

## RUTGERS UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES POLICY

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs	TITLE: Academic Appeals Policy
AMENDED: August 2012	

### I. PURPOSE

This policy defines the process of academic appeals for **SGS** students.

### II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direction of the Dean, the **SGS** Campus Senior Associate Deans and Student Affairs Committee members are responsible for implementing this policy.

### III. POLICY

Determination of satisfactory academic performance and the successful fulfillment of academic requirements for all Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (“**SGS**”) students are the responsibilities of the **SGS** Program Directors, and will proceed in accordance with the academic policies and guidelines of the **SGS** and the specific graduate program.

The Program Directors will review student performance and progress at each phase of a specific program, and will determine if a student can or should be permitted to continue. If the Program Director initiates an academic action against a student, he/she will communicate this information to the Senior Associate Dean and the affected student. Evaluation of a student’s progress by the Program Director shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, the student’s grade point average, course work, qualifying examinations, thesis research, and the written dissertation and defense.

If a Program Director initiates any academic action and/or has determined that a student cannot continue in the specific graduate program because of academic insufficiency, the student has the right to appeal the academic action to the **SGS** Student Affairs Committee (“SAC”), an “ad hoc” committee that shall be composed of at least other three (3) faculty at the **SGS**. The SAC will convene an academic appeals hearing at which both the Program Director and the student shall appear and give testimony, and provide the SAC with documentation in support of their position. At the close of the academic hearing, the SAC shall deliberate privately and decide whether to affirm, reject or modify the Program Director’s academic action. The SAC shall convey its recommendation to the **SGS** Dean or the Dean’s designee, the Program Director and the affected student. If the student does not agree with the SAC’s decision, the student has a right to appeal this decision to the Dean or the Dean’s designee, whose decision is final and non-appealable.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

1. A student who wishes to appeal an academic action must submit a written request to the **SGS** Campus Senior Associate Dean within three (3) business days of his/her notification of the academic action from the Program Director. Otherwise, the student has waived his/her right to appeal the academic action, and this shall become the final academic decision.
2. When a student requests an academic appeal hearing pursuant to this policy, he/she will ordinarily be permitted to continue in the program pending the outcome of the appeal(s) process.
3. Upon notification of a student's request for an academic appeals hearing, the **SGS** Campus Senior Associate Dean shall convene the **SGS** Campus Student Affairs Committee ("SAC") and notify the **SGS** Dean.
4. Once the members of the SAC are selected, a Chairperson shall be designated. The Chairperson or his/her designee shall request all pertinent documentation from the Campus Senior Associate Dean.
5. The Chairperson of the SAC will schedule an appeals hearing of the SAC within ten (10) business days of his/her receipt of the documentation from the Campus Senior Associate Dean, and shall notify the student, the Program Director and any other individual(s) the Chairperson determines may have information relevant to the appeal. Notification shall include, at a minimum, the date, place and time of the meeting. The SAC will review the testimony and the documentation provided to them in advance, as well as any documentation received at the hearing. The SAC will make a written recommendation to the Dean within five (5) business days of the appeals hearing. The Program Director and the student will be provided with a copy of this recommendation at the same time as the Dean.
6. The student has the right to appeal the SAC's recommendation to the **SGS** Dean or the Dean's designee within three (3) business days of his/her receipt of the SAC recommendation. Otherwise, the student has waived his/her right to appeal to the Dean or the Dean's designee.
7. The Dean will render a final, non-appealable academic decision within a reasonable period of time, but in no event later than forty-five (45) days after the last date of the appeals hearing. The Dean will notify the student, the Campus Senior Associate Dean, the Chairperson of the SAC and the Program Director of this decision. A copy of the decision will be sent to the student by both regular and certified mail, return receipt requested.

#### Student Preparation for the Appeal Meeting:

1. The student who has requested an appeal of an academic action is encouraged to seek the support and consultation of his/her advisor and/or the **SGS** Ombudsperson throughout the academic appeals process. The student may also consult with an attorney of his/her choice, but the student may not be represented at the appeals hearing by legal counsel. Legal counsel may be present outside the hearing room to consult with the student during or after the appeals hearing. The student may be

accompanied to the appeals hearing by an advocate of his/her choosing who may address the SAC at the close of the testimony, but this advocate may not be an attorney by profession.

2. The student must provide to the Campus Senior Associate Dean a detailed statement of the facts and circumstances supporting the appeal and provide a list of persons with information relevant to the appeal. These documents will be received before the academic appeals hearing is scheduled, although for good cause the student will be permitted to supplement these materials at any time up until a final, non-appealable decision is rendered.

3. The Student Affairs Committee will review the submitted information and may request additional materials from the student, the Program Director, or any other individual(s) to clarify issues pertinent to the matter.

#### The Appeals Hearing:

1. Within ten (10) business days of his/her receipt of a complete set of appeals materials, the Chairperson will schedule an appeals hearing that will include the SAC members, as well as the student, the Program Director and any other individual(s) who the Chairperson determines may have information relevant to the appeal.

2. The SAC Hearing will not be taped or transcribed, although the SAC may, at its discretion, designate an employee of the **SGS** as a note-taker during the testimonial phase of the hearing.

3. At the appeals hearing, the Program Director and the student will be asked to present background information and supporting documentation to the SAC.

4. The Campus Senior Associate Dean or his/her designee and any other persons invited by the Chairperson to present supporting materials or discuss issues relevant to the appeal may also be present at the appeals hearing.

5. After the SAC has heard from all essential or requested individuals, the appeals hearing will be adjourned and the SAC will deliberate on the appeal in a closed session attended only by its members. The SAC will convey its recommendation to the student in writing with written copies to the **SGS** Campus Senior Associate Dean and the **SGS** Dean within five (5) business days.

6. Within three (3) business days of his/her receipt of the SAC's decision, the student may submit a written appeal to the **SGS** Dean. The **SGS** Dean may, at his or her discretion, seek information and consult with any other party(ies), including the student, members of the program's academic standing committee, members of the SAC and the Senior Associate Dean, and shall render, within a reasonable period of time but in no event later than forty-five (45) days after the last day of the appeals hearing, a final and non-appealable written decision and shall provide written copies of the decision to the student by regular and certified mail, Return Receipt Requested, and to the SAC Chairperson and the Campus Senior Associate Dean.