

Explanation of the Graduate Academic Appeal Procedures University of California, Riverside

Graduate students at UCR have the right to appeal academic decisions that affect progress toward their degree. The ways in which students can exercise this right are governed by a policy known as the Graduate Academic Appeals Procedures.

This document provides a plain-language explanation of the UCR graduate academic appeals procedures. Reading this document does not substitute for reading the appeal procedures themselves, which can be found at <http://graduate.ucr.edu/forms/Program%20Appeal.pdf>

The graduate appeals policy only applies to academic decisions other than grades. When you read the appeal procedures, you will see that you are strongly encouraged to speak first with the relevant faculty to see if there is a way to informally resolve the dispute. Often, we find that disputes arise simply from a misunderstanding that might be resolved from further discussion. In addition, you must speak to the relevant faculty in order to understand the process and the judgment leading to the outcome; without such an understanding you cannot file a compelling appeal.

If you and the faculty member or members are unable to resolve the dispute informally, you have the right to file a written appeal to your program. Section 4 of the policy describes how to file the written appeal, and you should follow the instructions exactly. There are two very important things to note in these instructions. First, there are only **three** grounds that can establish a valid appeal (see section 4.e):

- a procedural error
- evidence of non-academic criteria such as personal bias
- special mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control that the faculty did not take into account

Second, be certain to pay attention to the timeframe for filing an appeal: **you must file the written appeal within 30 calendar days** (with some specific exceptions) from the day you found out the decision that you wish to appeal. You must address the appeal either to your program's graduate advisor or chair. It is fine, however, to submit your written appeal to the department's graduate secretary or other administrator who can mark the date and time of the submission.

The remainder of the appeal procedures (sections 5 through 9) spell out the obligations and procedures for your program upon receiving your appeal, your rights to appeal a program level decision to the UCR Graduate Division, definitions

for the timeframes, and standards of review. It is important for you to understand that you do not have a right to have your exam or other work re-graded or re-evaluated. **The only remedy under the appeals procedures is to void the original exam** and for you to retake the exam.

Once you submit your written appeal, your program has 30 days to rule on the validity of the appeal, and then a total of 60 days to render a decision on the outcome. If you remain dissatisfied with the program's decision, you retain the right to appeal the program's decision to the Graduate Division. Note that you must exhaust your appeals at the program level before filing a appeal with the Graduate Division.

If you have any questions about the appeal process, or if you wish to gain further advice on how to file an appeal, please speak to your graduate advisor or program chair. You also can make an appointment to see the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs, whose contact information may be found at http://graduate.ucr.edu/grad_admin.html.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a deadline for me to file my written appeal? Yes, you must file the appeal within 30 calendar days from the time you learned of the outcome you wish to appeal, or from you reasonably should have known. For example, if your department notified you of the outcome via your student email account, and you failed to read your email account for 30 days after the email was sent, you cannot claim that you only then found out the decision. Be certain to read section 8 of the procedures, which indicates that campus holidays, inter-session, and summer session days do not count within the timeframe.

I believe that the faculty's evaluation of my work is not accurate, and that my evaluation should have been higher. Is this a valid ground for an appeal? Under UCR policy, only faculty have the right to evaluate the academic merits of students' work, and so typically a claim that the faculty did not evaluate the merits of your work correctly is not a valid basis for an appeal. The only exception to this would be if a faculty member applied non-academic criteria to evaluate your work. See section 4e of the appeals procedure to see the valid claims on which you can base an appeal.

My dispute is with my program and so I am uncomfortable filing an appeal with my program. Can I appeal the decision directly to the Graduate Division?

No, you must file your appeal with your program and the program must be given an opportunity to review the case and provide a written response.

If I win the appeal, is it possible to have my exam re-graded? No. See section 5f.