

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Board of Student Academic Appeals
Policy Number	026
Approved by	Academic Council
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Contact	Office of the Registrar

1.0 MANDATE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The Board of Student Academic Appeals shall be the University's final authority for hearing student grievances arising out of Aga Khan University regulations, policies and procedures that academically affect students.
- 1.2 Appeals relating to charges of non-academic misconduct will be heard in accordance with the appeal procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 1.3 The procedures described in this policy are intended to provide an opportunity to the student to request a review and remedy injustices.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The University has a responsibility to provide fair and equitable procedures for the lodging and hearing of student complaints arising out of Aga Khan University regulations, policies and actions that academically affect students directly.
- 2.2 This policy is applicable to all students (full-, part-time, visiting) admitted to an AKU programme of study or enrolled to complete course/s for credit.

3.0 ENTITY BASED APPEAL

- 3.1 Students who wish to raise questions or who have a concern are strongly encouraged to communicate informally with their instructors, chair / director of the department / programme before initiating a review under formal procedures.
- 3.2 Where Faculty, College, School or Institute-based appeal processes exist, students must ensure that they follow these prescribed processes prior to submitting an appeal to the Board of Student Academic Appeals. Students may request the relevant programme office to provide information on the programme level process, if available.

- 3.3 Faculty, College, School and Institute-based appeal processes must be filed with the University Registrar. Changes to entity-based appeal processes must be immediately reported to the Registrar.

4.0 APPEALS TO BOARD OF STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 4.1 Academic appeals may fall into one of the following categories:

4.1.1 *Final grade*: A student questions his/her final grade or the assessment of his/her performance.

4.1.2 *Application of University regulations*: The student questions the application of University regulations governing programmes of study in which student is enrolled.

- 4.2 For this policy, the University Registrar or their designate will be the administrative officer responsible for the receipt and processing of appeals, for the scheduling and holding of hearings before the Board of Student Academic Appeals.

- 4.3 Students are requested to speak with the University Registrar or their designate regarding a complaint before submitting an application for appeal.

- 4.4 Students who submit an appeal to the Board of Student Academic Appeals without following the prescribed procedure will have the appeal returned without decision.

- 4.5 Students should note that an appeal to the Board of Student Academic Appeals is the final recourse in dealing with academic appeals.

5.0 TIME LIMITATIONS

- 5.1 An appeal of an academic decisions must be made within 30 days of the official communication (e-mail, letter etc.) informing the student of the academic decision.

- 5.2 Appeals of final grades must be made within 30 days of the posting of the final grades by the Office of the Registrar.

- 5.3 A student must commence the appeal process noted in items 6.0 and 7.0, below, within the 30 days of the notification of the academic decision or the posting of the final grades.

6.0 PROCESS FOR THE APPEAL OF GRADES

- 6.1 Students who have a question regarding the final grade in a course must first discuss the matter with the course instructor.

- 6.2 In case the issue remains unresolved, the student must refer the matter to the chair / director of the department / programme.

6.3 If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the chair / director of the department / programme, the student may then appeal to the Dean of the student's academic unit.

6.4 If the matter remains unresolved after discussing the matter with the Dean, the student may then appeal to the Board of Student Academic Appeals.

7.0 APPEALS RELATED TO ACADEMIC DECISIONS

7.1 A request for the reconsideration of an academic decision must, where applicable, be directed to the Dean of the student's academic unit.

7.2 If the student is not satisfied with the Dean's decision, the student may then appeal to the Board of Student Academic Appeals.

8.0 APPEALS PROCEDURE

8.1 All appeals submitted to the Board of Student Academic Appeal shall be made using the Student Academic Appeal Form. The Student Academic Appeal Form is available on the Office of the Registrar website, www.aku.edu/registrar.

8.2 Submissions not received on the Student Academic Appeal Form and that does not satisfy the requirements of the appeal as provided in the policy, will be returned to the student without decision.

8.3 Dissatisfaction with, or ignorance or neglect of University policy or published deadlines on the part of student shall not constitute sufficient grounds for appeal.

8.4 In filing an appeal, students must be clear about the reasons why they believe that the academic decision rendered is incorrect. Normally, an appeal will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

8.4.1 Significant mitigating circumstances

There existed circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the body (e.g. progression committee, programme committee etc.) in question was not aware when its decision was taken, and which could not reasonably have been presented at the time.

8.4.2 Procedural error/irregularity or other inadequacy on the part of the University

An appeal may be considered where the student believes that the award or mark is incorrect because the University has made an error. It is not enough to show that an error has taken place; it will also be necessary for you to show that the error resulted in an incorrect decision being made.

8.4.3 Prejudice or bias

An appeal brought on these grounds should clearly identify the particular individual(s) considered to have shown prejudice or bias against you, and should be supported by evidence

8.4.4 Medical Appeal

The University endeavours to accommodate students whose studies become interrupted or who may be unable to complete academic work due to an incapacitating medical condition. This should be supported by relevant medical documentation. The University, may its discretion, request more detailed documentation, where required.

- 8.5 While submitting an appeal, the student must clearly state the arguments and expectation from the appeal. The responsibility to demonstrate the validity of the appeal and to provide necessary supporting documentation rests with the student.
- 8.6 All appeals shall be submitted, preferably in person, by the student requesting the appeal, to the University Registrar or their designate. Students can also submit appeal through an e-mail at registrar@aku.edu. Submissions received in campuses other than Stadium Road will be forwarded to the University Registrar.
- 8.7 An appeal may be disqualified if received outside the 30-day period. To expedite the process, students are advised to file appeal as soon as possible.
- 8.8 A student may abandon an appeal at any time during the appeal process.
- 8.9 Unless authorized, the Board of Student Academic Appeal should complete its proceedings within 10 working days.

9.0 COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 9.1 The Board of Student Academic Appeals will be an ad-hoc committee and shall consist of three members of the faculty or senior staff of the University, one of whom shall be the Chairperson.
- 9.2 The Board will be entitled to use services of any personnel of the University as the Board may deem appropriate for the purposes of assisting the Board in conducting the appeal proceedings.
- 9.3 The University Registrar or their designate shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Student Academic Appeals and shall serve as Secretary to the Board.

10.0 HEARINGS AT THE BOARD OF STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 10.1 Hearings of the Board of Student Academic Appeals will be held at the call of the Chair.
- 10.2 Meetings of the Board of Student Academic Appeals are held *in camera*, and thus not open to the public.
- 10.3 Students appealing to the Board of Student Academic Appeals have a right to a fair hearing. This includes the right to be notified of the date at which the student's appeal will be considered, and at the discretion of the Board, permission to attend and present verbal arguments and permission to ask questions during the appeal hearing.

10.4 Inviting student to the Board of Student Academic Appeal will be at the discretion of the Board.

10.4.1 Upon receiving an invitation, students must confirm attendance for the meeting.

10.5 The Board of Student Academic Appeals, at its discretion, may invite relevant/concerned individuals to appear before the Board to provide information pertinent to the appeal.

10.6 Where the appeal is against an assigned final grade, the faculty member named in the appeal, at the discretion of Board, may be invited to attend the meeting of the Board of Student Academic Appeals.

10.7 In instances where an official of the University is named in an appeal, the student's submission will be available to the individual(s) named.

10.8 The student and any individual whose decision has been appealed will be informed in writing of the decision of the Board of Student Academic Appeals.

10.9 The decision of the Board of Student Academic Appeals is final.