



RED DEER COLLEGE
**Guidebook for Student
Appeals Policy**

Application of the Policy on Student
Appeals
Version 1.0
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INTRODUCTION

This guidebook outlines the Informal Resolution and the Formal Appeal Process for students that appeal Academic and Administrative Decisions.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Accommodation Decisions: decisions made regarding the delivery of services accessible to a person with a documented disability.

Academic Decisions: decisions made about a student's academic performance. These decisions include such academic matters as Academic Standing, Academic Integrity, Admission, Assessment and Grading, Registration, Graduation, and other related academic decisions.

Academic Misconduct: the giving, taking, or presenting of information or material that unethically or dishonestly aids oneself, another, or a group on any work. This normally concerns work which is to be considered in the determination of a grade, the fulfillment of academic requirements or the enhancement of the student's record or academic career. Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, Plagiarism, Cheating, Improper Collaboration, Falsification, and Impersonation.

Academic Misconduct also applies when working on group projects. If the instructor discovers or suspects one member of the group of being involved in Academic Misconduct, everyone in the entire group may be subject to the disciplinary decisions made as a result of an investigation of the alleged Academic Misconduct.

- **Cheating:** copying the work of others, or using, or attempting to use, unsanctioned notes, information, materials, study aids, or devices in any academic exercise or activity.
- **Falsification:** falsifying, altering, fabricating, or counterfeiting information for use in an academic exercise or to gain unfair academic advantage, notwithstanding creative writing type exercises.
- This includes manipulating, changing, or omitting data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, without acknowledgement and which results in inaccurate findings or conclusion.
- **Impersonation:** impersonating another individual in person or through written or other communication to gain unfair academic advantage.
- **Improper Collaboration:** inappropriate sharing of work on an assessment that was intended as an individual assessment of a student's performance or students working together in groups beyond the degree of permissible collaboration set out by the instructor.
- **Plagiarism:** the use or close imitation of language, creative works, prototypes, and ideas of another individual and representation of them as one's own original work. The most common forms of Plagiarism are: copying or paraphrasing another author's work without proper acknowledgement, using the ideas or lines of reasoning of another author's work without proper acknowledgement, submitting work to which someone else has made substantial improvements to the content, and submitting the same work for multiple courses without approval. Plagiarism can be judged to have occurred if the

instructor has both the submitted material and original source that was copied, or if the student is unable to explain the terminology or ideas of a submission. The definition of Plagiarism applies whether or not the act was intentional.

Academic Misconduct Decisions: disciplinary decisions that are made as a result of an investigation of alleged Academic Misconduct.

Academic Integrity: the values that underlie post-secondary education and research. These values include honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (modified from the definition of Academic Integrity from the [International Centre for Academic Integrity](#)). Maintaining Academic Integrity involves expressing original ideas, citing sources, working independently, and reporting results accurately and honestly.

Administrative Decisions: decisions made that impact students relating to deferred and supplemental examinations, final exam schedules, tuition and fees, refunds, prior learning assessment and Non-Academic Misconduct.

Appeal Coordinator: person that coordinates the flow of information and communication between Appellant, Respondent, and Appeal Panel throughout the duration of the Appeal Process; normally the Executive Assistant to the Vice President Academic (VPA).

Appeal Hearing: the formal hearing at which the Appellant and Respondent present their case to the Appeal Panel.

Appeal Package: all information presented to the Appeal Panel by the Appellant and Respondent.

Appeal Panel: an ad hoc Panel of five (5) members chosen from an established Appeal Roster to hear the Formal Appeal. Quorum for the Appeal Panel consists of the Chair or Vice Chair, two (2) faculty members from the Roster, and two (2) student members from the Roster.

Appeal Roster: a list of potential Appeal Panel members from which the Appeal Panel is chosen. The Roster consists of four (4) students appointed by the Students' Association, four (4) faculty members appointed by the Faculty Association, and an Appeal Panel Chair (administrator or faculty) appointed by the Vice-President Academic (VPA). The VPA will also appoint a Vice-Chair (administrator, faculty, or student) from the established Roster. The Appeal Roster is representative of different College programs. The term of office will normally be a minimum of one (1) year for students and two (2) years for faculty and administration. Faculty and administration endeavor to replace no more than half of their members in any given year.

Appellant: the student filing the Appeal.

