

**Centre for Christian Studies  
Policy and Procedures for  
Appeal from decisions relating to readiness  
for continuing in, or completing, the program**

**Background:**

The Program Staff (including the Principal in her/his role as Program Staff), following assessments that include the student, field volunteers, peer learners and others as appropriate, make decisions regarding readiness to continue in, or complete the program. A member of the Program Staff communicates decisions to the student as soon as possible, followed by written confirmation. Questions about, or disagreement with, the decision should be discussed informally with the appropriate program staff member(s). If this discussion does not resolve the issue, the student may initiate a formal appeal procedure. (See Appendix for the procedure).

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the appeal procedure is to ensure that just decisions have been made in relation to students. It is designed to be congruent with the CCS educational stance:

*Education at CCS happens within a living community, with each person as both learner and educator. We see persons as physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual beings. Our focus is on the learner and on integration of learning within the whole person. Learning is discerning meaning, relating content to our experience. We seek integration of knowledge and experience, theory and practice, reflection and action, support and challenge. This learning process calls us all to be transformed.*

**Scope:**

The appeal procedure outlined below relates solely to decisions made by CCS Program Staff. It does not apply to, or affect, course evaluations made within the university, theological school or program where the required external courses are taken. Appeal procedures set forth in the handbook or calendar of such institutions will govern appeals related to those course evaluations.

In keeping with the educational stance of CCS, each appeal begins with an informal process of discussion with the final resource being a formal hearing before the Appeal Committee.

**Policy:**

A student may appeal the decision of the Program Staff regarding decisions relating to readiness for continuing in, or completing, the program through an Appeal Committee established by the Program Committee or its Chair.

**Appeal Committee:**

Membership in the Appeal Committee consists of:

- a) A member of the Program Committee who has not been involved in the Appeal set up;
- b) A member of the Program Staff including the Principal (not involved in initial decision);
- d) One representatives of the broader CCS community, chosen by these criteria: knowledge of and familiarity with CCS, understanding of academic standards, geographical location, and, respected for their sense of justice and fairness.

The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and binding on all parties to the appeal.

### **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

1. A student wishing to question any decision regarding readiness to proceed or complete, may do so in writing within **two weeks** from the date of receiving the written confirmation of the Program Staff decision. This “request for a review” shall be directed to the Chair of the Program Committee or his/her designate. (The request needs to specify precisely what is being questioned (the decision itself, the decision-making process, etc.) The person receiving the request for a review will arrange within **one week** a mutually convenient date for the student and appropriate program staff member (s) to talk with her/him to review the decision. This meeting may be held by phone. The Chair of the Program Committee or her/his designate shall attempt to resolve the dispute by clarifying the objectives and perspectives of both parties. The student and/or the Program Staff member(s) may have a support person participate, if they so desire. This person is to be named when the date for the review is set.

After the conclusion of the review meeting, the student shall receive, in writing, **within two to three days**, a record of the meeting, clearly indicating the outcome of the review and the reasons for any decisions made, namely, to uphold or overturn the initial decision. This correspondence shall be initiated by the Chair of the Program Committee or her/his designate involved in the review.

2. Should the process with the Chair of the Program Committee or her/his designate fail to resolve matters, either the student or Program Staff member(s) may, within **one week** of receiving the documentation regarding the outcome of the review, make a formal written appeal to the Chair of the Program Committee.

1.(a) The written notice of appeal shall include:

- (i) the name, address, email address and telephone number of the appellant;
- (ii) the details of what is being appealed;
- (iii) the facts relied upon and grounds for appeal;
- (iv) a copy of the findings and reason from the review process.

- (b) **Within two weeks** following receipt of the written notice of appeal, the Chair of the Program Committee (or designated person) shall establish an Appeal Committee.
- (c) The Appeal Committee shall, **within two weeks**, fix the time, method, (by electronic means, for example, teleconference, or face to face, or a combination of methods) place and date for the hearing and advise both the student and staff members of same. The Appeal Committee shall consult with Treasurer regarding budget for the Appeal.
- (d) The student, staff or CCS, may seek legal counsel at their own discretion and expense.
- (e) The CCS will not be responsible for the any costs for any legal counsel or support person that either party brings to the hearing. The CCS will cover the costs of a hearing held by teleconference or other electronic means where distance is involved.
- (f) Along with the notice of the hearing, the Appeal Committee shall forward to the responding party the written notice of appeal; and in return, the responding party shall, **three full days** prior to the hearing date set, deliver to the Appeal Committee and to the appellant written submissions setting forth the facts relied upon in support of the response.
- (g) Should either party wish to rely on other documentation in support of its appeal position, such documentation should be appended to the notice of appeal or response thereto with copies provided as well to the Appeal Committee. If either party wishes to have legal representation or a support person at the Hearing, they must inform the Appeal Committee **one-week** prior to the hearing.
- (h) Written material exchanged between the parties and delivered to the Appeal Committee will form the basis of the hearing record.
- (i) Each party will be called upon to make personal representations before the Appeal Committee on the specified hearing date. The Appeal Committee, if requested by either party, may permit additional representations. The student and staff members shall participate in the hearing, with or without support persons of their choosing.
- (j) In order to record the necessary information, the Chair of the Program Committee (or designated person) will ask a member of the Appeal Committee, or appoint a specified recorder, to record the proceedings by taking written notes or using a tape recorder. A copy of the transcript or notes will be available to all parties involved. Any other notes taken by any other participant will not have official standing.

(k) Following review of submissions by both parties to the appeal, the Appeal Committee is empowered to uphold or reverse the initial decision and, where deemed necessary, to make such recommendations to the relevant governing body as is appropriate in the circumstances.

(l) The Appeal Committee may reserve its decision or render it orally at the time of the hearing. In any event, a formal written decision should be delivered to both parties within **ten days** from the date of the appeal hearing.

(m) The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and binding on all parties to the appeal.

(n) The appeal record shall consist of the request for the review, the notice of appeal, the written response, appended documentation, if any, the decision of the Principal (or Program Staff), and the decision of the Appeal Committee. The appeal record will be retained in the student's file until the student graduates or no longer has standing as a student at CCS (see Records Retention policy) and in the Personnel file of the cited Program Staff for the duration of their employment at the CCS. The records shall be deemed to be public documents unless an application is made by either party and accepted by the Appeal Committee to maintain the record as a private, confidential matter.

(o) If the student is under the oversight of a Diocese or Presbytery, or other adjudicatory, the appropriate body will be informed at the time of the date set for the Appeal. If requested, further information will be made available to them.

2. The Appeal Committee has jurisdiction at all times to govern its own procedure.
3. CCS staff and volunteers, as appropriate, shall implement the recommendations of the Appeal Committee.
4. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be communicated to the Program Committee at its next meeting.