

**Process for
Undergraduate Student Academic Petitions**
Revised effective May, 2020

I. Introduction

This is a statement of the process that applies to *undergraduate student Academic Petitions*.

Academic Petitions are requests by a student for an exception to an academic policy. “Academic policy” includes any policy, rule, or regulation that applies to academic matters at SMU.

SMU academic policies reflect the SMU community’s collective judgment about the academic standards and procedures that best serve the interests of students and the overall academic community. All students are expected to know and to be governed by these academic policies. At the same time, the University recognizes that, depending on the particular policy and various reasons, a student might request an exception to an academic policy.

This process applies to all SMU undergraduate students. It does not apply to students enrolled in SMU graduate or professional schools. Students enrolled in SMU graduate or professional schools are governed by the rules and standards for academic petitions promulgated by the School in question.

This process does not apply to the petitions, appeals, or complaints relating to any of the following areas; these are governed by separate processes available through the links below.

- [Appeal of Grades](#)
- [Honor Code](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Academic Grievance and Appeals Procedures for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Discrimination or violation of rights](#)
- [Appeal of financial aid decisions](#), including financial aid decisions based on lack of satisfactory academic progress

II. Petitions Relating to Academic Suspension and Dismissal for SMU Pre-Majors

If a student is an SMU Pre-Major who receives suspension or dismissal and wishes to petition this decision, the student should follow the procedure and rules set out in the Undergraduate Catalog relating to Academic Advising and Satisfactory Progress Policies.

III. Petitions Relating to Academic Suspension and Dismissal for Declared Majors

If the student is a declared major who receives suspension or dismissal and wishes to petition this decision, the student should first submit the petition to the Academic Dean of the College of the student’s major, or to the person or committee to whom the Dean of the College has delegated responsibility in this area.

IV. Petitions Relating to the [Temporary Grading Policy for Spring 2020](#) (COVID-19)

If the student selected a course option for the grades of Satisfactory (“S”), Satisfactory Minus (“S-”) or No Credit (“NC”) or accepted the grade assigned by their instructor and is now requesting a grade reversal, the student must provide a detailed explanation outlining the reason for the grade reversal and provide a supporting letter from their advisor.

V. Petitions Relating to Application of Other Academic Policies

A student who petitions for an exception to or waiver of academic policy must first follow any procedure that applies to the particular type of request.

If the Undergraduate Catalog or other policy statement specifies a procedure, that student should follow this procedure.

If the Undergraduate Catalog or other policy statement does not specifically set out a procedure for the type of petition in question, or does not address whether a petition on the policy in question is possible, the student should inquire about whether a petition or procedure is available by asking his or her academic advisor or the Academic Dean of the College in question. If the student remains uncertain about whether a petition is permissible, the student may proceed to **Section VII** of this document and file a petition with the Committee on Academic Petitions. However, the filing of a petition with the Committee on Academic Petitions does not by itself mean that the policy in question can be the subject of an appeal.

VI. Academic Petition to the Committee on Academic Petitions

If a student has followed the applicable options set out previously in this document, the student may file a petition with the Committee on Academic Petitions.

In evaluating an academic petition, the committee is guided by the following considerations:

1. Did the decision maker act under a patent misinterpretation of University policy?
2. Was the application of the policy arbitrary such that no reasonable decision maker could apply the policy in the manner in which it was applied here?
3. Depending on the policy, the committee may consider whether extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's anticipation or control justify an exception to the academic policy, keeping in mind that all other students are required to follow the policy. However, in the case of certain policies, even such circumstances will not permit deviation from or waiver to the policy.

VII. How to Submit an Appeal to the Committee on Academic Petitions

- The student must submit his or her appeal to the Committee on Academic Petitions at cap@smu.edu.
- The appeal must include a clear statement for each of the following items:
 - A. A description of the decision you are appealing and the outcome you are requesting.
 - B. What unit, school, division, or academic officer issued the decision that you are appealing? (If you appealed to one level within a school or unit and then appealed to another level, be sure to include each in your answer to this.)
 - C. Explain why you believe that the decision fits in one of the following categories:
 1. The decision was based on a clear misinterpretation of University policy (please specify)
 2. The decision is outside the bounds of a reasonable application of the academic policy, rule or regulation that way applied
 3. Extenuating circumstances justify the overturning of a decision
 - D. Attach any documentation relating to items A, B, and C. This includes a copy of the decision that you are appealing and any documents supporting your contention that the decision was clearly erroneous as defined above.
- The Committee on Academic Petitions will request that you provide additional information if the submission is incomplete. Once the submission is complete, the CAP will review the appeal and issue a decision according to the standard stated above. The CAP may request to meet with the student or gather further information (e.g., Information from other University offices may be considered as part of the appeal evaluation. Appeals made close to the probation, suspension, and dismissal deadlines established by the Registrar's Office may not allow sufficient time to solicit documents germane to the appeal.), but may also determine that this is not necessary to decide the appeal. The CAP consists of three members, but its decision need only be by a majority; unanimity is not required. The CAP will notify the student of its decision by e-mail at the student's SMU email address.

Note: CAP's evaluation process typically occurs through electronic vote. CAP does **not** schedule meetings with students **unless CAP deems it appropriate**.