

# ACADEMIC RIGHTS BOOK

The logo for the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) is centered within a white, sunburst-shaped graphic. The sunburst has a scalloped edge and is set against a background of a red horizontal band. The USSU logo itself consists of the letters 'USSU' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with the 'U's and 'S's overlapping. Below the letters, the full name 'University of Saskatchewan Students' Union' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

**USSU**  
University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

THE USSU  
ACADEMIC RIGHTS  
HANDBOOK

## ACADEMIC ADVOCACY

The USSU's Academic Advocacy Office serves as a general information source for undergraduate students regarding their rights and responsibilities. We are here to advise you on the academic policies and procedures of the University of Saskatchewan, both informally and formally.

If you find yourself in need of an advisor and/or an advocate or have any general academic-related questions, do not hesitate to contact us. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Academic & Governance Assistance are here to assist you.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I believe that the mark I got in a class, exam or assignment is unfair. What can I do from here?**

If you're unsatisfied with the grading done in one of your classes, the first step is to consult with your professor or the individual who did the marking within 30 days of receiving the grade. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of this consultation, you can submit a Request and Report of Re-Assessment Form to the department offering the course (or the Dean's office in a non-departmentalized college) within 30 days from when you received your initial grade. Submitting this form has a \$20 fee and can be pursued only after you've informally consulted the individual who did the marking.

### **My professor has accused me of academic misconduct. Where do I go from here?**

The first step is to speak informally with your instructor about the allegation to discuss an appropriate remedy. The University of Saskatchewan Student Academic Misconduct Regulations outlines different remedies that your instructor may pick at their discretion: you may receive a grade of zero, a failing grade, a reduced grade, or you may be asked to resubmit your work. Your instructor will be required to submit an Informal Resolution of Academic Misconduct form to notify you of the remedy imposed.

However, an allegation of academic misconduct can reach the formal level in two instances: if the allegation is serious in nature, the instructor can request a formal hearing, or if you dispute the remedy proposed by your instructor, then you can request a formal hearing within 14 days of the remedy proposal.

## **I failed a class due to serious personal circumstances. How can I get it withdrawn?**

If you've failed a class due to personal extenuating circumstances such as physical or mental illness, a death of someone close, or any circumstances that affect your academic performance but are out of your control, you can apply for a retroactive withdrawal to the college that you're registered in. A retroactive withdrawal removes a failing mark and changes it to a withdrawal, or "W" on your transcript, which has no weight in affecting your average.

## **What is an academic hearing and what should I expect?**

When academic-related matters aren't settled informally, a hearing may take place to resolve the situation. A hearing can occur either on a college level, or a university level.

If you've submitted an appeal to your college or department or have been accused of academic misconduct, this may go to a college-level hearing. At the college level, a hearing board will be established. The composition of the hearing board varies college to college, but typically has faculty and student representation.

If you choose to appeal the decision that the college-level hearing board arrived at, then this will go to the university hearing stage. You can appeal a college-level hearing outcome only on specific grounds outlined in the University of Saskatchewan Procedures of Student Appeals in Academic Matters, Section V.B.1. At this stage, the University Secretary appoints three individuals onto the hearing board, one who is a student and two who are University Council members.

The purpose and intent behind having a hearing is to ensure that the parties involved can be heard before an impartial body. This means that both parties have the opportunity to present their side of the story in a fair manner in order for the hearing board to determine the appropriate outcome. Both sides are given the opportunity to issue a statement, to be represented by an advocate, to bring evidence forward, to call witnesses, and to ask questions.

## **What are my rights as a student in academic grievance procedures?**

Fairness and equitable treatment is a value outlined in the University of Saskatchewan's Mission, Vision and Values statement and the USSU Academic Advocacy Office is here to ensure that these values are upheld in academic matters. There are policies and processes that the university has in place to ensure procedural fairness. For instance, students have the right to appeal a decision that they believe infringes on the principles of fairness and equity. The role of the USSU Academic Advocacy Office is to assist you along the way and to provide guidance and support.

In an academic hearing, students have the right to a fair and unbiased hearing, and have the right to have an advocate or representative present. In an academic misconduct meeting, the student is presumed innocent unless proven otherwise.

## **How will an allegation of academic misconduct affect my academic standing?**

If you are able to resolve an allegation of academic misconduct at the informal stage with your instructor, this outcome will not be permanent on your academic record. If you're found at fault at the formal hearing stage, then the hearing board is responsible for determining the appropriate sanction(s) that may or may not result in a permanent or nonpermanent endorsement of academic misconduct on your transcript.

## **What counts as academic misconduct and what can I do to avoid committing it?**

Many instances of academic misconduct are done unintentionally due to carelessness or mistakes made on the student's part. The University of Saskatchewan Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct policy outlines what constitutes academic misconduct. However, academic misconduct can be understood in simple terms as cheating. As a student, one of your responsibilities is to be informed about what academic integrity is and isn't.

The University offers many resources to help students learn more about academic integrity and what this means. For online resources and information about academic integrity, please refer to the University Library at <https://www.usask.ca/integrity/be-responsible1.php> and the University Secretary at <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/resources.php>.

If you're ever unsure about whether or not your work may be in breach of academic integrity guidelines, always make sure to check with your instructor in advance.

## **CONTACT US**

For general inquiries or questions about academic-related concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email us:

### **Vice-President of Academic Affairs**

vpacademic@ussu.ca  
(306) 966-6968  
USSU Office (Upper Place Riel) Room 110

### **Academic and Governance Assistant**

aga@ussu.ca  
(306) 699-6989  
USSU Office (Upper Place Riel) Room 110

For more information about academic policies and procedures, check out our website at: [ussu.ca/academic-advocacy](http://ussu.ca/academic-advocacy)

## **UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

### **Student Learning Services**

library.usask.ca/studentlearning  
(306) 966-2886

### **Campus Legal Services**

ussu.ca/campus-legal-services

### **Disability Services for Students (DSS)**

students.usask.ca/disability-services  
(306) 966-7273  
dssnotetaking@usask.ca

### **Aboriginal Students Centre**

students.usask.ca/aboriginal  
(306) 966-5790  
asc@usask.ca

### **International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC)**

students.usask.ca/international  
(306) 966-4925  
international.students@usask.ca

### **Office of the University Secretary**

usask.ca/secretariat  
(306) 966-4632  
university.secretary@usask.ca

## **UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES AND FORMS**

There are many policies that concern student academic affairs which can be found on the University of Saskatchewan's website. The USSU Academic Advocacy Office will help you navigate through these policies, but for more information please refer to the following:

University of Saskatchewan Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters  
*Request for and Report of Re-Assessment Form University Appeal Form*

Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct  
*Informal Resolution of Academic Misconduct*

University of Saskatchewan Academic Courses Policy on Class Delivery,  
Examinations and Assessment of Student Learning

