

Procedure for Undergraduate Student Academic Requests for Relief

Governing Policy:	Requests for Relief from Academic Decisions
Subsections:	Introduction , Requests for Relief Submission Process , Timelines , Appeals to SRBA
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:	Provost & Vice-President (Academic)
Effective Date:	September 1, 2025
Supersedes:	(NEW)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The University Senate has delegated to Deans the right to waive certain academic regulations. The Deans' rulings in academic matters are final unless overturned or modified on appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

To learn more about the request for relief and appeals process, students may contact the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Requests for relief should be initiated with the office having immediate jurisdiction for the particular requirement or regulation in question.

A decision or ruling remains in effect unless overturned or modified by the individual or body hearing the request for relief of that decision or ruling.

Throughout this document, reference to “Dean” is to be interpreted “Dean or their designate or equivalent”, and reference to “Department Chair” is to be interpreted “Department Chair or their designate or equivalent”.

In a course offered by Western Continuing Studies, “Department Chair” shall be interpreted as “Executive Director of Western Continuing Studies” and “Faculty Dean” shall be interpreted as “Dean of the partnering Faculty”.

“University”, for the purposes of this procedure, means Western and its Affiliated University Colleges.

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2.0 REQUESTS FOR RELIEF SUBMISSION PROCESS

Note: All requests for relief must be supported by evidence. A detailed description of the evidence supporting the request (including any supporting documentation) must be presented, in writing, as part of the request for relief.

2.1 Submitting a Request for Relief based on Category

- 1) **Category 1:** In the case of a request for relief regarding a specific course not involving medical or compassionate circumstances (see “Grounds” listed in the policy), students must first attempt to resolve the concern through informal consultation with the instructor. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the instructor, or does not receive a decision from the instructor, a written request for relief may be submitted directly to the Department Chair or to the Dean in faculties without departmental structure.

Normally, a request for relief in a Certificate-credit or Diploma-credit course will proceed as set out above. Except as otherwise noted, in cases where a certificate-credit or diploma-credit course is offered by a Faculty with department structure, but is not offered by a particular department, a request for relief will proceed directly from the instructor to the Dean of the Faculty in which the certificate-credit or diploma-credit course is offered.

- 2) **Category 2:** Requests for relief in the form of an exemption from a Senate academic regulation normally begin with the student’s Home Faculty Academic Advisors and proceed to the Dean of the student’s Home Faculty if no resolution is reached.

Where a request for relief concerns program eligibility in a Faculty other than the student’s Home Faculty, the request must be made to the Department Chair in which the program is offered or to the Dean of the Faculty in faculties without departmental structure.

- 3) **Category 3:** A request for relief from a decision made by a student’s Faculty Academic Advising unit should be made to the party with direct oversight of that unit, typically the Dean of the student’s Home Faculty.

A written request need not be lengthy but should indicate clearly the detailed reasons for the request and the relief requested. All relevant supporting documentation must be attached.

Following a request for relief by an undergraduate student to a Department Chair, the student, if not satisfied with the decision of the Chair, may then submit a written request to the Dean of the Faculty in which the course or program is offered. The request for relief must be accompanied by a copy of the Chair’s decision.

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Note that requests for relief based on medical or compassionate circumstances should in most cases have been made to the student's Dean's Office/Academic Advising unit at the time of the circumstances. Requests for retroactive relief based on such circumstances and which do not involve the fairness of the course itself should be initiated with the Dean's Office/Academic Advising unit of the student's Home Faculty and include a clear explanation of why academic considerations were not requested in a timely manner.

2.2 Possible examples of relief that can be considered by a Dean (a non-exhaustive list):

- 1) Waiver of a Senate regulation or requirement.
- 2) Allowing the opportunity for re-examination or reassessment.
- 3) Directing the adjustment of a grade on a particular piece of work, e.g., following the report of an independent assessor. [It is possible that a grade may be lowered as a result of reassessment.]
- 4) Directing the adjustment of grades in the case of a request for relief against general marking or grading practices. [This form of relief does not extend to the re-evaluation of the work submitted.]

Not all types of relief are suitable for any given request. For example, in the absence of an adequate permanent record of the student's work, the only form of relief that might be appropriate would be allowing the opportunity for reassessment.

3.0 TIMELINES

3.1 Requests for Relief Timelines

Marks: Prior to the filing of a written request for relief, students must attempt to resolve the concern regarding a mark or grade through informal consultation with the instructor. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the instructor or does not receive a decision from the instructor, a written request for relief must be submitted to the Department Chair **within three (3) weeks from the date that the mark was issued**. Students must include details of their attempts to informally resolve their concerns in their written submission to the Department Chair or Dean, as the case may be.

A request for relief against a decision of the Department Chair must be made to the relevant Dean in writing not later than three (3) weeks after the Department Chair's decision is issued. All relevant information and documentation must be provided to the Dean with the request for relief.

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3.2 Program eligibility and progression timelines

A request for relief against a decision concerning program eligibility must be made to the Department Chair of the department in writing by June 30. A request against a decision of the Department Chair must be made to the relevant Dean in writing within three (3) weeks of the Department Chair's decision being issued.

Students requesting a Dean's Waiver of Progression Requirements must do so in writing to the Dean of their Faculty by June 30 (if required to withdraw at the end of the Winter term), or within 30 days of the posting of the notice of their probation or "required to withdraw" status from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are responsible for verifying their current academic status on the Student Center.

3.3 Faculty-specific timelines

- 1) In the **Doctor of Medicine Program**, a request for relief against a mark must be initiated with the instructor within four (4) weeks of the mark being approved by the appropriate administrative committee. All other requests for relief must be made within four weeks of the date of the decision giving rise to the request for relief. A request for relief to each successive level of appeal must be made within four weeks of the date of the decision at the prior level.
- 2) In the **Faculty of Law**, a request for relief against a final grade in a course must be submitted to the Dean by March 1 for First Term Marks and by June 30 for Spring Term Marks. All other applicable deadlines are as set out above.
- 3) In the **Ivey Business School**, a request for relief against a mark must be initiated with the instructor within six (6) weeks of the mark being issued. All other requests for relief must be made within six (6) weeks of the date of the decision giving rise to the request for relief. A request for relief to each successive level of appeal must be made within six (6) weeks of the date of the decision at the prior level.

4.0 APPEALS TO SRBA

A student may have a right of appeal to SRBA **within six (6) weeks of the date of the relevant Dean's decision.**

A Dean's decision remains in full force and effect unless overturned or modified by SRBA.

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See the *Senate Review Board Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures* for further information.

Last Reviewed: *