



USSU Academic Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Academic Advocacy

4 Grievance & Appeal
Questions

7 Frequently Asked Registration
& Class Questions

9 Other Academic Questions

11 University Resources

12 University Academic Policies
and Forms

12 Contact Us

Academic Advocacy

The USSU 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 informal and formal academic policies and procedures of the University of Saskatchewan.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you need advice or an advocate or have any general academic-related questions. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the Academic & Governance Assistant are here to assist you.

What is academic integrity? How do I avoid academic dishonesty?

Academic integrity is “a commitment, even in the face of adversity to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage” (The International Center for Academic Integrity). This means that the student must create work that is reflective of their abilities.

Each student is responsible for familiarizing themselves with what qualifies as academic integrity and what is “misconduct” (that is, academic dishonesty).

Academic dishonesty can happen unintentionally or when students feel desperate, so it is important to be aware of the factors that can lead to this.

1. Time management is key! Feeling behind or feeling unprepared can make cheating tempting.
2. Poor mental health. Take care of your mental health and seek support, as stress can increase a student's willingness to engage in academic dishonesty.
3. When researching (or even taking notes), write down citations so you remember where you found information. This can prevent accidental plagiarism when referencing notes later.
4. Avoid sitting next to friends/siblings during assessments (even if the assessment is open book!). Unauthorized collaboration is still considered dishonesty.
5. Develop good writing skills (the library is a great resource!). This will reduce feelings of panic or helplessness during assignments.
6. Develop help-seeking behaviour. Professors, instructors, librarians, tutors, and other support staff are there to guide you. Ask for help and/or clarification when needed.
7. Refer to your syllabus! A syllabus is a contract between the student and instructor. It contains important information about academic dishonesty and your professor's expectations.

What counts as academic misconduct, and how to avoid it?

Academic misconduct describes cheating and dishonesty (in all of its forms). Some examples of behaviour that could lead to an allegation (an accusation) of academic misconduct are:

1. Providing false information to gain academic advantage or admission to a program.
2. Stealing notes, research work or other intellectual properties produced by others.
3. Using work that you produced in one class to fulfill a requirement in another class.
4. Creating fake resources.
5. Knowingly interfering with another person's opportunities or work.
6. Attempting to use or using personal relationships, bribes, or threats to gain academic advantage.

Many instances of academic misconduct are done unintentionally due to carelessness or mistakes. The University of Saskatchewan Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct outlines what constitutes academic misconduct; to view the policy, please see the link below. As a student, it is your responsibility to be informed about what academic integrity and academic misconduct are.

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 and check the link code below.

If you are unsure whether your work may be in breach of the Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct, always check your syllabus and with your instructor in advance.

University's regulations on student academic misconduct:

<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php>

USSU's syllabus guide:

<https://ussu.ca/academic-advocacy/>

Library resources:

<https://library.usask.ca/studentlearning/#LearningHub>

Frequently Asked Grievance/ Appeal Questions

What is the process if I am accused of academic misconduct by an instructor?

If an instructor makes an allegation of academic misconduct against you, the instructor may have a choice to pursue the formal or informal procedure. An informal procedure consists of the instructor speaking with you to discuss the concern and an appropriate sanction. A formal procedure will be started if it is a repeat offence, if the instructor believes the cheating is serious, or if an informal resolution is not possible.

When you receive an email with an academic misconduct allegation, your first step is to have an informal conversation with your instructor. You may be able to discuss an appropriate remedy. The Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct outlines different remedies (called “sanctions,” a type of consequence) 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 (though the sanctions are not limited to this list). If you agree to the sanctions in the informal process, your instructor will be required to submit an Informal Resolution of Academic Misconduct form to notify you of the remedy imposed. If you do not agree to the sanctions, the allegation will proceed to a formal resolution process (a hearing).

However, an allegation of academic misconduct can reach the formal level if required by the instructor or department. This usually happens if it is a repeat offence, if the allegation is severe, or if the student disputes the remedy proposed by their instructor. Within fourteen (14) days of the remedy proposal, you can request a formal hearing.

