

Academic Appeal Procedure

This Procedure for Academic Appeals sets out the process by which SMU students may make an academic appeal when an appeal is allowable. When an academic appeal is not allowable, then this Procedure does not create any right of appeal.

An “Academic Appeal” refers to instances when a student requests a waiver of or exemption from an academic policy or regulation, or when a student contends that an academic policy or regulation has been misapplied. For purposes of this procedure, a “petition” and “appeal” refer to the same thing.

This Academic Appeals procedure *does not apply* to disagreements or appeals relating to grades. This topic is covered under the **Grade Appeal Procedure**.

This Academic Appeals procedure *does not apply* to issues relating to the Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity. These are governed by the **Student Conduct Review Process** and the **Honor Code**.

Where to Submit an Academic Appeal

Unit, Division, or School

If a student seeks a waiver or exemption from the application of an academic policy, or contends that the policy has been misapplied, then the student should first do the following:

- Submit an appeal (often called a “petition”) to the unit, division, or School with responsibility over the academic policy that is implicated; and
- Use the specific petition or appeal form for the issue in question, if there is such a form. Forms for different types of appeals-petitions can be obtained from the Office of the Registrar, the Office of General Education, academic advisors, and records officers within the various schools.

Additional review within the School

Depending on the type of petition, if a student’s appeal is denied, a student might be able to submit the appeal to an additional decisional level within the School.

Appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee

When a student may appeal; when a decision may be changed

If a student has attempted every other level of decision on an academic appeal, the student may appeal the decision to the Academic Appeals Committee (AAC). In evaluating any appeal of a decision on a petition, the AAC may overturn or alter the

previous decision only if the previous decision is *clearly erroneous*. “Clearly erroneous” means that the decision is

(1) based on an objectively incorrect mathematical or calculation error; or

(2) clearly outside the bounds of any reasonable application of the academic policy or regulation at issue.

How to submit an appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee

- The student should submit his or her appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee at aac@smu.edu.
- The appeal should include a clear statement as to each of the following items:
 1. Describe the decision you are appealing.
 2. What unit, school, division, or academic officer issued the decision that you are appealing? (If you appealed to one level within a school or unit and then appealed to another level, be sure to include each in your answer to this.)
 3. Explain why you believe that the decision fits in one of the following categories: (1) the decision is based on an objectively incorrect mathematical or calculation error; or (2) the decision is clearly outside the bounds of any reasonable application of the academic policy, rule, or regulation that was applied.
 4. Attach any documentation relating to items 1, 2, and 3. This includes: a copy of the decision that you are appealing; and any documents supporting your contention that the decision was clearly erroneous as defined above.
- The Academic Appeals Committee will request that you provide additional information if the submission is incomplete. Once the submission is complete, the AAC will review the appeal and issue a decision according to the standard stated above. The AAC may request to meet with the student or gather further information, but may also determine that this is not necessary to decide the appeal. The AAC consists of 3 members, but its decision need only be by a majority; unanimity is not required. The AAC will notify the student of its decision by email at the student’s SMU address.