of the appeal, the second reader shall apply the standard of whether a reasonable marker could have reached the same conclusion as the instructor did in the same circumstances. In applying the standard, the second reader may consider other materials relating to the course, such as the written work of other students, and the course outline in the syllabus. The second reader shall render a recommendation on the written work within 30 days of receiving the grade appeal record.
- iii. If, after reviewing the grade appeal record, the second reader decides that a reasonable marker could not have reached the same conclusion, the second reader shall recommend a grade for the written work that they believe a reasonable marker would have assigned. A second reader may recommend a change of grade by either increasing or decreasing it. The second reader shall give reasons for their decision, either to affirm or change the grade, for approval to the Basic Degree Director. The Basic Degree Director shall then assign the final grade.

2.3 Grade related to a thesis or any other final program paper

When there is only one faculty examiner involved, appeals made under this clause shall follow the principles of appeals made under Course Assignments and Course Grade. Appeals shall be made in writing within 30 days of the grade being posted on ROSI/ACORN. Where two or more faculty examiners are involved, appeals proceed to the Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council.

2.4 Success or failure in meeting an academic standard or other academic requirement; or application of an academic regulation

Appeals follow Steps 1 and 2, noted above. Appeals shall be made in writing within 30 days of the decision being communicated to them. Final recourse under this clause is an appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council.

3.0 APPEAL OF DECISIONS OF THE BASIC DEGREE DIRECTOR

Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Basic Degree Director to the Academic Dean. This appeal must be submitted in writing no later than 14 days from the date of the formal response. The Dean reviews the procedural evidence, which now includes all the evidence previously gathered, the student's appeal letters and the formal response from the Basic Degree Director and renders the final decision on the grade appeal. The decision is communicated in writing within 30 days to students, instructor(s) and Basic Degree Director, with copies of the formal response placed in student's files and any indicated grade changes filed with the college Registrar.

In the case of non-conjoint students, the decision of the Academic Dean is final. Conjoint students have the right to appeal to the Admissions and Procedures Committee of the Basic Degree Council of the Toronto School of Theology.

4.0 APPEAL OF THE DECISION OF THE BASIC DEGREE COMMITTEE (COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS & ACADEMIC STANDARDS) OR THE DEAN

Students have the right to further appeals under this clause, after having exhausted all of the above steps, to the Academic Appeals Committee of the TST Basic Degree Council.