

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 4 OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC APPEALS

To the Academic Affairs Committee,  
University of Toronto.

Your Subcommittee reports that it held a meeting on January 26th, 1974 at 9:30 a.m. in Seminar Room 1, 84 Queen's Park Crescent, which adjourned to January 31st, 1974, at 4:30 p.m. in Room 106, 97 St. George Street, at which the following were present:

- Professor J. B. Dunlop (Chairman)
- Mr. J. E. Creelman
- Professor V. E. Graham
- President J. M. Kelly
- Mr. J. K. Martin
- Mr. C. Ian P. Tate
- Professor A. M. Wall
- Miss M. Salter, Secretary

By Invitation, Meeting of January 26th, 1974

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| Professor E. J. Kremer,<br>Department of Philosophy                     | Professor J. G. Slater,<br>Chairman,<br>Department of Philosophy |
| Dean A. E. Safarian,<br>School of Graduate Studies                      | Professor C. W. Webb,<br>Department of Philosophy                |
| Professor F. A. Sherk,<br>Assistant Dean,<br>School of Graduate Studies |  |

THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Mr. P.

Mr. P. appealed against a decision of the Committee on Applications and Memorials of the School of Graduate Studies dismissing an appeal from the decision of his Ph.D. Examination Committee to adjourn his examination and to require revisions in his thesis. Mr. P. contended that the Examination Committee had wrongly assessed his work and that his thesis should be accepted without revision.

After consideration of the documentary and oral evidence and the arguments put, the Subcommittee saw no basis for interfering with the decision of the School of Graduate Studies, but agreed that, since the time allowed for reconvening his Examination Committee had run out in the fall of 1973, additional time should be allowed to permit Mr. P. to make revisions in his thesis.

It was duly moved and seconded,

- (1) THAT the appeal of Mr. P. against a decision of the Committee on Applications and Memorials of the School of Graduate Studies be denied, but
- (2) THAT the time permitted for revision of the thesis should be extended until February 9, 1976.

The motion was carried.

The meetings adjourned at 3:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. respectively.

Secretary

Chairman

February 18th, 1974.



GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC APPEALS

1. An academic appeal is an appeal by a student against a decision as to (a) his or her success or failure in meeting an academic standard or other requirement or (b) the applicability to his or her case of any academic regulation.
2. So as to minimize the necessity for appeals to be taken, every division of the University in which decisions which may be the subject of appeal are made should adhere to certain general principles.
3. So as to provide for fair and effective disposition of appeals that nevertheless are taken, every division of the University in which an appeal may arise should establish certain structures and procedures.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4. Regulations and requirements should be clear, precise and well publicized. Lack of information or understanding can be a significant source of grievance. The more important regulations and requirements should appear in the calendar along with notice of the existence and availability of other regulations.
5. Regulations and requirements should be established or approved by the appropriate authority within the division and should not be changed to the detriment of students who have made decisions, choices and commitments in reliance on them. Arbitrary decisions or amendments can also be a significant source of grievance.
6. Dates should be established for the determination and announcement by course instructors of the essays, tests, examinations and other work required for credit and the grading scheme. These dates should be well in advance of the deadline for withdrawal from courses or transfer to other courses. The announced work assignments and grading scheme should not thereafter be changed materially except in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate divisional authority.

STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

7. The procedures available within a division for considering appeals should be well publicized, as should the existence of a right of appeal to the Subcommittee on Academic Appeals of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Governing Council.
8. Each division should repose final authority to determine appeals within the division in a committee which should include members of the teaching staff and student body.
9. Appeals should be commenced by a written notice stating the nature and grounds of the appeal, which should be accompanied by copies of any documents relied upon in support of the appeal.
10. The committee should hold a hearing at which the appellant should be allowed to appear in person, with or without counsel, and to call evidence and present argument in person or by counsel. Appellants frequently are

not satisfied that they have been fairly dealt with until they have had a hearing. If they have no right to a hearing at the divisional level, they are more likely to appeal to the Subcommittee on Academic Appeals to obtain one. This provision will reduce the likelihood that divisional decisions will be appealed. The intention to be represented by counsel should be communicated to the committee in advance of the hearing, preferably in the notice of appeal.

11. In the case of an appeal against the grade assigned or credit given to any essay, test, examination or other written work, if the committee should have reason to believe that a significant error might have been made, the work should be referred to one or more outside experts in the field of study concerned whose opinion should be considered by the committee in deciding whether to allow the appeal.
12. Divisions should seek to open lines of communication which would encourage grievances to be informally stated to the appropriate instructor or academic administrator with a view to informal settlement without resort to formal appeal procedures. Time and effort of all concerned can often be conserved in this way.

MISCELLANEOUS

13. The Subcommittee on Academic Appeals will be pleased to assist any division with advice in the setting up of appeal structures and procedures.

J. B. Dunlop

May 17th, 1974.