CAS Appeals Process

If a graduate student wishes to appeal any academic decision in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), that appeal should first be made to the faculty member or faculty involved and, if necessary thereafter, to the department chairperson or program director if the program has no chair. The initial appeal must be made within 30 days after the academic decision was communicated or made available to the student. If the appeal is carried forward to the department chairperson or program director, this must be done within 30 days of the faculty’s decision. The department chair or program director reviews the materials and either supports the instructor’s recommendation or determines an appropriate outcome.

Should the student wish to continue the appeal process, the next step involves the Board of Graduate Education (BGE) of the College of Arts and Sciences. An appeal to the BGE must be made in writing and submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education within 30 days of the decision by the department chairperson or program director. The Associate Dean will notify all parties involved of the appeal and will provide both parties an opportunity to submit any supporting documentation they believe the BGE should review. Written submissions will be limited to 10 pages, with additional appendices if necessary, from each side in the dispute.

The appeal may be heard as an agenda item at one of the regularly scheduled BGE meetings, or a special meeting may be called. A quorum of the BGE, excluding ex-officio members, must be in attendance. When the BGE sits as appeals board, a graduate student selected by the Graduate Student Association will be appointed to the board as a voting member. This student must be a graduate student in the College of Arts and Science but not from any departments involved in the appeal. Since this is an internal and not a legal procedure, students involved in the appeals process may be accompanied by someone who is not acting as an attorney or representing the student in his/her capacity as an attorney. If a member of the BGE is a member of the department or program involved in the appeal, that BGE member will abstain from active participation in the appeals process. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education shall be present throughout the entire process, but shall not be allowed to propose or second any motion, or to cast a vote on any motion related to the appeal.

The BGE will hear the case presented by the student and others supporting the student’s appeal and will also hear the presentations of the other parties involved. Then, the BGE will conduct a discussion. If the BGE finds that insufficient information has been presented, it may request a period of not longer than 30 days to obtain the information, meet again, and reach a decision. The BGE will consider the merits of the student’s appeal and the adequacy of procedures followed in the department. The BGE may support the decision being appealed, overturn it, or change the penalty imposed. The Associate Dean will inform the student in writing of the BGE’s decision.

Should the student wish to appeal the decision beyond CAS, a written appeal may be submitted to the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education. This must occur within 30 days of the decision by the BGE. The AVP will review the documents as submitted to the BGE and may request additional information to determine whether or not the process as outlined in this section was appropriately
followed. The AVP cannot overturn a decision but can remand the decision back to CAS for further investigation if the process was not followed.