Right of Appeal

You have the right to appeal any academic policy or requirement if either of the following conditions is present:

- extenuating circumstances make it impossible for you to comply with the policy or requirement,
- an undue hardship would result from a strict application of interpretation of the policy or requirement.

Please note, however, that extenuating circumstances must be beyond your control and that undue hardship must be a condition far more serious than simple inconvenience. Documentation will be required and the timeliness of the appeal will be taken into consideration.

To appeal an academic policy or regulation (except a change of grade appeal) the student must complete and submit the online web based appeal form at Graduate Student Academic Appeal (http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/student/academicappeal). Information regarding required documents to support an appeal for reinstatement is found at that website. A student may attach documents files to the appeal form. Appellants may track the status of their appeal through the online website.

Academic Appeal Procedures

The responsibility of the College of Graduate Studies is to review an academic appeal for procedural fairness and to maintain and protect the rights of the graduate students, graduate faculty, and institutional policy. Within the limits set by faculty and administrative policy, members of the graduate faculty and graduate administrators act in good faith within the area of their academic expertise, provided their decisions are consistent with general policies established by the College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee or its representative bodies. Graduate programs may utilize their own program, department or college-level process to consider an appeal and other measures required to assess the circumstances of a student's request for an appeal. In any event, the appeal process must not conflict with the College of Graduate Studies Policy on Academic Appeals.

Subject to these limitations, the College of Graduate Studies will assume that actions taken by the graduate faculty of the program or department concerning course requirements, graduation requirements, and similar matters are final and binding with all parties concerned. Only if it is found or determined by the College of Graduate Studies that the department, program, or academic college did not follow documented procedures, or that the student's appeal did not have a fair review, or that there is evidence on the part of the faculty which may be perceived to have materially affected the academic decision, will a decision imposed by the academic unit be subject to reversal by the College of Graduate Studies.

Student Appeal Steps

Step 1

Graduate students wishing to appeal must complete and submit their appeal online through the Graduate Student Academic Appeal (http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/student/academicappeal) portal. The appeal will be directed to the student's graduate program director who must review and take action on the appeal by indicating his/her appeal decision at the appeal portal. In some instances, the appeal may then be forwarded to the Department Chair and then the Dean of the relevant College for review. Normally, the Program Director's decision will be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies or his/her delegate acting on behalf of the Director. A favorable appeal decision by the Program Director will indicate approval of the appeal unless the decision is determined to be counter to COGS policy. If determined to be counter to COGS policy, the Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the Program Director regarding the best action to be taken on the appeal. The student would then be informed of the appeal decision by the Director of Graduate Studies. The student may review the Program Director's appeal decision at the web Appeal Portal.

Step 2

If the Program Director's decision is not acceptable to the student, the student may choose to appeal the Program Director's decision to the Department Chairperson after notification of the Program Director's appeal decision. The student's appeal to the Department Chair must contain:

1. an explanation specifying the points on which the student disagrees with the program director's decision; and
2. all evidence supporting the student's perspective.

The Department Chair's decision will be recorded on the web Appeal Portal.

Step 3

If the student does not accept the appeal decision by the Department Chair, the student may appeal to the next appeal level. To do so, the student must direct the appeal to the Academic College Dean. The student's appeal to the Academic College Dean must contain:

1. an explanation specifying the points on which the student disagrees with the department chair's decision; and
2. all evidence supporting the student's perspective.

The Academic College Dean will review the appeal submit his/her decision. The Academic College Dean may review the decisions of the Department Chair and the Program Director and/or discuss the appeal with the Department Chair and/or Program Director prior to rendering the decision.

Step 4

If the student does not accept the decision of the Academic College Dean, the student may appeal the decision to the Director of Graduate Studies. The student's appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies must contain:

1. an explanation specifying the points on which the student disagrees with the Academic Dean's decision; and
2. all evidence supporting the student's perspective.

The Director of Graduate Studies may charge a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee (hereafter referred to as the Appeals Subcommittee) to review the student's appeal. The Appeals Subcommittee will consist of a five (5) member ad hoc panel drawn from members of the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Student Organization member of the Graduate Committee shall be an ex-officio member of the Appeals Subcommittee. In accepting to serve as a member of the Appeals Subcommittee, each member of the subcommittee shall declare that no actual or perceived conflict of interest exists between the member and any party involved in the appeal.

The Appeals Subcommittee will convene within fifteen (15) working days of the request of the Director of Graduate Studies. If the appeal is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies during the summer, the subcommittee's review may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies, be delayed until after the beginning of the academic year. The subcommittee will review all available documentation, written responses to prior decisions, and convene interviews with individuals, necessary to determine whether the action(s) being appealed by the student were arbitrary, capricious, or contrary to University policy. A recommendation will be made within fifteen (15) working days after the Appeals Subcommittee's review of the materials or following the conclusion of the Appeals Subcommittee meeting(s), whichever is later. This recommendation shall be transmitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies shall render a decision following receipt of the Appeals Subcommittee recommendation. The decision of the Director of Graduate Studies will be recorded in the web Appeals database.
for viewing by the student. The Director of Graduate Studies may elect
to forward notice of the decision to others who have been involved in the
appeal process to this stage.

Step 5
If the student does not accept the decision of the Director of Graduate
Studies, the student may make a final appeal to the Provost and Vice
President for Academic Affairs (hereinafter Provost). The student’s appeal
to the Provost must contain:

1. an explanation specifying the points on which the student disagrees
   with the Appeals Subcommittee’s decision (step 4 above); and
2. all evidence supporting student’s perspective.

The Provost shall review all materials and documentation of the prior
appeals and shall render a decision.

All appeal decisions and recommended actions by the Provost are
considered actionable and final.