ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS PROCESS

The following procedures address those student appeals and grievances arising from suspension, termination/dismissal, or denial of progression based on unsatisfactory academic performances from the Graduate School or its programs.

The intent of the academic appeal procedure is to assure fairness and due process to all involved parties. **Good faith efforts should always be made by students, faculty, and administration to settle all appeals, complaints, and grievances on an informal basis.** These efforts will include conferences between the persons directly involved and others whom these persons believe to be able to help solve the problems.

**Definitions**

Students may find themselves terminated from a graduate program for a number of reasons. Sometimes the language and policies behind the termination can be confusing. These definitions are provided to shed some light on the nuances between terms.

- **Suspension** – Removal of the student from the graduate program for a defined period of time and/or the specification that a student must fulfill certain requirements before re-admission or re-instatement will be considered. While suspended the student is not entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed by the University. Special conditions may be stipulated for reinstatement at the conclusion of the period of reinstatement of the period of suspension. The student is not in good standing with the University during the term of the suspension.

- **Termination/dismissal** – Terms used synonymously to refer to a student being withdrawn from a graduate program and Graduate School. Official notification is sent to students by email and US mail. Students terminated have the right to appeal their dismissal in writing within one week per this policy. As with a suspension, the student is no longer entitled to attend classes, use University facilities, participate in University activities, or be employed by the University as a student.

- **Denial of Progress** – Students failing to meet program progression criteria, with course failures, too many incomplete grades, or some other programmatic issue, would fall into this category. Students in this category are may be suspended or terminated/dismissed and be defined by the corresponding criteria above.

Graduate programs and students should have an open communication with one another. Graduate programs have developed programmatic handbooks to assist students through their graduate studies. Students are responsible for following the policies and procedures as outlined
in the Graduate School and program handbooks and Rules. Ignorance of the guidelines and procedures will not constitute an affirmative defense in an appeals process.

**General Procedures**

1. The student should be informed in writing by the relevant instructor, faculty committee, Program Director, or administrator (e.g., Dean or Assistant Dean) that he/she is not meeting the academic requirements to continue in the graduate program. Written notices of course failures, unsatisfactory program progress, and intent to request dismissal or suspension from the Graduate School are distributed to the involved student, the student's academic advisor, the Program Director, the program progression’s committee (if present), and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.

2. Should the student disagree with the decision made by the faculty, committee, Program Director, or administrator regarding course failure or intent to terminate progression in the program based on unsatisfactory academic performance, the student should initiate a conference with the involved person(s) to determine if the disagreement can be resolved within 2 weeks.

3. If the results of the first conference are not acceptable to the student, the student informs the involved faculty within 1 week and requests a conference with the involved faculty and Program Director or school administrator. NOTE: This step is required only in situations in which the Program Director and/or school administrator have not already approved or concurred with the initial notice of failure or intent to terminate.

4. If the consensus of the program is still that the student should be terminated/dismissed or suspended, the Program Director or Chairperson notifies the Graduate School Assistant Dean and recommends the student’s dismissal or suspension. The email or letter outlines the reason for the dismissal or suspension and steps taken to date. If suspension is recommended, the recommendation also includes specific criteria for term of the suspension and requirements for reinstatement.

5. The Assistant Dean will review the student’s academic record and submitted information from the program to ensure that the student has received due process. If the student’s academic record and/or submitted information support termination/dismissal, the student will be dismissed from the program and the Graduate School. If suspension is recommended and supported by the academic record and submitted information, the student will be suspended per the request. The student will be notified by email and US mail. The program will be notified by email.

**Written Appeal Procedure**

1. Should the student wish to appeal the Assistant Dean’s decision, the student should submit a written response to the Dean within 1 week of receiving the written notice of suspension or termination/dismissal. The appeal should include rationale for the appeal
and desired outcome. The student also may request a personal interview with the Dean to discuss the situation after they have submitted their written appeal.

2. The final decision rests with the Dean of the Graduate School. At the Dean's discretion, he/she may discuss the Assistant Dean’s decision with the involved faculty and student’s program, as well as any other persons affected by the recommended resolutions.

3. The Dean will notify the student of her/his decision by email and certified U.S. mail within 5 working days of submission of the appeal or interview with the student (whichever falls last). The decision of the Dean is final.

4. If the student is suspended, terminated/dismissed, or otherwise unable to continue his or her academic studies either temporarily or permanently because of disciplinary or other action, the Dean shall notify the appropriate CU Registrar of the change in the student's academic status and order the Registrar to suspend the student's registration.