POST-MASTERS APPEALS COMMITTEE
Policies and Procedures

I. The Committee

The Post-Masters Appeals Committee comprises one representative elected by each of the doctoral programs and representative of the research methods faculty. Committee members serve staggered two-year terms and may be re-elected. In addition, the Senior Associate Dean, representing the administration, the Executive Director of Student Life and the Associate Director of Student Services serve on the committee as non-voting members. The chair of the committee is elected by the committee members at the first committee meeting of the year.

II. Charge of the PMAC

The Post-Masters Appeals Committee has responsibility for acting on appeals from applicants to the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) and the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degrees that have been denied admission and appeals from students in those degrees requesting exceptions to existing procedures. The committee typically meets twice a semester during the academic year. Review by the committee is considered a formal appeal and students must first attempt to resolve the dispute informally, as described in Section V below.

In addition, the Post-Masters Appeals Committee is responsible for:

A. Making recommendations to the Office of the Dean, as appropriate, regarding policies of an academic nature related to post-masters students

B. Recommending the distribution of awards and financial aid to Senior Associate Dean

GSEHD Ph.D. students in Counseling are not eligible to use the GSEHD Post-Masters Appeal Committee process when appealing faculty and departmental decisions regarding student performance. Ph.D. students should consult the Handbook for Ph.D. Students in Counseling.

III. Justification

For matters that are not resolved informally as provided in Section V below, students may appeal in the following cases:

A. A student may appeal an academic matter on the basis of a violation of GSEHD policies or procedures. In order to prevail on an appeal, the student must submit clear evidence of any such divergence from prescribed procedures to the Post-Masters Appeals Committee.
B. A student may appeal an academic matter on the basis of extenuating circumstances that would render the application of established policies and procedures unfair under the circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are generally an event or series of events that are beyond the student’s control that prevented the student from fulfilling degree requirements in a conventional manner consistent with GSEHD policies and procedures. In order to prevail on an appeal, a student must submit clear evidence of any such extenuating circumstances.

IV. Committee Procedures

A. The chair sends a roster of the Post-Masters Appeals Committee members and the committee’s meeting dates for the academic year to the Dean’s office and the Associate Director of Student Services following the first meeting of the academic year.

B. Once the student files an appeal in writing with the Office of Student Services, the Associate Director of Student Services coordinates communication between students, the faculty advisor(s), the Office of the Dean, the Post-Masters Appeals Committee chair, and when necessary, other parties associated with the appeal. Any committee member involved in the appeal must recuse himself/herself from the committee’s proceedings and subsequent deliberations to reach a decision on the appeal.

C. If two letters of support are not included in the student appeals materials, the Associate Director of Student Services shall request a written statement of support or non-support from the student’s faculty advisor.

D. The Associate Director of Student Services is responsible for notifying in writing the student, faculty advisor(s), and the faculty member associated with the appeal of the day, date, and time of the hearing. The student, the faculty advisor(s), and the faculty member associated with the case have the option of attending the meeting to make a personal appeal and each should notify the committee of his/her intention to do so. The committee will be notified at least one week prior to the hearing if the student is to attend. The student may have another individual present for support but the person will not be permitted to speak or participate in the hearing. If the individual is an attorney, the student must inform the chair no later than one week prior to the hearing.

E. The Associate Director of Student Services prepares the original and a copy per committee member of all documents related to the appeals case, which include at a minimum:
• Associate Director of Student Services’ statement of the reason for appeal
• Student statement of appeal
• Faculty Advisor statement, if any
• Two faculty statements of support or non-support
• Transcript record of course work
• All other related documentation.

These materials must be in the Office of Student Services no later than one week prior to the meeting date.

F. Anyone may submit written documentation to the committee, provided these documents are relevant in the determination of the chair specifically to the student’s case at hand. These communications must accompany the student’s letter of appeal. Further, all information pertaining to a student’s case, including information contained in GSEHD files, may be utilized by the committee in the appeals process described above.

G. One week prior to the committee meeting, the Associate Director of Student Services sends an annotated agenda for the meeting to the Chair and brings the appeals and all relevant materials to the committee meeting. The Chair or the Associate Dean can request a meeting of the Chair, Associate Dean, and Associate Director of Student Services prior to the meeting to review the cases on the agenda.

H. The chair is responsible for the conduct of the hearing. An appropriate amount of time (to be determined by the chair) is allotted for the student to present the case followed by questions related to the case from the committee. A faculty member relevant to the case can give testimony after the student has presented his/her case. If a faculty advisor or faculty member wishes to give testimony in opposition to the student’s case, the student and faculty member appear separately before the committee.

