



## MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Concepcion De Godev, Chair, Graduate Council  
From: Dr. Katherine Hall-Hertel, Associate Dean, Graduate School  
Date: February 16, 2024  
RE: Policy revision for Academic Termination

The Termination Appeals process is somewhat nuanced and complicated. Recently there were cases where students were not clear on their appeal options. These proposed revisions are intended to clarify the policy and process. These revisions do two things:

1. Extend the window of time to appeal from 30 days to 60 days. This will help students who are terminated at the end of the Fall semester when the university closes for the holidays. It also aligns with the time allotted for visa holders to be reinstated.
2. The revision addresses the “exit strategy” option for doctoral students who are terminated after failing their comprehensive exam or final defense. This change allows them to appeal the “two-year rule” rather than their reinstatement to the doctoral program. They can apply to the master’s program provided they meet the criteria, which will be defined by their program.
- 3.

Proposed changes are in red.

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## Appeal of Academic Termination for the Purpose of Reinstatement (Degree-Seeking Students)

While an action of termination is considered final, a student who is terminated from a graduate program may appeal that termination to the Graduate School if there are unusual or extenuating circumstances. The type of academic termination will determine the permissible grounds for the appeal and the specific procedure utilized.

## Category 1: Academic Termination Based on Failure to Maintain Commendable or Satisfactory Performance in Coursework

Category 1 appeals are available to students who have been terminated for receiving a U or C grade after an initial suspension and students who fail to maintain the specific grading standards of an academic program. In these cases, an Appeal of Academic Termination submitted to the Graduate School must be supported by the student's graduate program. Without support from the student's graduate program, academic termination of this type is always considered a final action.

To initiate a Category 1 Appeal of Academic Termination, the student must send a written letter to the Graduate School requesting consideration of their case by the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Appeals Committee. In the written request, the student must make their case for reinstatement. Included with the student's letter must be at least two letters of support for reinstatement from the student's academic program. For master's degree students, the termination appeal should include a letter from the program coordinator/director and a letter from the department chair, major advisor and/or the thesis/project advisor. For a doctoral student, a termination appeal should include a letter from the program coordinator/director and the advisory committee or dissertation committee chair. The letters from the program must specify what expectations must be met by the student if they are readmitted to the program. **An appeal is not considered complete without letters of support and will not be reviewed by the Appeals Committee.** A termination appeal request and the supporting documentation must be received by the Graduate School within **60** days of the date on the letter of termination.

Once the Graduate School receives a Category 1 Appeal of Termination, it will be sent to the Chair of the Graduate School Appeals Committee. This Committee will review all relevant materials and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the decision on the Appeal of Termination case and that decision is final.

## Category 2: Academic Termination Based on Programmatic Action

Category 2 appeals are for students who have been terminated for failure to **make** satisfactory progress in an academic program and for students who have been denied re-admittance through the suspension **and/or the Category 1 termination** appeal process. Academic decisions based on the disciplinary expertise and judgment of graduate faculty members and program coordinators/directors in a particular field are not subject to appeal. The fact that a programmatic decision goes against a student's

desire for continuation in an academic degree program is not grounds for a termination appeal. However, **with program support, a doctoral student who was terminated for failing a milestone may appeal for immediate admission to the relevant master's program, provided they meet the outlined criteria for doing so. When moving to the master's program is not an option,** a Category 2 appeal may be brought on the grounds that there was "procedural error" or "discrimination" in the termination decision. To initiate a Category 2 Appeal of Academic Termination, the student must send a written letter to the Graduate School requesting consideration of their case by the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Appeals Committee. In the written request, the student must make their case for reinstatement. If the student is alleging "procedural error," the student must specify what procedures were utilized and how the program deviated from the specified procedures. If the basis of the appeal is "discrimination," the student must show how their case was handled substantially different from those of other students in similar circumstances. A termination appeal request and the supporting documentation must be received by the Graduate School within **60** days of the date on the letter of termination.

Once the Graduate School receives a Category 2 Appeal of Termination, it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Graduate School Appeals Committee. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will contact the program in question and request a response to allegations of "procedural error" and/or "discrimination". The program will have two weeks to respond to the request of the Appeals Committee Chair. Once all relevant information has been received, the Committee will review the materials and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School makes the decision on the Appeal of Termination case and that decision is final.