

## **Tips for Writing a Good Appeal Letter to the Board of Studies**

### **1. Understand the Assistant/Associate Dean's Decision:**

Receiving an appeal decision can be stressful, particularly if your appeal has been denied. It can help to take a few days to reflect and prepare notes before writing your letter to the Board, rather than responding immediately in a potentially emotional state. Be sure to read the decision letter carefully to understand the specific rationale behind the decision so that you can focus your letter to the Board on these areas. This way, you can ensure that you put forward the most clear and thorough appeal letter possible.

You are encouraged to seek advice from the Office of the University Ombudsman for individual guidance and assistance.

Remember that you must submit your appeal to the Board no later than the deadline indicated in your decision letter (generally within 21 days).

- 2. Word Limit:** Your letter should be concise and should not exceed 500-800 words (or a page to a page and a half) typed and single spaced. Use a clear font (such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri) and legible print size (12 is recommended).
- 3. Address:** Address your letter to the "Members of the Board of Studies" or simply "Dear Board of Studies."
- 4. Structure:** Your appeal letter should be structured in three parts:

#### **a. The Request:**

Introduce your appeal by clearly stating what your appeal is about. All appeals to the Board are appeals of a prior decision by the Assistant/Associate Dean. For example:

"I am appealing the Associate Dean's decision to deny my appeal to waive the Requirement to Withdraw for a Minimum of Three Years;"

"I am appealing the Associate Dean's decision to deny my appeal to drop COURSE ### (Term) after the academic deadline;" or

"I am appealing the Associate Dean's decision to deny my appeal to waive the 21-day appeal deadline."

#### **b. Direct Response to Decision Letter:**

You do not need to repeat or resubmit information contained with your original appeal. Your letter to the Board should directly respond to the specific reasons your appeal was denied, as outlined in the Assistant/Associate Dean's decision letter.

Note that all appeals to the Board will first be reviewed by the Assistant/Associate Dean to determine whether the information provided might warrant changing the original appeal decision. If the Assistant/Associate Dean does not revise the original decision, your appeal will proceed to the Board for review.

The Board will not overturn the Assistant/Associate Dean's original decision simply because you disagree. Instead, your letter to the Board should aim to clarify any elements of your extenuating circumstances that you believe were misinterpreted or inadequately recognized during the first level of appeal. Particular attention should be paid to the *timeline* (start, duration, and present state of your extenuating circumstances), *severity* (during the time period under appeal), and *impact* of your extenuating circumstances on your academic performance (specific ways that your studies have been affected). Also, it is helpful to the Board if the information provided explains whether the extenuating circumstances you experienced are now resolved, have improved, or are being managed.

**c. Future Plan:**

You do not need to repeat or resubmit the academic plan included with your original appeal, but it may be helpful to reconsider, emphasize, or expand upon certain elements of your academic plan that were of particular concern to the Assistant/Associate Dean.

A strong academic plan will help the Board understand that you have developed strategies for managing more severe or ongoing extenuating circumstances and that you are prepared to take appropriate action in order to succeed in your future studies.

For detailed information and suggestions, see the "[Preparing an Academic Plan](#)" tip sheet.

## **5. Supporting Documentation:**

In some cases an appeal may be denied by the Assistant/Associate Dean if the documentation provided is insufficient or does not relate to the relevant time period. You should submit any additional supporting documentation if it was missing from your original appeal and/or you think it could help to refute the reasons provided in the original appeal decision.

Documentation should be current, relevant, and obtained from an appropriate professional source. Like your letter to the Board, documentation provided should address the timeline and severity of your extenuating circumstances, and connect these factors to your academic performance. It is helpful to draw to the attention of the Board specific components of your documentation by identifying this particular information within your appeal letter.

You are strongly encouraged to submit all new documentation that you want to be considered *at the same time* as you submit your letter to the Board, otherwise there may be significant delays in hearing your appeal.

Just like your letter to the Board, all new documentation will be reviewed by the Assistant/Associate Dean before proceeding to the Board. No new documentation may be presented directly to the Board.