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

Fairness and equitable treatment are values held by the University (see the Mission, Vision, and Value statements), and the USSU Academic Advocacy Office is here to ensure that these values are upheld in academic matters. There are policies and processes the University has in place to ensure procedural fairness. Students have the right to appeal decisions they believe did not follow University procedures or infringe on the principles of fairness and equity. The role of the USSU Academic Advocacy Office is to assist you and provide guidance and support as you navigate these policies and procedures.

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 situation, the student is presumed innocent unless proven otherwise.

A mark I got in a class, assignment, exam, or assessment is unfair. What can I do?

- 1.** If you are unsatisfied with the grading and assessment 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.
- 2.** If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of this informal consultation you can submit a formal 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 of receiving the grade. Submitting this form has a \$20 fee.
- 3.** If you are not satisfied with the result of the formal assessment and believe that the academic outcome was affected by other factors, you may appeal the decision by submitting a written statement and a request for review to the dean of your college within 30 days from the date you were informed of the decision.
- 4.** If you are still not satisfied, the last step you can take is to file a University level appeal if you believe the outcome of the assessment may have been influenced by discriminatory treatment, failure to follow university policy and procedures, failure to meet accommodations, or that there is new evidence (these are called "grounds for appeal").

Flow-chart to understand the appeal process:

<https://governance.usask.ca/documents/student-conduct-appeals/StudentAppealChart.pdf>

University's appeals in academic matters policy:

<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php>

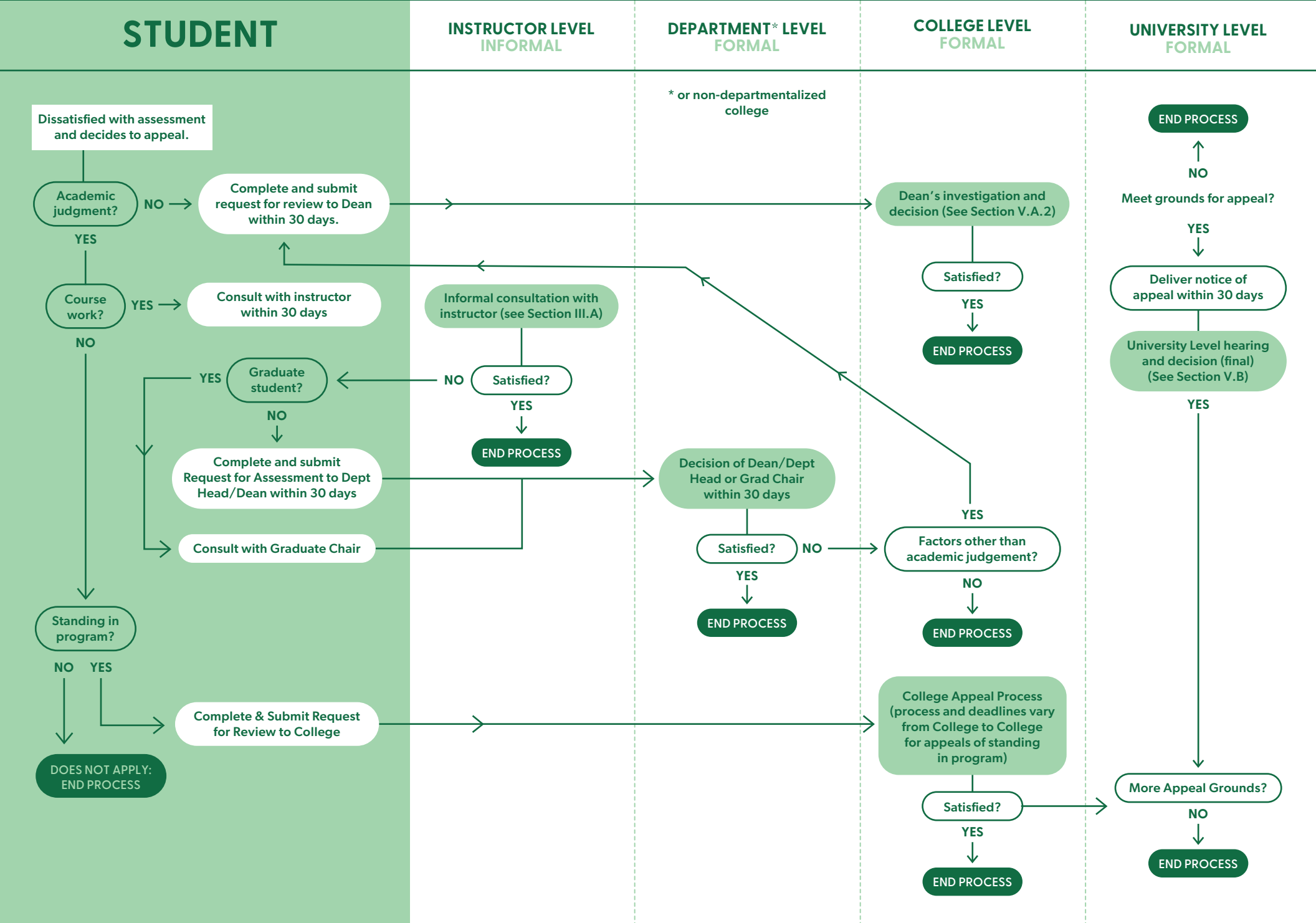
I failed a class due to serious personal circumstances. How can I get it withdrawn?

