

EFFECTIVE APPEALS & COMPLAINTS



ADVOCACY

As a BCIT student, you have the right to appeal decisions made about your academic efforts (Academic Appeal), and your non-academic conduct (Decision Review Board), as well as file complaints if you believe you were treated unfairly.

Before seeking an appeal, it is important to review the proper procedure associated with it, so that you are appropriately prepared for what is expected of you, and what you can expect from BCIT.

The first thing you should do before asking for an appeal or making a complaint is to brainstorm a list of every reason why you believe the appeal or complaint should be reviewed. Disagreeing with a decision simply because you don't like it is not a good enough reason. Was it a fair decision? Did the decision follow the rules of Procedural Fairness? There need to be specific reasons relating to policy or procedure to warrant a review.

Some basic rules to follow when submitting an appeal or complaint:

DON'T RUSH! Far too often students do not take the time to write a proper appeal or complaint. When you rush or submit a poorly written appeal you increase the chances that your request will be denied, even if you have a good case.

BE FACTUAL! Include as much factual detail as possible and where possible reference your comments to supporting documentation. Avoid dramatizing the situation. It is tempting to overstate the case when something is important to us. When feelings are a legitimate part of the message, state it as fact but, again, avoid being overly dramatic.

BE RESPECTFUL TO THE READER! At the very least, students should know the name and the title of the person they are sending an appeal to or making a complaint about. Threatening, name-calling, cajoling, pleading, flattery and making extravagant promises are manipulative and ineffective methods of getting the resolution you are seeking.

BE BRIEF! Yes, it is more work to write a good letter than a long one, but it makes a difference. Decision-makers appreciate the extra effort that goes into composing a good, short letter. It should be written in clear, concise, and succinct sentences.

BE HONEST! If you have actually done something wrong, accept responsibility. Everyone makes mistakes and if you express your regret, and demonstrate that you have learned from the situation, it sends a positive message to the reader.

AVOID ERRORS! A request or complaint will make a better impression if it is typed, free of spelling and grammar mistakes, free of slang, and addressed to the correct person or department.

KEEP COPIES! Photocopy everything, and hold onto it until the matter is settled. Keep copies of all letters sent or received, as well as relevant supporting documents, and forms.

*It is the responsibility of all students to familiarize themselves with BCIT Policies & Procedures.
Find them @ bcitsa.ca/advocacy*