POLICY GROUP: NC800 – Student Records, Rights & Responsibilities
POLICY TITLE: Appeal of Academic Decisions

A. Background and Definitions

Niagara College students have the right to appeal decisions that significantly affect their academic career. This includes College decisions on admissions, course grades and promotion.

Mark: A mark is awarded for each individual evaluation within the course, each mark contributes to the final grade.

Final Grade: A final grade is awarded upon completion of the course.

B. Purpose

This policy addresses appeals relating to academic decisions which impact the academic standing or progression of Niagara College students.

C. Policy Statements

1. General principles of our Appeal of Academic Decisions Policy are:

   a) Students have the right to appeal without fear of disadvantage or reprisal
   b) Appeals should ideally be resolved informally by parties involved
   c) Appeals will be addressed in a timely manner adhering to time limits
   d) Students are encouraged to consult with Counselling Services or Enrolment Services for guidance and information at any stage of the process
   e) Students should inform faculty at the earliest opportunity of any circumstance that may affect their academic performance so that alternate arrangements can be made
   f) Transparency is paramount and students may request that the College provide rationale and explanations for decisions
   g) Student’s privacy and confidentiality will be respected throughout the appeal process

2. The informal student appeal process will be addressed within the appropriate academic division. If resolution at the informal stage cannot be reached, the student may pursue a formal academic appeal.

3. Counselling Services and Enrolment Services staff will be available to advise the student at any stage of the appeal process.
4. Student Administrative Council (SAC) is also available as a resource to support the student in this process.

5. In the case of grade appeals, students are reminded that all failing grades are reviewed as a matter of course. The grade appeal process does not question the professional judgment of the faculty member. The focus is on the fair and consistent application of the evaluation process.

6. Decisions regarding admission and promotion are made by the Admissions Office on behalf of the Academic Administrator for the relevant academic school. Where such a decision is being appealed, the Associate Registrar (or designate) will attempt a resolution at the informal stage. If the appeal of an admissions decision is not resolved at that stage, it will follow the Appeal of Admission Decision Procedure.

7. Formal appeals regarding final grades must be launched within ten (10) business days from the time the final official grade was entered for the course. Extenuating circumstances will be considered if a late submission is received.

8. The student has the right to remain in class “On Condition” pending the outcome of the appeal. The only exception is in cases where the College is obligated to restrict the student for health and safety reasons. In either case, the Registrar or designate will inform the student of the conditions of their participation in class.

9. The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and binding on all parties. The decision is NOT subject to further appeal.

D. Related Documents

Policies: NC800 Academic Honesty
NC800 Student Records, Rights & Responsibilities
NC500 Harassment & Discrimination
NC800 Grading and Transcript

Procedure: NC800 Academic Misconduct
NC800 Appeal of Academic Decisions
NC800 Student Complaints & Issues
NC800 Appeal of Admission Decision