If you have failed a class due to personal extenuating circumstances (such as physical or mental illness, the 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 your College. A retroactive withdrawal removes a failing mark and changes it to a "W" on your transcript (representing withdrawal), which does not affect your average.

See page 25 of the Academic Courses Policy to find more details about the withdrawal process:

<https://policies.usask.ca/documents/academic-courses-policy-approved-june-2023-clean.pdf>

Student Appeals



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

If you can informally resolve an allegation of academic misconduct with your instructor, this outcome will not be permanent on your academic record. However, if you are found to have committed academic misconduct (that is, guilty of academic misconduct) at the formal hearing stage, this will go on your record. 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 is an academic hearing, and what should I expect?

A hearing may take place to resolve an academic situation (such as an accusation of academic misconduct, or an appeal) if it is not concluded informally, if it is not the first offence, or if the student does not agree with the informally offered sanctions.

This hearing can occur either on a College level, or a University level; most programs require you to initiate at the college level, and will inform you if they require you to move to the University level.

If you submitted an appeal to your College or Department or have been accused of academic misconduct, this may go to a College-level hearing. A hearing board will be established, typically from people (including faculty and student representation) within the college.

If you choose to appeal the College-level hearing board's decision, this will follow the University appeal procedures. You can appeal a College-level hearing board's outcome only for certain specific reasons (called "grounds for appeal") outlined in the University of Saskatchewan Procedures of Student Appeals in Academic Matters, Section V.B.1 (See link below). At this stage, the University Secretary appoints three individuals, one student and two University Council members to sit on the hearing board. These individuals will have no connection to you.

It is important to note that University-level hearing boards are less specialized than College-level hearing boards since they are composed of University Council members from other Colleges across the University. The University-level hearing board's decisions are restricted to the University of Saskatchewan Procedures of Student Appeals in Academic Matters, Section B.5 (See link below).

