

REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC DECISIONS AFFECTING GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These procedures apply to all academic decisions taken by the Department of Economics or its members with respect to graduate studies in the Department of Economics. They do not apply to academic decisions made by the School of Graduate Studies, its officers or any of its committees.
- 1.2 Academic decisions are decisions taken with respect to a graduate student's academic program. Examples of such decisions are examination or course grades, results of comprehensive examinations, interpretations of degree requirements or decisions requiring withdrawal from the program on academic grounds.
- 1.3 Non-academic decisions are subject to grievance procedures described in the *Queen's University Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights & Discipline*, http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/SARD_Policy.pdf
- 1.4 The review procedures are in compliance with all general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies. In case of an unforeseen conflict between these procedures and the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies, the latter shall prevail.
- 1.5 A review of an academic decision should move through several stages, and be terminated when (a) the student is satisfied with the decision, or (b) all stages of the review procedure have been exhausted.
- 1.6 The general principle of these procedures is that reviews should be conducted, in the first instance, at the lowest appropriate administrative level.
- 1.7 Within the Department of Economics, the following sequence of appeal and review is provided:
 - I) The Initial Appeal
 - ii) The Formal Review
 - iii) The Departmental Review
- 1.8 An *appeal* of an academic decision refers to a request to change the original decision. A *review* of an academic decision involves an investigation of the circumstances and procedures pertaining to the original decision. Hence, a review of an academic decision may lead to observations and recommendations concerning the original decision, but it cannot *normally* reverse that decision without the consent of the person or persons charged with the responsibility for making the academic decision.

2. **Initial Appeal**

- 2.1 At this stage the student should talk informally with the person who made the decision being appealed. If the decision was made by the Department or any of its committees, the student should discuss the matter with the Coordinator of Graduate Studies.
- 2.2 The Initial Appeal should be launched as soon as possible, but normally no later than two months after the decision is announced.
- 2.3 A witness may be present if he or she is mutually acceptable to both parties.
- 2.4 The student should ensure that the person making the decision is aware of all the facts which the student believes bear upon the decision.
- 2.5 If the decision is not altered and the student is not satisfied that it is academically proper, the student may initiate the Formal Review.

3. **Formal Review**

- 3.1 Normally within two weeks of a decision of the Initial Appeal the student should inform the Head of the Department in writing that he or she wishes to invoke the Formal Review Procedure, outlining the nature of the unfavourable decision and stating the grounds for the request. The grounds for the request must indicate prime facie evidence that:
 - (a) the original decision involved circumstances that were unreasonable or unfair;
 - (b) the proper procedures were not followed in reaching the original decision.or
The Head of the Department may deny a review if a prime facie case has not been made.
- 3.2 The Head of the Department will appoint a committee of faculty members of the Department to review the initial decision, to write a report and to make recommendations. (Faculty members of the Department are those with the rank of Lecturer or higher.)
- 3.3 Members of the Department involved in the initial decision shall be excluded from the committee.
- 3.4 The committee shall call as witnesses the student, the person or persons making the initial decision and any other persons it deems appropriate.
- 3.5 The committee will normally report to the Head within two weeks of its appointment.
- 3.6 The Head will make a decision on the basis of the report and will inform the student in writing of the results of the Formal Review. If the Head's decision is unfavourable to the student, a copy of the committee's report will be made available to the student.
- 3.7 If the student is not satisfied with the results of the Formal Review, he or she may initiate a Departmental Review.

4. Departmental Review

- 4.1 Normally within two weeks of being informed of the results of the Formal Review the student should inform the Head of the Department in writing that he or she wishes to invoke the Departmental Review procedures.
- 4.2 As soon as is practical, the Head shall call a meeting of the Department to review the case. The Head will make available to each member of the Department, copies of the student's written request for a review, the report from the committee to the Head, and the Head's letter to the student.
- 4.3 The student may make a verbal presentation at the Department meeting.
- 4.4 Only faculty members of the Department may attend that portion of the meeting devoted to the review.
- 4.5 Members of the Department involved in the initial decision that is being reviewed will be present only as witnesses.
- 4.6 The Department will decide the question by a simple majority vote of voting members present.
- 4.7 The Head will inform the student in writing of the decision of the Department.
- 4.8 If the student is not satisfied with the results of the Departmental Review, he or she may inform the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

5. Review of Decisions Made Outside the Department

- 5.1 If the initial decision was made by the School of Graduate Studies, its officers or any of its committees, the student should follow the review procedures as outlined in the School of Graduate Studies and Research calendar.