

# Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals

## Policy & Procedure

*Revised March 2022*

Consistent with its mission, the College of Health Professions welcomes feedback from students about our policies, programs, and services in an effort to promote a successful learning environment. To that end, the University is committed to providing prompt and fair resolution of student concerns and complaints. As representatives of the University of Detroit Mercy, we are accountable to our students, constituents, and accrediting agencies to provide a process by which students may submit complaints and voice concerns in a nonthreatening manner, free from retaliation of any kind. The following is the link to the [University student complaint website](#).

### What is a student complaint?

A student complaint ranges from an experience with, or treatment by, a University employee to a matter relating to academic or non-academic areas not addressed in the college or department handbooks or covered within the University policies and procedures. There are two types of complaints:

1. Academic: College/School-related, Library/IDS, Career Education Center, University Academic Services issues or any other academic matter.
2. Non-academic: Student Services (e.g., Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Accounting, International Services, Residence Life or other non-academic departments), Auxiliary Services (bookstores, food services, etc.) or issues with Facilities or Public Safety (buildings, parking lots, security of person or property, etc.)

### How is a student complaint different from a grievance or appeal?

A student academic grievance or appeal is **not** handled at the University student complaint link. Complaints related to sexual harassment, Title IX, sexual misconduct or violence, or any other type of discrimination claims are also **not** handled at the link above. Students should attempt to resolve complaints with the person with whom they had an issue; then supervisory personnel in that department. Students seeking guidance or resolution of nonacademic issues should seek advice from the [Dean of Students](#) at (313) 993-1028. Examples of issues which are nonacademic are listed in the [Student Handbook](#). Additional resources are listed below.

- [Sex and Gender-based Discrimination, or Title IX](#)
- Tuition Variance: This site is also not intended for issues related to charges for tuition and fees. Tuition variance issues need to go to the committee through the [Student Accounting Office](#). Obtain a [Petition for Tuition Adjustment](#) from the Student Accounting Office. This can be done in person or online via the above link.
- [Whistleblower Policy](#)
- [CHP Honor Code/Honor Council](#)

- [Student wellness \(Personal Counseling & Student Wellness Center\)](#)
- [Disability Support Services](#)

## Academic Grievances and Appeals Policy

**Informal resolution.** Students are expected to take an initial step to resolve a dispute informally and in good faith with the faculty (or with whomever they have an issue). If the informal dispute is not resolved, the student should meet with the Chair, track Coordinator, or Associate Dean to resolve. Students are expected to utilize internal mechanisms of dispute resolution, such as this appeals process, before utilizing external mechanisms.

Scope. This policy governs appeals for students with academic issues that may affect a student's progression in their program. Program handbooks and policy manuals may amplify or modify the procedures detailed below.

Student responsibility. There are specific guidelines and time constraints for the submission of an appeal. A student is responsible for reading this entire document and following its guidelines. Any questions about the appeal process should be directed to the program administrator (MSON Associate Dean, PA Chair, HSA Chair). An appeal should be addressed to MSON Associate Dean, PA Chair, HSA Chair, or specific entity identified by the program (e.g., committee). Appeals should be accompanied by a description of the student's rationale describing why the decision should be overturned and identify strategies to improve success or remedy the effects of the decision. The student has the responsibility to demonstrate why an academic decision, or its consequences should be overturned in all appeal procedures.

Appealing a Dismissal from the Program. Upon receipt of the appeal letter, the status of the student is considered dismissal pending. While an appeal of a dismissal is pending, students may not attend any program activities (e.g., classroom, clinical placements or internships, student meetings, etc.).

Assignment of Grades. Grades are assigned by the faculty scheduled to teach a course. Grades are determined based on the evaluation criteria and competencies described in the course syllabus. Faculty utilize rubrics, specific criteria, clinical expertise and academic judgment when assigning a grade. Grades cannot be assigned by any other person than the faculty teaching that course, and a grade can only be changed by the faculty member who assigned the grade.

