



The University of Sydney

Student Appeals against Academic Decisions – Senate Resolutions

N.B.: Please also refer to “Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions – Academic Board Resolutions”

Latest amendment approved by: Senate on 20 February 2004

Date of effect: 21 February 2004

Any student may appeal to the Senate against an academic decision. Normally such an appeal will not be heard unless the student has exhausted all other avenues. For undergraduates and for postgraduate students undertaking coursework award programs, this means appeal to the department and/or faculty/college board/board of studies concerned, and for postgraduate students undertaking research degrees, also to the Committee for Graduate Studies.

Appeals solely against questions of academic judgement that have, in the view of the Chair of the Academic Board, been thoroughly investigated by the faculty/college board/board of studies in accordance with the procedures adopted by the Academic Board, will not be heard unless there are grounds for believing due academic process has not been observed.

Appeals against exclusion from re-enrolment in undergraduate award programs and against termination of candidature for postgraduate awards are heard by the Student Appeals Committee (Exclusions and Readmissions), and appeals against disciplinary action are heard by the Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee.

Note: It has been expedient throughout this document to refer to faculties and deans of faculties; it should be understood that the procedures are to be read as applying, *mutatis mutandis*, to colleges and the graduate school and the college principals and directors.

Hearing of appeals

The Senate has resolved as follows with respect to the hearing of appeals against academic decisions:

1. Appeals against academic decisions may be referred by the Senate to the Student Academic Appeals Committee, a standing committee of the Senate.
2. The membership of the Student Academic Appeals Committee shall be—
 - (i) the Chancellor, the Deputy Chancellor, and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (ex officio);
 - (ii) the Chair of the Academic Board;
 - (iii) The Deputy Chair of the Academic Board (or nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board);
 - (iv) two student Fellows of the Senate; and
 - (v) two Fellows of the Senate who are not members of the academic staff.

3. The Student Academic Appeals Committee acts on behalf of the Senate in hearing an appeal and in determining its outcome.
4. On receipt of an appeal the Chancellor or the Chancellor's nominee shall appoint one person from each category of membership listed in section 2 above.
5. Four members of the sub-committee shall form a quorum.
6. A unanimous decision of the sub-committee shall be final and reported to the Senate for noting.
7. An appellant will be advised as soon as practicable of the decision and the reasons for it.
8. In the event that the sub-committee is unable to reach a unanimous decision, majority and/or minority reports together with supporting papers will be referred to the Senate for final decision. The Senate should give a written statement for its decision to the parties concerned.
9. The sub-committee shall observe the following procedures in hearing an appeal:
 - (a) The dean of the faculty or chairperson of the board of studies concerned shall be provided with a copy of the student's letter of appeal and be asked to provide, within ten working days, written comment from whatever source is appropriate on this matter, including the recommendations of the staff member, professor and head of department concerned, so far as is practicable.
 - (b) The appellant shall be given a copy of the response elicited from the dean or chairperson of the board of studies seven working days in advance of appearing before the sub-committee.
 - (c) The sub-committee will interview both the respondent and the appellant together and may call on other witnesses if it determines they are relevant, provided that the appellant has the opportunity to respond to later adverse material, if presented. The respondent shall be the dean or chairperson of the board of studies, except in a case where the dean or chairperson does not support the particular decision, in which case the Senate shall nominate the respondent.
 - (d) The appellant shall respond to requests for further information, normally within fifteen working days; otherwise the Vice-Chancellor may determine that the appeal has lapsed.
 - (e) The appellant will have the right to be accompanied at the interview(s) by a friend.