DOUGLAS COLLEGE

# APPEAL OF FINAL GRADES POLICY

| Policy Name: | Responsible Owner: | Created: |
|---|---|---|
| Appeal of Final Grades | Vice President, Academic and Provost | 2015 May |
| **Policy Number:** | **Approval Body:** | **Last Reviewed/Revised:** |
| E.AA01.05 | Education Council | 2020 November |
| **Category:** | **Replaces:** | **Next Review:** |
| Education | The policy and procedures relevant to Grade Appeals within the former Student Appeals Policy. | 2022 May |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


A. PURPOSE
B. SCOPE
C. DEFINITIONS
D. POLICY STATEMENTS
E. PROCEDURES
F. LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES
G. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS
H. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSES


## A. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles and governs the procedures for student appeals of Final Grades in Credit Courses at Douglas College.

## B. SCOPE

- **ACADEMIC STUDENTS**
- **RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATORS (i.e., Deans / Associate Deans / Directors)**
- **VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC & PROVOST**
- **REGISTRAR**
- **STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES (i.e., COUSELLORS, INDIGENOUS STUDENT SERVICES, ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES, etc.)**
- **EDUCATION COUNCIL**

## C. DEFINITIONS

1. **Credit Course**: Credit Courses have a numerical credit value assigned to them and can be counted towards a College credential. They may be letter-graded or mastery-graded courses.

2. **Final Grade:** The official grade for the course recorded on the student's transcript. In appealing a Final Grade, a student may focus on one or more individual assignments that he or she feels was not properly assessed.

3. **Instructor's Course Outline:** A document provided by the instructor for each course and section that outlines, among other information, how a student's performance will be evaluated and any specific criteria regarding how student work will be treated for evaluation purposes. The information required in this document is specified in the Evaluation Policy.

4. **Responsible Administrator**: The administrator responsible for the Faculty or Educational Services Department in which the course under appeal is offered. In a Final Grade appeal process, the Responsible Administrator is usually a Dean or an Associate Dean.

## D. POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Douglas College students have the right to appeal Final Grades in Credit Courses when they believe that College Grading Policy or Evaluation Policy or the stated evaluation criteria for the course have not been properly or consistently applied. All parties to an appeal have the right to a timely, fair and equitable process for resolving concerns over grades.

2. A Final Grade may be appealed on the following grounds:

    a. One or more of the following was not properly applied:
        i. College policy governing evaluation and grading;
        ii. program/department-specific academic requirements;
        iii. the official curriculum guideline for the course;
        iv. the criteria for evaluation as detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline and/or individual assignment guidelines.

    b. Evaluation criteria were unclear or were not specified.

    c. The grade was assigned on a basis other than evaluation of the student's required coursework, and/or in a manner inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Instructor's Course Outline with respect to such issues as penalties for late assignments or absences.

    d. Extenuating personal circumstances were not adequately considered, or could not reasonably be revealed at the time the Final Grade was awarded.

    e. The Final Grade was miscalculated.

3. A concern about a Final Grade should be resolved informally with the instructor where possible, and otherwise at the earliest possible step of the formal appeal process outlined in the Douglas College *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*.

4. A Final Grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same as the result of an appeal.

5. Students are encouraged to consult with a College Counsellor, the Coordinator of Indigenous Student Services, an Accessibility Specialist, the Douglas Students' Union Ombudsperson, or another elected member of the Douglas Students' Union, for assistance in understanding the Appeal of Final Grades Policy and procedures and in preparing a written appeal submission.

6. Students have the right to continue their studies while a grade appeal is in process, except where the Responsible Administrator determines that the student's participation in learning activities would impede the learning, health or safety of the student or others. A student who continues in any course or program that requires prior completion of the course under review will be required to withdraw, without refund, from the course or program should the appeal be unsuccessful. The Responsible Administrator's decision may be appealed to the Vice President, Academic and Provost, whose decision is final.

7. Students may be accompanied to a Grade Appeal Committee or Education Council Appeal Tribunal hearing by a Douglas College support person, such as a College Counsellor, the Coordinator of Indigenous Student Services, an Accessibility Specialist, the Douglas Students' Union Ombudsperson, or another elected member of the Douglas Students' Union. The support person may help to ensure the student understands the process, and, if the student wishes, may make a closing statement on the student's behalf summing up the student's submission. A hearing by a Grade Appeal Committee or the Education Council Appeal Tribunal does not constitute a judicial process and legal counsel is not permitted to attend.

8. The Final Grade Appeal process is confidential and all parties to an appeal must respect this confidentiality.

9. Timelines may be extended with agreement of all parties, but should be respected wherever possible.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1. This policy applies to the evaluation of academic work in a Credit Course. It does not apply to Continuing Education Courses.

2. Students who have a complaint of harassment or inappropriate conduct by an employee should refer to the Administration policies on *Violence Prevention and Response*, *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response* or *Respectful Workplace.*

3. Students who wish to appeal Educational Policy decisions other than Final Grades that affect their Academic Standing should refer to the Appeal of Educational Decisions Policy. Students must decide on the central issue(s) contained in their appeal and may pursue only one process related to each issue at a time. Where a student appeals a Final Grade and another educational decision simultaneously, the Responsible Administrator will determine which process will be completed first.

4. A student who has been suspended from the College as a result of disciplinary actions under College Administrative policies on *Violence Prevention and Response, Standards of Student Conduct*, or *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response* - may pursue a Final Grade appeal, but that appeal will be held in abeyance until the suspension is complete. The student must initiate the appeal within the standard time limits by notifying the Responsible Administrator in writing, by letter or email, and must reactivate the appeal within 30 calendar days of the completion of the suspension.

5. A Final Grade appeal is distinct from a complaint about the quality or delivery of a course or program, including a complaint about teaching quality. Such a complaint can be made to the Responsible Administrator.

6. A Final Grade appeal cannot consider matters of pedagogy (teaching methods) or professional judgment, as long as the instructor is complying with College educational policy, any department- or program-specific educational requirements, and the approved curriculum guideline for the course.

## E. PROCEDURES

Refer to the Douglas College *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).*

## F. SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES

- *Grade Appeal Form* (available from Enrolment Services )
- *Appeal of Final Grades Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*

Administration Policies:

- Human Rights
- Respectful Workplace
- Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response
- Standards of Student Conduct
- Violence Prevention and Response

Educational Policies:

- Evaluation Policy
- Grading Policy

## G. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS

**British Columbia College and Institute Act 24 (e)** grants Education Council the power to "set policies and procedures for appeals by students on academic matters and establish a final appeal tribunal for these appeals."

## H. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSES

N/A