

GRADUATE STUDENT APPEAL PROCEDURE

(Approved by the Graduate Council, Nov. 16, 2005)

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 departmental 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 Graduate and Professional Student Handbook), of academic fraud (see 'Academic Integrity' section of the Graduate School Bulletin), or for disability-related grievances (see the grievance procedure for students with disabilities in the Graduate and Professional Student Handbook).

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 Law School or the Business School.

2. Departmental Resolution Process

Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level, i.e., within the student's department, according to departmental grievance procedures specified in the department's graduate student guide. (Departments may develop a formal grievance procedure or designate an individual (e.g., the chair or the DGS) who will handle complaints on an *ad hoc* basis. If the student's grievance concerns this designated individual, the department must specify an alternate process.)

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

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 the Graduate School responsible for academic policy, 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 departmental appeal committee) a description of the results of the departmental 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 should be sent to the Graduate School's associate dean for academic policy within 30 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 GSU representatives to the Graduate Council or a substitute from the student's college selected by the associate dean from a pool of students identified by the GSU. 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 working 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 working days of receipt of the committee's recommendation. (All deadlines set forth here 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.

BMT Nov. 17, 2005