

Student Appeals

I. PURPOSE

To provide and describe the process by which a student can appeal a decision made by an SMS program's Student Progress Committee (SPC). Any SMS student who is called to a SPC meeting and has a disciplinary action or judgment placed on them for academic and/or professional reasons has the right to appeal that decision. The appeals process is to ensure that proper procedure has been followed, that appropriate precedents and policies have been applied, and to ensure that the judgment aligns with the precipitating event.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. Only judgements or disciplinary actions originating from an SPC decision will initiate the SMS appeals process if the student submits written notification to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- B. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will make the student aware of the Appeals Committee membership. A student should never contact a member to discuss the case while the appeal process is ongoing. If a Committee member is contacted, the contacted member is obligated to report the timing and nature of the contact to the committee chair. Concerns should only be addressed to the ADAA, including concerns of conflict of interest.
- C. A student may submit a request to the ADAA to replace a committee member for a perceived conflict of interest. If allowed, the ADAA will allow an alternate committee member to sit for the assigned meeting only. Students will be made aware that committee member re-assignment may delay the meeting by 1-2 business days.
- D. Substitutions for members of the Appeals Committee may be necessary due to scheduling and time constraints of the Appeals Committee members. The Appeals Committee Chair arranges the meetings and will make approved substitutions when necessary.
- E. If deemed necessary, the Appeals Chair can ask the student to meet with the Appeals Committee. Only students will be allowed to attend if requested. No family members, friends, or legal entities will be allowed. If the meeting is by video/phone conference, the

student must confirm they are in a private space and that they are not recording the meeting.

- F. In all cases, the Appeals Chair will keep the meeting minutes. No other forms of recording shall be permitted by the student or committee members.
- G. Appeals Committee members should not discuss the student or the case details before or after the meeting with each other or with non-committee members.
- H. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will notify the Dean of School of Medical Sciences, the Program Director, the Chair of the Student Progress Committee, and the ADAA of the decision from the Appeals meeting.

III. DEFINITIONS

The SMS Appeals Committee will review SMS student appeals regarding decisions made by program Student Progress Committees. The Committee consists of five to six full-time SMS faculty members, including representatives from each PA program at minimum and other SMS programs when feasible. Limited/one-time reassignments may be made by the SMS ADAA should a conflict of interest arise. Members serve a two-year term or as needed assignments, and the Chair is assigned by the SMS Dean for a three-year term.

IV. AUDIENCE

This policy applies to any SMS student called to a Student Progress Committee (SPC) meeting and has a disciplinary action or judgment placed on them for academic and/or professional reasons.

V. COMPLIANCE

If the ADAA finds that the policy and procedures found herein are not properly followed by the SMS student requesting an appeal, the appeal will not be considered.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The SMS Appeals Committee will review SMS student appeals regarding decisions made by program Student Progress Committees.

The SMS ADAA will initiate SMS Appeals Committee meetings based on student requests and answer any questions regarding policy and procedure. The SMS ADAA may also call Appeals

Committee meetings to discuss policy and procedure concerns and/or recommendations that would be sent to the Dean and/or the Leadership Committee for review. Minutes will be taken.

The SMS Dean handles the Appeals process in the absence of the ADAA.

VII. PROCEDURES

1. Initiating the Appeal

- a. After receiving official written notification of an SPC decision, the student may begin the appeals process by emailing a **professional and succinct appeal letter** to the SMS ADAA (or the SMS Dean if the ADAA is unavailable) **within two (2) business days** of receiving the SPC decision.
- b. The letter must:
 - i. Provide a clear **rationale** focused on facts and/or procedural concerns.
 - ii. Avoid accusatory language, comparisons to other cases, or references outside the institution.
 - iii. Be written solely by the student—not by family members, attorneys, or other parties.

2. Activation of the Appeals Committee

- a. The ADAA contacts the Appeals Committee Chair to schedule a meeting, which should occur **within three (3) business days** of notification.
 - i. The Appeals Committee Chair informs the student of the meeting date and time as soon as it is confirmed. A copy of the appeals procedures will also be provided to the student upon request.

3. Information Gathering

- a. The ADAA notifies the appropriate Program Director that the appeals process has been activated.
- b. The ADAA requests all materials used by the SPC in its decision, including complete meeting minutes.
- c. The ADAA compiles this information and forwards it to the Appeals Committee Chair.

4. Appeals Committee Review

- a. The Appeals Committee reviews:
 - i. The SPC case information.
 - ii. The student's appeal letter.
- b. The Committee determines whether:
 - i. Policy or procedural breaches occurred.
 - ii. Relevant precedents were considered.
- c. Detailed minutes are kept for all meetings.

- d. The Committee will either:
 - i. Uphold the SPC decision
 - ii. Uphold the student's appeal.

5. Decision Notification

- a. Within **24 hours** of the meeting, the Appeals Committee Chair informs the ADAA of the decision.
- b. The Appeals Committee's decision is reviewed by the Dean of the School of Medical Sciences for final approval. This is the final step in the appeals process.
- c. Within 24 hours of final approval by the Dean:
 - i. The ADAA emails the student the Appeals Committee's decision and any further instructions.
 - ii. The ADAA sends an official notification to the student.
- d. The ADAA informs the Program Director and SPC Chair of the decision.
- e. If the student's appeal is upheld:
 - i. The SPC Chair schedules a follow-up SPC meeting to develop a plan for the student. The student will be notified at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled SPC meeting.
- f. If the SPC decision is upheld:
 - i. The student must follow the SPC instructions as outlined in the original decision letter.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, STATUTES, AND RELATED POLICIES

SACSCOC Standard 10.1 (Academic policies) and Standard 12.3 (Student rights).

ARC-PA 5th Edition Standard A3.15g (policies and procedures for student grievances and appeals), ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14g, ARC-PA 1st Edition PDPP Standard A4001i.

<https://www.lmunet.edu/office-of-institutional-compliance/title-ix-policy-and-procedure>

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

The office of the ADAA: (865) 338-5726. The ADAA may be reached by dialing the School of Medical Sciences main phone number at 423-869-3611 and asking to be transferred to the ADAA.

IX. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Original policy adoption: January 8, 2020.

Revision: approved by SMS Dean's Council on June 15, 2023.

Revision: approved by SMS Dean's Council on January 28, 2025.

Revision: approved by SMS Dean's Council on December 11, 2025 – will become effective Jan. 1 2026