## Procedure

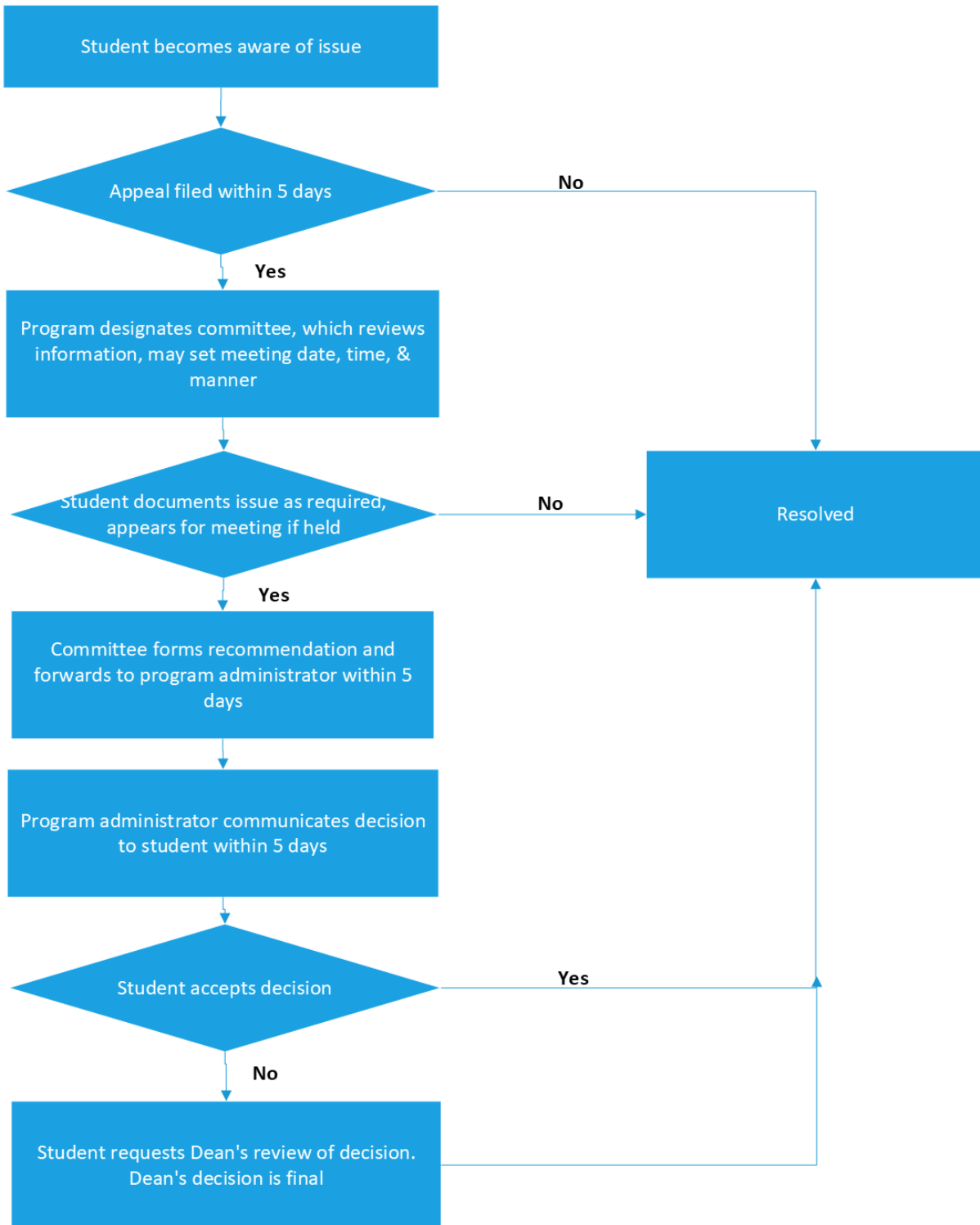
*PLEASE NOTE: The student must follow this process, which provides specific details, guidelines, timelines and expectations.*

