

# Guidelines for Committee Convenors

## No. 2 – Guidelines for Appeals Committees

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Academic Policy and Programs Unit

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### No. 2 – Guidelines for Appeals Committees

**Please note:** *These guidelines were written by the Director, Academic Policy and Programs, in his (pro tem) position as Chair, Appeals Committee. They are the guidelines that he uses with Appeals Committee, and are provided here for the possible use of faculty appeals committees in consideration of appeals against exclusion on the basis of unsatisfactory academic performance.*

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- Policy on unsatisfactory academic performance and exclusion - [MOPP E/6.7](#)
- [Student information on unsatisfactory academic performance](#)
- [Appeal against exclusion \(Performance/Time Limits\)](#)
- [Appeal against exclusion \(Academic Dishonesty\)](#)

*The following guidelines should be used by Appeals Committees when considering cases*

- Faculty processes and policies should refer to University level references associated with Appeals and Exclusions (eg. these guidelines, relevant MOPP policy and student rules) to assist both students making applications and faculty level consideration.
- The committee seeks to ensure QUT standards and reputation are maintained and that students are likely to be successful in their studies both for their personal achievement and the considerable financial investment made by themselves or others. The balance is naturally complex and predicting success is a judgement call.
- The committee endeavours to ensure equity and consistency of decisions across the University.
- The committee will not normally be persuaded by a case which rests on little evidence and much assertion of intention to do better by the student.
- The committee considers examples of stronger levels of **evidence** to include a Statutory Declaration by the appellant or independent third party who can attest to the matters claimed.
- The committee looks for evidence of the factors that the student claims has contributed to his/her poor performance. These can take the form of statements from doctors, psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, or any other professional person who can attest to the circumstances claimed. They may also include statements from other third parties who can attest to the matters claimed.
  - The committee considers the congruence of patterns of the timing of medical conditions against the period of poor performance rather than whether the exact nature of the condition has been specified in the medical practitioner's certificate (which may be subject to privacy considerations).

- The committee may consider the trends of student performance to determine the propensity for success informed by the veracity of the submission, action taken and context. Such patterns can also assist with the support requirements that could be put in place to facilitate positive performance.
  - The committee looks for a statement from the student showing that he/she has been able to understand and analyse the situation which has caused their poor performance.
- The committee looks for evidence that the student has taken some action, which has been sustained, to address the circumstances which led to his/her poor performance. This may take the form of an action plan with evidence of changed medical status, living arrangements, relationship resolution, financial situation, work arrangements, reduced enrolment of units, or other changes as appropriate to the student's circumstances.
- Likewise, the committee will not normally be persuaded by a case wherein the student shows that he/she understands the reasons contributing to his/her poor performance, but is lacking in evidence that the situation leading to the poor performance has changed.
- The committee looks for evidence of ability in the student. For example, if the student has performed relatively well early in his/her academic career, but more poorly later, the committee might take that to show that the student has proven ability which has been impaired by other circumstances in later times.
- The committee considers the stage of enrolment:
  - If the committee is dealing with an appellant who has not made the transition to university well, and has been excluded at the end of first year, the committee, in the absence of other evidence, may take the view that it is in the student's interests to be excluded for a year to enable the student to deal with the issues which caused the poor performance before there is too much negative impact on their academic record. The student can then apply for readmission after a mandatory 12 month exclusion period.
  - If a student is within a few (eg. two or three) units of completing the course, but has a mediocre record over a number of years, the committee may nevertheless take the view that if the student had not previously been excluded, he/she should be given the chance to complete the course.
  - If a student has not been identified previously for probation or exclusion, then the committee may take the view that the student is to be placed on probation rather than exclusion (consistent with Student Rule 41).
  - If a student is appealing against exclusion for a second or subsequent time, the committee will not normally be persuaded to uphold the appeal by anything short of an exceptionally strong case.
  - The committee considers relevant additional information that may become available which clarifies the student's appeal application.
- The committee considers steps taken by the faculty to identify and mitigate poor performance. Examples of intervention strategies range from

ongoing (eg. at the unit levels) to periodic (eg. through outcomes from School/Faculty Exam Board meetings).

- A demonstrable intervention by the faculty to identify or address performance issues through the year strengthens the case for exclusion. Similarly its absence potentially furthers the basis for probation.
- The case for exclusion may be strengthened if an intervention strategy has been offered by the faculty but has not been taken up by the student and there is no evidence of substantial mitigating circumstances.