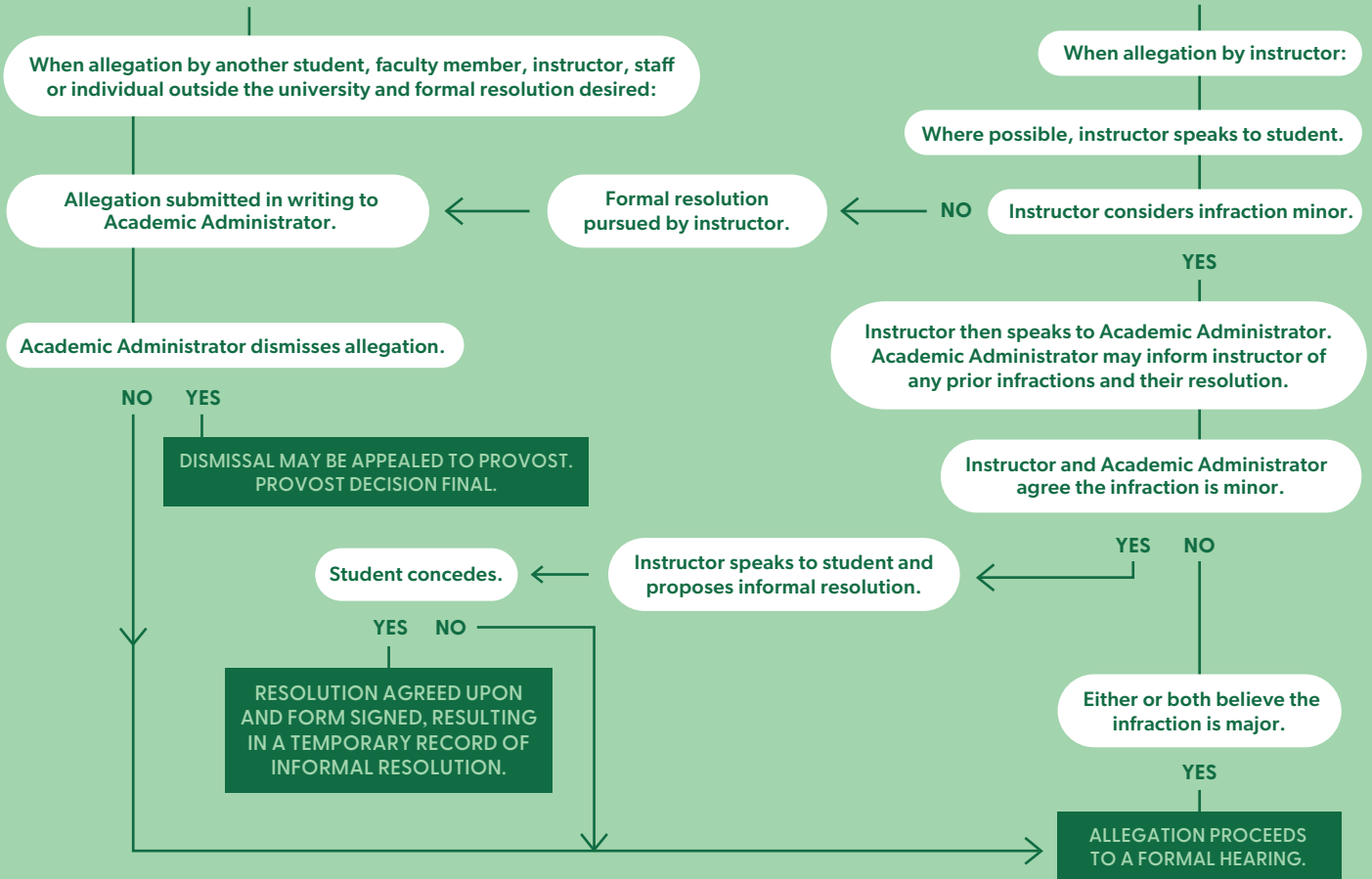
University's procedures on appeals for academic matters:

<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php>

Suspicion of Academic Misconduct

FORMAL

INFORMAL

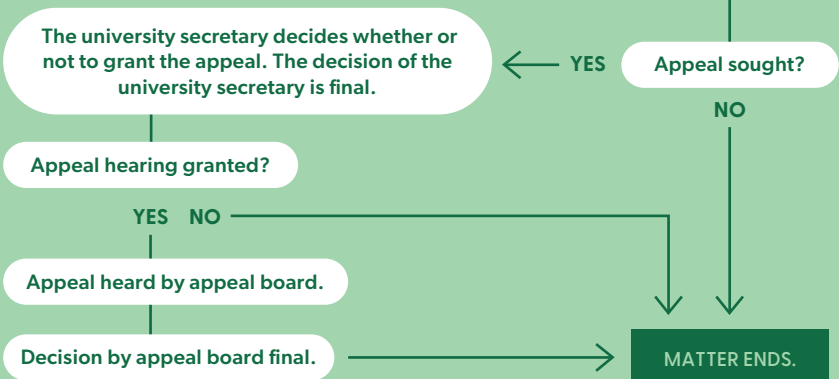


Student Academic Misconduct Process

DEFINITION

Academic Administrator:

The Dean, Executive Director, or faculty member designate of the College or School that is responsible for the course or other academic activity to which the allegation relates or where the matter falls outside the responsibility of a College or School, the Provost and Vice-President Academic.



Frequently Asked Registration/ Class Questions

How do I choose my program of study?

The University of Saskatchewan has course and program catalogues for all the programs offered by the university. These catalogues provide insight into the academic policies of various programs and show course and credit unit requirements for each degree, diploma or certificate. These catalogues also provide course descriptions and often class syllabi from previous years' offerings, which can help you choose your classes. You can look at course requirements for various programs and plan and choose your program accordingly.

How do I plan for my degree?

DegreeWorks is a tool to help you plan and visualize your degree. It is available in the Student Academic profile channel on PAWS. Using this tool, you can check the progression of your degree and the classes you need to take. Explore your options for other programs and see if the classes you have taken meet the requirements for various degrees/programs using the "What if?" function. DegreeWorks helps with mapping your degree and enables you to formulate a long-term plan to complete your degree. (Please note that DegreeWorks is not completely accurate. To ensure you are taking all required courses, please see an academic advisor.)

Can I register for a class after the registration deadline has passed?

If the registration deadline has passed for the term, you can still register for classes by requesting an override. You can apply for the override using the online form. You will be charged a \$35 fee for each class added.

This form is also used if you need:

- (1) departmental permission to take a specific course.
- (2) a class limit override (to attend a class that is already full).
- (3) a time conflict override.
- (4) a prerequisite or corequisite waiver (to allow you to take a class while still missing the prerequisite).

Note: there is no guarantee that your requests will be approved, as this is at the discretion of the instructor or department head.

Online override form:

<https://students.usask.ca/academics/registration/permission.php#Classoverrides>

I do not have a prerequisite for a class, can I still take it?

Sometimes you can still take a class even if you are missing a prerequisite.

- Make sure you have the equivalent educational experience and any relevant documentation, as this is required for the override process.
- Fill out the request class override form and follow the process given by your college.
- For this form, you will likely need the name of a faculty member from the department/college in which the course is offered. It is helpful to find their information before filling out the form.

For more information about the prerequisite waiver and where to submit it, visit the link code on the previous page.

Where do I go for academic advice?

Each department and College at the University has academic advisors for students. These advisors can help you:

- Plan your semester and academic year.
- Make sure you are taking your program/degree requirements.
- Find the quickest way to complete your academic program.

If you are undecided about your program or undeclared, find a general academic advisor from your college.

You can book an appointment with an advisor by emailing them or through an online booking system.

Find an academic advisor:

<https://students.usask.ca/academics/advisors.php#Undergraduateadvisors>

Can I drop/unenroll from my university classes if I am not doing well?

You can always make registration changes and drop classes before the deadline for registration changes to avoid any tuition charges or possible academic penalties. If you want to drop a class after the deadline, you will only get a partial refund of tuition, and your transcript will list the class with a “W” rather than a numerical grade. Make sure to check the class registration and withdrawal deadlines and find out if you are eligible for a tuition refund.

Other Academic Questions

I am struggling with my classes; where can I get some help?

Feeling unprepared and stressed is normal, but there are ways you can reduce your stress and be better equipped to do assignments and tests. The University of Saskatchewan Library provides various educational resources for students. You can visit the University Learning Hub to access these various academic supports, including Math and Stat help, Writing help, Research help, study skill help, and structured study sessions. You can also find tutors through the University: free tutors (hired by the University), and other tutors.