1. Students will be notified of an adverse determination regarding academic progression by a communication from the program administrator (or similar title, e.g., track coordinator). This communication will be sent by email to the students Detroit Mercy email account (see [Detroit Mercy Email policy](#)). Note that programs may also choose to send a copy of this communication by United States Post Office mail in addition to the official email communication. The communication will provide the procedures a student must follow to appeal the decision. Any written notice provided to the student will be mailed to the address on file with the University. It is the responsibility of the student to check his or her email and mail regularly, and to ensure that the address on file with the University registrar is correct.
2. Students are afforded only one opportunity to appeal an academic decision. If a student does not request an appeal or fails to appear at the hearing to discuss the appeal, they will forfeit their right to appeal. A student may withdraw an appeal at any time.
3. A student initiates the appeal, through their Detroit Mercy email account, that includes a signed letter to the program administrator (MSON Associate Dean, PA Chair, HSA Chair) describing the basis or circumstances for the appeal. The letter must be received within five (5) business days of the date the student became aware of the issue, or should have become aware (e.g., the date of the email from step 1 above). The student's appeal should include a description of the circumstances that affected the student and strategies to improve academic performance should the appeal be granted. If no written statement is submitted, the issue will be considered closed. The student's written statement should be no more than two (2) pages when printed on paper and must describe the basis for appeal in detail. Supplementary information may be included to support the appeal and is not considered within the two-page limit.
4. Appeals will be considered by a committee designated by the program in their policy manuals. Faculty who were most directly involved in the decision will not be chosen to hear the appeal and in the event they are a member of the committee, will recuse themselves. The committee will review all letters of appeal and schedule appeal appointments as needed. The committee has the right to affirm the dismissal with or without meeting with the student face to face.
5. The student will be notified through their Detroit Mercy email account of the date, time, and place of any meeting.
6. The meeting to discuss the appeal request is considered a conflict resolution mechanism and is not a judicial proceeding. A student may not be represented by legal counsel in any hearing or record the proceedings of any hearing. Students may be accompanied by one support person (not an attorney) at this meeting. This support person is not allowed to speak unless called upon by the committee. Students may be asked not to bring in personal belongings other than written notes and supporting documentation. The student is allowed to take notes during the hearing.
7. After meeting with the student, the committee will make a recommendation to the program administrator concerning the student's future in the program within five (5) business days. The recommendation is made based on the student's potential for success. Multiple factors may be considered, including but not limited to: overall academic

performance, clinical performance, advisor notes, compliance with previous conditions of probation, accountability, and external conditions impeding success.

8. The program administrator makes the decision to affirm or overturn the original decision on academic progression based on the committee's recommendation within five (5) business days of receiving the committee's decision. This communication will be sent by email to the student's Detroit Mercy email account. This decision is final.
9. In rare instances, the student may request the Dean review the decision. This request for review must state the grounds on which the student believes a review is warranted, and this communication must be received by the Dean within 10 business days of receipt of the program administrator's decision. Grounds for requesting the Dean's review are limited to the following: procedural irregularity, substantial evidence not previously considered, undue severity of action, evidence of bias, or evidence the decision was arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable.
10. The Dean has the discretion to affirm the decision, or to conduct further review of the appeal. The Dean may request additional information and may reach a decision with or without meeting with the student or seeking additional counsel. If the Dean affirms the decision of the committee, the Dean's decision is final.
11. In any instance when a decision is made to overturn a student's dismissal, the student will re-enter their program on Academic Probation. A contract will be created detailing the conditions the student must meet, either initially, or throughout the time remaining in the academic program. If the student cannot fulfill the stated expectations, the student will be dismissed, and there will be no opportunity to appeal this action further.

## CHP/MSON Academic Appeals Process (Rev. March 2022)



\*Intended for illustrative purposes and clarification. This chart cannot illustrate every detail of the process. In all cases, the words of the policy and procedure rule.