1. Preamble

The purpose of this procedure is to afford graduate students at Notre Dame the opportunity to resolve complaints dealing with academic issues such as dismissal from graduate standing, placement on probationary status, denial of readmission to the same program (if the student was previously in good standing), and other program decisions that terminate or impede progress toward the degree.

This procedure is not to be used to address issues of sexual or discriminatory harassment (see grievance procedure available through the Office of Institutional Equity), of academic fraud (see the ‘Academic Integrity’ section of the Graduate School Bulletin of Information), or for disability-related grievances (see grievance procedure available through the Office of Disability Services).

This procedure is provided for continuing and returning graduate students in the Graduate School. It is not to be used by applicants for admission or by students in the Mendoza College of Business, the Law School, the School of Architecture, or the ESTEEM program.

2. Program Resolution Process

Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level, i.e., within the student’s program, according to grievance procedures specified in the program’s graduate student guide. Programs are required to develop a formal grievance procedure approved by the Graduate School.

For complaints originating in the student’s program, the student must first attempt resolution within the program by following the program’s grievance procedure. If a mutually satisfactory resolution cannot be reached at the program level, the complaint may be brought to the Graduate School.

3. Formal Appeal Procedure to the Dean of the Graduate School

Complaints must be initiated by a written statement from the student to the associate dean of students in the Graduate School, indicating the nature of the problem, the date(s) the problem occurred, the grounds upon which the appeal is based, background information that the student considers important and the relief requested. The associate dean will request from the department chair (or chair of the program’s appeal committee) a description of the results of the program’s resolution process.
Grounds for formal appeal include procedural error, violation of official policy by academic or administrative personnel, or special mitigating circumstances beyond the student’s control that were not properly taken into account in a decision affecting the student’s academic progress.

The complaint must be sent to the Graduate School’s associate dean of students within 30 calendar days of the department’s resolution. The associate dean will then convene a meeting of an ad hoc academic appeals committee, composed of three faculty members chosen by the associate dean, two of whom will be current members of the Graduate Council (one from the student’s college and one from outside the student’s college) and one of whom will be from the student’s college but not a member of the Graduate Council. The committee will also include one non-voting graduate student. This student may either be one of the current Graduate Student Union representatives to the Graduate Council or a substitute from the appellant’s college selected by the associate dean from a pool of students identified by the Graduate Student Union. The committee will be chaired by the associate dean, who does not vote. At the student’s request or by request of the committee, the appeals committee will also meet with the student. The committee may also meet with other individuals involved.

The appeals committee will make a written recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. The dean may or may not accept this recommendation, but in either case, he or she will respond to the appeal in writing within 30 calendar days of receipt of the committee’s recommendation. All deadlines may be extended in extenuating circumstances. The dean will send a copy of this letter to the department chair. The judgment of the dean of the Graduate School is final.

Students who have been dismissed from their program cannot register or complete the ND Roll Call process for subsequent semesters, including the summer session, during the appeal process.