I. The Associate Director of Student Services and the Senior Associate Dean, sitting as ex-officio members of the Committee, may supply relevant information, either orally or in writing, to the Committee at any time during their deliberations. The Committee may use all information pertaining to the student’s case, including information contained in department or school files and from the faculty advisor, in the appeals process and may request written documentation or a personal appearance before the Committee of anyone who can provide information pertaining specifically to the issue under appeal.

J. After the hearing, the committee will have a confidential meeting to decide on the appeal. Decisions are reached by majority vote. If the appeal is granted, it is the prerogative of the Committee to accompany the favorable decision with specific requirements the student must meet to continue in the program. The decisions are
communicated in the form of written minutes by the Associate Director of Student Services in collaboration with the chair to committee members and the Office of the Senior Associate Dean no later than 10 business days after the meeting date.

K. The Associate Director of Student Services communicates all decisions to the students, with a copy to the program faculty, in writing within ten business days of the committee’s decision. The student has the option to further appeal his case to the Dean. The Office of Student Services informs the Office of the Dean if the student wishes to further appeal the case.

L. The chair is responsible for the conduct of the hearing. The Office of Student Services keeps a copy of all written records along with the committee’s rulings and recommendations and the rationales for them. All copies of case material documents are returned to the Office of Student Services and disposed of appropriately. For a period of 3 years after the date of the decision, the Office of Student Services will retain all materials.

V. Student Procedures

Informal Attempts at Resolution

Prior to appealing a decision through the Post-Masters Appeals Committee, the student first should attempt to resolve the matter with the faculty member(s) most directly responsible. If no resolution results, the student should then consult with the individual at the next administrative level, for example, the director of the program or the chair of the relevant department. If there continues to be no resolution, the program director, chair or student may contact the Senior Associate Dean and solicit assistance to ensure that adequate steps are made to resolve the issues at an informal level without the complaint escalating to the status of a formal appeal. If no resolution is achieved as a result of these informal attempts, the student may appeal to the Senior Associate Dean. If no resolution is achieved at this level, the student may appeal to the Post-Masters Appeals Committee. Any such informal attempts will not delay the six-month time frame for filing the appeal.

Formal Appeal

In order for an appeal to be considered by the Post-Masters Appeals Committee, students must adhere to the following process:

A. Submit the appeal and supporting documentation in writing to the Post-Masters Appeals Committee through the Office of Student Services no later than six months from the decision being appealed and one week prior to the meeting of the Post-Masters Appeals Committee.
   - The letter requesting an appeal must include the following information:
     1. A description of the reason for requesting the appeal.
2. A detailed description and timeline of events
3. A statement explaining outcome sought by student
4. A clear plan of action if the appeal is approved
   • All documents relevant to the case (e.g., student statement, faculty member statements, transcript record of course work, and all other related documentation) This must include two letters from faculty in the student’s program stating his/her position on the student’s appeal and detailing any work with the student on the issue under appeal.

B. Once the student has properly submitted all case materials, the appeal will be placed on the Post-Masters Appeals Committee’s agenda for the next meeting during the academic year. Appeals submitted outside of the academic year will be added to the agenda of the committee’s first meeting of the following academic year. Appeals submitted outside of the academic year must be submitted no later than six months from the decision being appealed. In extenuating circumstances, the Dean may request to convene the committee outside of the academic year.

C. The student will be notified in writing of the date and time of the meeting by the Associate Director of Student Services. The faculty advisor of the student making an appeal shall be invited to attend the Committee meeting seven calendar days in advance. Although the student is invited to attend the hearing, it is not a requirement to attend to present the case. If planning to attend the hearing, the student must inform the Associate Director of Student Services in writing no later than one week prior to the hearing. The student may have another individual present for support but the person will not be permitted to speak or participate in the hearing. If the individual is an attorney, the student must inform the Associate Director of Student Services no later than one week prior to the hearing. The Associate Director of Student Services will inform the Chair about any additional individuals who will accompany the student to the hearing. Students who choose to attend will be allotted an appropriate amount of time to be determined by the chair to present the case, followed by questions related to the case from committee members. In the event that a student does not attend, the committee will base the decision on the written documentation in the case file.

D. The student will be notified in writing of the committee’s decision by the Associate Director of Student Services within 10 business days of the date of the decision.

E. The student may appeal the decision of the Post-Masters Appeals Committee by submitting a written appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be written and submitted within 30 calendar days after the written date of the decision. A delay in filing an appeal may constitute grounds for rejection of the appeal.