

College of Graduate Studies
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Appeal Advisory Committee of the Graduate Council

I. NATURE OF THE COMMITTEE: The appeal Advisory Committee of the Graduate Council is an Ad Hoc committee reporting to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The committee is convened at the discretion of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE: The Committee is composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Graduate Council and three members of the Graduate Council, one of whom must be a graduate student, and none of whom may be from the academic department of the appellant. Committee members will be selected by the by the Chair of the Council. The Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies will serve as an *ex officio* member of the committee. The Chair of the Graduate Council will chair the Appeal Committee. In the event that the appellant is from the same department as the Chair, then the Vice-chair will assume the Chair's role and an additional member will be appointed.

III. BASIS FOR APPEAL: Graduate Students have the right to appeal **for cause** any decision affecting their academic standing as a graduate student. **Cause** excludes grade appeals, which are under the purview of the MTSU Grade Appeal Committee. The burden of responsibility rests with the appellant to provide a timely, cogent and convincing written documentation of the facts upon which the appeal is based. **Cause** as a basis for submitting an appeal includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- A. Bias.
- B. Procedural Error. This basis for appeal should be self-evident.
- C. Non-academic decisions made by the academic program which are not subject to established University policy.
- D. Curricular matters. This includes such matters as alleged misadvice; errors in the advancement to candidacy process; imposition of curricular requirements postmatriculation, etc.
- E. Any other issue which the student believes may be appealable, with the one exception noted below under section IV.

IV. EXCLUSION FROM APPEAL: A graduate student may not appeal the academic judgment of the faculty or of the graduate program, unless there is an issue of bias which is directed toward the appellant.

V. APPEAL PROCESS: Any appeal must be initiated in a timely manner. The student wishing to appeal should first consult with the faculty member(s) involved. If no satisfactory resolution can be reached, the Graduate Coordinator or Chair of the Department should be consulted in an attempt to resolve the situation. Only after these steps have been attempted should a student lodge a written appeal with the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Upon receiving an appeal, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies will inform the Chair of the Graduate Council, who will convene the Appeal Committee. The Committee will review all documents deemed necessary and the Chair will make a written recommendation to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies suggesting action to be taken. Upon receiving the Committee's recommendation, and after reviewing the pertinent documentation, the Dean will make a final decision regarding the appeal.

VI. NOTIFICATION PROCESS: Within 10 days after receiving the committee's recommendation, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies will inform the student, in writing, of the decision. This decision will complete the appeal process and there will be no further avenue of appeal available to the graduate student.