

NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM  
GRADUATE STUDENTS' APPEAL PROCEDURE

(January 2006)

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this procedure is to afford graduate students in the Neuroscience Graduate Program at UC Berkeley an opportunity to resolve complaints about dismissal from graduate standing, placement on probationary status, denial of readmission to the same program, and other administrative or academic decisions that terminate or otherwise impede progress toward academic or professional degree goals. This procedure may also be used to resolve disputes over joint authorship of research in accordance with joint authorship policies of campus departments or units.

The scope of this procedure is limited to the matters listed above, and excludes complaints regarding denial of admission, denial of readmission to a program different from the one the student originally pursued, student records, grades in courses of instruction, student employment, student discipline, and auxiliary student services (such as housing, child care, etc.). This procedure may not be used for complaints regarding actions based solely on faculty evaluation of the academic quality of a student's performance, or decanal evaluation of a student's appropriate academic progress, unless the complaint alleges that the actions were influenced by non-academic criteria.

### A. INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

A student may pursue informal resolution of a complaint by scheduling a meeting with the Head Graduate Adviser to discuss the complaint and explore possible avenues of resolution. If informal resolution is pursued, it must be initiated, and should be completed, within 30 days. At any point in this process, if a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the student may initiate formal resolution by submitting the complaint in writing.

### B. FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

A written complaint must include information regarding the action being complained of and the date it occurred, the grounds upon which the appeal is based, and the relief requested. The complaint must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Procedural error or violation of official policy by academic or administrative personnel;
2. Judgments improperly based upon non-academic criteria including, but not limited to, discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex, race, national origin, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability;
3. Specific mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control not properly taken into account in a decision affecting the student's academic progress.

A written complaint must be received by the Head Graduate Adviser within 30 days from the time the student knew or could reasonably be expected to have known of the action that is

the subject of the complaint. The department should complete its investigation and notify the student of the outcome of the complaint within 60 days of the date it was received.

If the complaint is about an action taken by the Head Graduate Adviser, the complainant may elect to take the complaint directly to the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute's Executive Committee. In such a case, the time limits set out in the preceding paragraph still apply.

The time frame for filing a written complaint may be extended by the department if the student has been involved in continuing efforts toward informal resolution, and the informal resolution process was initiated within 30 days of the time the student knew or could reasonably be expected to have known of the action that is the subject of the complaint. All time frames referred to in this procedure refer to calendar days. Summer and inter-semester recesses are not included within these time frames.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Head Graduate Adviser will request (a) member(s) of the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute's Executive Committee to investigate the complaint and make a recommendation to the Head Graduate Adviser regarding the outcome of the complaint. The investigation will include an interview with the complainant, a review of any relevant written materials, and an effort to obtain information from available witnesses (i.e., interviews or written statements or documents). The Head Graduate Adviser will notify the student in writing of the outcome of the complaint. A written complaint under this procedure satisfies the requirement of a unit level resolution process pursuant to the Graduate Appeal Procedure.

#### C. APPEAL TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint under the department's procedure, he or she may bring the complaint to the Formal Appeal Procedure of the Graduate Appeal Procedure. The formal appeal must be received in the Office of the Dean of the Graduate Division, 424 Sproul Hall, within 15 days of the date of the written notification of the result of the unit level procedure. The Graduate Appeal Procedure is downloadable (<http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/degrees/pdf/gradappeal.pdf>). Also downloadable is the Graduate Appeal Form (<http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/degrees/pdf/appealform.pdf>).

#### D. COMPLAINTS INVOLVING DISCRIMINATION

If the complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex, race, national origin, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, the department should consult the appropriate campus compliance officers prior to commencing informal or formal resolution. For more information contact the Equity Standards and Compliance Office (510/642-2795; [http://equity.chance.berkeley.edu/who\\_we\\_are.shtml](http://equity.chance.berkeley.edu/who_we_are.shtml)).