

Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure

Created May 27, 2015. Revised 7/13/15, 7/21/15, 6/1/16, 7/13/16

Policy

Informal resolution. It is expected that students will take an initial step to resolve a dispute informally and in good faith with the faculty (or with whomever they have an issue) prior to accessing the appeals process. Students are expected to utilize internal mechanisms of dispute resolution, such as this appeals process, before utilizing external mechanisms.

Scope. This policy governs appeals for students with academic issues which affect a student's progression in their program. Program handbooks and policy manuals may amplify or modify the procedures detailed below.

Student responsibility. An appeal of a dismissal from the College of Health Professions (CHP) or the McAuley School of Nursing (MSON) should be accompanied by a description of the student's rationale that the dismissal should be overturned, and identify strategies to improve success. The student has the responsibility to demonstrate why an academic decision or its consequences should be overturned in all appeal procedures. There are specific guidelines for the submission of an appeal. A student is responsible for reading this entire document, and following its guidelines. Any questions about the appeal process should be directed to the program administrator.

Appealing a Dismissal from the Program. Upon receipt of the appeal letter, the status of the student is considered dismissal pending. While an appeal of a dismissal is pending, students may not attend any program activities (e.g., classroom, clinical placements or internships, student meetings, etc.).

Assignment of Grades. Grades are assigned by the faculty scheduled to teach a course. Grades are determined based on the evaluation criteria and competencies described in the course syllabus. Faculty utilize rubrics, specific criteria, clinical expertise and academic judgment when assigning a grade. Grades cannot be assigned by any other person than the faculty teaching that course, and a grade can only be changed by the faculty member who assigned the grade.

Resources for Non-Academic Issues Students seeking guidance or resolution of nonacademic issues should seek advice from the Dean of Students at (313) 993-1028. Examples of issues which are nonacademic are listed in the Student Handbook. Additional resources are listed below.

- **Sexual Harassment policy** at <http://www.udmercy.edu/hr/current-employees/sexual-harassment/index.htm>
- **UDM Student Handbook** at <http://www.udmercy.edu/slo/office/handbook/index.htm>
- **Student Life Office** at <http://www.udmercy.edu/slo/>
- **CHP Honor Code/Honor Council** at <http://healthprofessions.udmercy.edu/about/policies/HonorCode/index.htm>
- **Student wellness** (Personal Counseling & Student Health Center) at <http://www.udmercy.edu/slo/wellness/index.htm>
- **Disability Support Services** at <http://www.udmercy.edu/uas/disability-support/>

Procedure

PLEASE NOTE: The student must follow this process, which provides specific details, guidelines, timelines and expectations.

1. Students will be notified of an adverse determination regarding academic progression by a communication from the program administrator. This communication will be sent by email to the students UDM email account (see [UDM Email policy](#)). Note that programs may also choose to send a copy of this communication by postal mail. The communication will provide the procedures a student must follow in order to appeal the decision.
2. Students are afforded only one opportunity to appeal an academically related decision. If a student does not request an appeal or fails to appear at the hearing to discuss the appeal, he/she will forfeit his/her right to appeal. A student may withdraw an appeal at any time
3. A student initiates the appeal by submitting a signed copy on paper, of a letter to the program administrator describing the basis or circumstances for the appeal. The letter must be received within five (5) business days of the date the student became aware of the issue, or should have become aware (e.g., the date of the email from step 1 above). The student's appeal should include a description of the circumstances that affected the student and strategies to improve academic performance should the appeal be granted. If no written statement is submitted, the issue will be considered closed. The student's written statement should be no more than two (2) pages printed on paper, and must describe the basis for appeal in detail. Supplementary information may be included to support the appeal and is not considered within the two-page limit.
4. Appeals will be considered by a committee designated by the program in their policy manuals. Ordinarily, faculty who were most directly involved in the decision will not be chosen to hear the appeal. The committee will review all letters of appeal and schedule appeal appointments as needed. The committee has the right to affirm the dismissal with or without meeting with the student face to face.
5. The student will be notified of the date, time, and place of any meeting.
6. The meeting to discuss the appeal request is considered a conflict resolution mechanism and is not a judicial proceeding. A student may not be represented by legal counsel in any hearing, or record the proceedings of any hearing. Students may be accompanied by one support person (not an attorney) at this meeting. This support person is not allowed to speak. Students may be asked not to bring in personal belongings other than written notes and supporting documentation. The student is allowed to take notes during the hearing.
7. After meeting with the student, the committee will make a recommendation to the program administrator concerning the student's future in the program within five (5) business days. The recommendation is made based on the student's potential for success. Multiple factors may be considered, including but not limited to: overall academic performance, clinical performance, advisor notes, compliance with previous conditions of probation, accountability, and external conditions impeding success.
8. The program administrator makes the decision to affirm or overturn the original decision on academic progression based on the committee's recommendation within five (5) business days. This communication will be sent by email to the student's UDM email account (see UDM Email policy). Note that programs may also choose to send a copy of this communication by postal mail.

9. While the program administrator's decision is final, the student may request that the Dean review the decision. This request for review must be written on paper and signed, state the grounds on which the student believes a review is warranted, and this communication must be received by the Dean within 10 business days of receipt of the program administrator's decision. Grounds for requesting the Dean's review are limited to the following: procedural irregularity, mitigating circumstances, undue severity of action, evidence of bias, or evidence the decision was arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable.
10. The Dean has the discretion to summarily affirm the decision, or to conduct further review of the appeal, including requesting additional information from the student or faculty or program administrator, meeting with the student or seeking additional counsel. The Dean's decision is final.
11. Should the Dean of CHP overturn a student's dismissal, the student will re-enter their program on Academic Probation. A contract will be created detailing the conditions the student must meet, either initially, or throughout the time remaining in the academic program. If the student cannot fulfill the stated expectations, he/she will be dismissed, and there will be no opportunity to appeal this action further.