Non-Academic Misconduct: student behaviour that has been deemed unsafe or disruptive that has interfered with the normal teaching, learning, activities, or business processes of the College, both on and off campus. This includes: damage to, or theft of, College assets such as facilities, electronic devices, the computer network, or electronic data; making false or frivolous allegations; disclosure of confidential information; and, actions that place the College at potential legal risk. Non-Academic Misconduct is an administrative matter.

Non-Academic Misconduct Decisions: decisions that may be imposed due to Non-Academic Misconduct; may include verbal warning, written warning, probation, restitution, requirement to withdraw from a course or program, suspension or expulsion. In extreme cases, Disciplinary Action may result in the rescinding of a credential or participation in future activities. Suspension or expulsion from the College requires the approval of the Vice President, Academic.

Respondent: the faculty, staff, or administrative member of RDC who is responding to the student appeal. Normally the Respondent is the person who made the decision or ruling being appealed.

Student Appeals Form: a form used for submitting a request for Formal Appeal. Forms are available from the Students' Association, Office of the Registrar or online through the "Forms Index" on TheLoop.

Support Person: the person who supports the Appellant or Respondent throughout the process. The Support Person is a third party who is not in a Conflict of Interest with the Appellant or Respondent.

The role of the Support Person is to provide guidance, moral, and emotional support to the Appellant or Respondent throughout the Appeal Process. The Support Person may attend any interviews and meetings throughout the process, including the Appeal Hearing. The Support Person is normally a silent support during the Appeal Hearing, but may assist in addressing the Panel at the discretion of the Chair.

ELEMENTS OF THE APPEAL PROCESS

1. The student and the decision maker may each involve a Support Person at any time throughout the process.
2. Participants in the process are expected to exclude themselves if there is a potential for Conflict of Interest. This includes staff, faculty and support persons.
3. Information collected for the purpose of the Informal Resolution Process and/or the Formal Appeal Process is protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of Alberta.
4. All parties involved in dealing with issues under this policy shall conduct themselves in a professional manner maintaining confidentiality regarding all related matters. On occasion, it may be necessary to include other members of the College community who have information or evidence relevant to the appeal.
5. Information gained and shared throughout this process is not to be communicated, outside of the Appeal Process, through any means.
6. Any exception to the stated timelines in the Formal Process must be approved by the Appeal Coordinator and Chair of the Appeal Panel, where reasonable. All parties involved in the process must be notified of any exception or revisions to the stated timelines.

7. The Vice President Academic may authorize the use of the procedures in the Student Appeals: Academic and Administrative Policy for any other Academic or Administrative Decisions not included in the definitions above.
8. The decision maker at every level communicates the decision to the student. When a student disputes a decision, the decision maker communicates the next step in the Informal Resolution Process to the student.
9. Should a student decide to pursue a Formal Appeal, the Formal Appeal Process is clearly communicated to the student by the decision maker, and a copy of the Student Appeals: Academic and Administrative Policy is made available to them.

STEPS OF THE APPEAL PROCESS

A. Informal Resolution

1. In order to expedite the process, the student attempts to resolve the issue by meeting with the original decision maker as soon as possible within six (6) working days of being informed of the decision. The original decision maker informs the student, in writing, of the outcome of this meeting within two (2) working days of the meeting.
2. If the student decides to continue with the next step of the Informal Resolution Process, the original decision maker must inform the student of the decision in writing, with the rationale as to why the decision was made.
 - 2.1. If resolution for Academic Decisions or Academic Misconduct Decisions is not reached with the original decision maker, the student contacts the Associate Dean within three (3) working days of receiving the original decision maker's written decision. The Associate Dean immediately initiates a review by gathering information relevant to the issue. In cases where the Associate Dean is the original decision maker, the student contacts the Dean of the School;

OR

- 2.2. If resolution for Administrative Decisions is not reached with the original decision maker, the student contacts the Registrar (or in their absence, the Associate Registrar) within three (3) working days. The Registrar immediately initiates a review by gathering information relevant to the issue;

OR

- 2.3. If resolution for Academic Accommodation Decisions is not reached with the original decision maker, the student contacts the Associate Vice President Academic, Research and Student Affairs (AVPARSA) within three (3) working days. The AVPARSA immediately initiates a review by gathering information relevant to the issue.