Access the Learning Hub:

<https://library.usask.ca/studentlearning/#LearningHub>

What are University tutors and how do I hire one?

- The University has a large tutor network, which you can access through the library.
- There are a number of select tutors who will work with you for free, and many more tutors who charge their own rates and you pay them directly (they are called “Subject Tutors”).
- The free tutors (paid for by the university) can be found at the Writing Help Centre and the Math and Stats Help Centre.
- Writing Help and Math Help have drop-in centres on the first floor of Murray Library.
 - You can schedule online or in-person appointments or drop by during their office hours
- The university does not hire Subject Tutors, but they are high-achieving students approved by the library to do freelance tutoring.

“Subject Tutors” can help with anything from music to economics or biology and nursing. It all depends on who is offering their services, but you can usually find a large selections of subject specialties.

- You can search and contact subject tutors via the Usask Tutoring Network: usask.tutorocean.com/ Use your NSID to log in.
- When arranging in-person meetings with a subject tutor, meet in a public space, like the library for safety reasons.
- Also note that the University does not monitor payment with subject tutors: tutors set their own rates, and all transactions are between you and the tutor. So make sure you are responsible with payments.
- Visit the library's tip sheet for tips on how to prepare and get the most out of your tutoring session.

Access the library's tip sheet:

https://libguides.usask.ca/ld.php?content_id=36831008

What is a SLEQ questionnaire and why is it important?

- SLEQ stands for "Student Learning Experience Questionnaire." The questionnaire gathers feedback from students about their experiences in the class, including (but not limited to) the teaching, assessment, and instructors. SLEQ is typically sent out once or twice in a course, once at midterms (though not for all courses), and once in the last two weeks of class.
- All instructors are supposed to collect feedback from students about their learning experiences, and SLEQ is the most common method.
- There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will not affect your course grade.
- SLEQ is important because it gives your instructor(s) feedback on how they have been teaching the course. It allows your voice to be heard. The department head or someone else in leadership will also be given your feedback to review (except the optional questions your instructor may have created at the end of the questionnaire).
- You will be emailed SLEQ (check your "other" folder in your email), but you can also access any eligible SLEQ through Canvas or the PAWS "Course Feedback" channel.
- Remember, your instructor(s) will read your exact wording, though it will be presented in an anonymized manner.

I am sick on the day of my final exam or final assessment. What can I do?

- You must submit a “Request for Deferral” form.
- Make sure it is submitted NO LATER than three days after the original exam.
- Submit the form to an academic advisor in your college.
- You may also need to submit a “Declaration of Absence” form.
- Your college may also ask for a doctor’s note as evidence.
- Before submitting any of these forms, check your college’s “Deferred Exam” policy/webpage for specific details, as they may change from college to college.
- If your request for a deferred exam is approved, you will be informed of the new date to write the exam. You will have to pay a \$40 fee to take the deferred exam.

Scan to access more information on exams:

<https://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php#Rescheduling>

University Resources

Student Learning Services

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

Legal Services

CLASSIC:

<https://law.usask.ca/students/jd-students/classic.php#top>

Pro Bono Students Canada:

<https://law.usask.ca/probono/#AboutUs>

Access and Equity Services (AES)

students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php
(306) 966-7273
aes@usask.ca

Office of the University Secretary

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

Indigenous Student Supports:

<https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/>
Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre
1-306-966-5790
gordonoakes.redbear@usask.ca

International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC)

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

University Academic Policies and Forms

There are numerous policies concerning student academic affairs available at usask.ca. The USSU Academic Advocacy Office will help you navigate these policies, but please refer to the following:

Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters:

<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php#About>

Request for and Report of Re-Assessment Form University:

<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php#top>

Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct Informal Resolution of Academic:

<https://governance.usask.ca/documents/student-conduct-appeals/UniversityInformalResolutionForm.pdf>

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

<https://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php#6GradingSystem>

Contact Us

For 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