3. The Associate Dean, Dean, AVPARSA, or Registrar uses the information acquired to attempt a resolution agreeable to both the student and the decision maker and communicates the outcome of the Informal Resolution Process in writing to the parties involved within three (3) working days of initiating the review.
4. If the parties cannot agree during the Informal Resolution Process, the student may proceed to the Formal Appeal Process as outlined in this document. The student must initiate the Formal Appeal Process within ten (10) working days following receipt of the written outcome of the Informal Resolution.

B. Formal Appeal Process

1. If the student decides to pursue the Formal Appeal Process following receipt of the written outcome of the Informal Resolution process, the student completes a “Student Appeals” Form and submits the completed form to the Office of the Registrar within ten (10) working days of the conclusion of the Informal Resolution Process.
2. Once the form has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar, the Registrar notifies the Appeal Coordinator of the appeal by forwarding the completed Student Appeals form to the Appeal Coordinator on the day it is received.
3. Within two (2) working days of receiving the completed Appeal form, the Appeal Coordinator:
 - 3.1. Starts an appeal file consisting of the completed Student Appeal form. Other information regarding the appeal submitted by both Appellant and Respondent will be added to the file throughout the Appeal Process.
 - 3.2. Advises the Respondent of the Appeal, advises the Appellant, the Respondent, and the Office of the Registrar of information to be gathered and submitted for the Appeal Package, and ensures the collection of that information.
 - 3.3. Notifies the Chair of the Appeal Panel.
 - 3.4. Finalizes the date, time, and location of the Appeal Hearing and communicates the final details to all parties.
 - 3.5. Advises the Appellant and Respondent of the timelines in which the completed Appeal Packages must be submitted to the Appeal Coordinator prior to the Appeal Hearing. Normally, the Appeal Package from the Appellant is shared with the Respondent in advance of the Respondent’s submission.
4. The Appeal Coordinator ensures that information received from the Appellant and Respondent is shared with the Appellant, the Respondent, and all members of the Appeal Panel prior to the Appeal Hearing.
5. The Appeal Coordinator determines the members of the Appeal Panel from the established Appeal Roster.
6. The Appellant and Respondent each have the right to have a Support Person at the Appeal Hearing.
7. The Appellant and/or Respondent may bring witnesses to the Appeal Hearing. The names of witnesses and an outline of what they are speaking about must be provided as part of the Appeal Package that is submitted to the Appeal Coordinator. Witnesses are

only present at the Appeal Hearing in the Formal Appeal Process for the time that they are presenting information. A written statement from a witness may be provided to the Appeal Coordinator if that witness is unable to attend the Hearing.

8. The Appeal Panel reserves the right, on a case by case basis, to proceed in the absence of the Appellant, the Respondent, the witness, and/or the Support Person on the basis of any of their written submissions in the Appeal Package.
9. In the case of a group appeal, the Appeal Panel normally provides the opportunity for a single spokesperson to speak for the group; however, the Panel may interview other members of the group at its discretion.
10. The Appeal Hearing is normally held within ten (10) working days of the initial submission of the completed Student Appeals form unless an exception is granted by the Appeal Coordinator and Chair of the Appeal Panel, where reasonable.
11. Only Appeal Panel members are present during deliberations and/or voting on the decision. Decisions are based upon the information presented and are usually made by consensus or, if necessary, by a majority vote of all members of the Appeal Panel.
12. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and binding on all parties and is communicated in writing to both parties within four (4) working days of the decision. In extraordinary circumstances, the Appeal Panel may extend the decision timeline. The Appeal Panel Chair communicates the reason(s) for extending the decision timeline to all parties involved in the appeal.
13. The student appeal file, including all documentation relating to the Appeal, remains with and is the responsibility of the Appeal Coordinator until the Formal Appeal Process is completed. The Appellant, Respondent, and the limited circle of other individuals who need to know, as determined by the Appeal Chair and/or Appeal Coordinator, are informed of the final decision.
14. The official record of the written final decision is placed in the student's file in the Office of the Registrar.
15. The information contained in the Appeal Package is retained in accordance with RDC's Information Management policies, procedures, and guidelines.
16. Upon conclusion of the Formal Appeal Process:
 - 16.1. The Appeal Coordinator submits the original information collected for the Appeal Package to the Office of the Registrar.
 - 16.2. The Appellant may retain the information provided in the Appeal Package.
 - 16.3. The Appeal Coordinator collects and destroys all copies of the information from the Appeal Package from the Respondent and Appeal Panel.