APPEAL TO WAIVE AN ACADEMIC REGULATION, ACADEMIC REGULATIONS APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Academic Regulations Appeals Committee considers appeals for exceptions to undergraduate program academic regulations listed in this bulletin. The committee — composed of faculty and administrators from each school and the college, and representatives from the Division of Strategic Enrollment Management and the Office of Disability Support Services — is a standing committee of the Office of Academic Affairs.

Undergraduate students who wish to petition the university for a waiver of the regulations in this bulletin may do so through the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee. Students who have been accepted to the graduate portion of a five-year bachelor’s/master’s program may also need to make an appeal through the Graduate School. Examples of typical petitions are requests for retroactive withdrawal, waiver of the continuance policy following a suspension or a waiver of the rule requiring that the last 25 percent of a program be earned in residence at VCU. Students may petition for a past semester within three years, but cannot ask for waivers after having graduated. In exceptional circumstances any member of the Academic Regulations Appeal Committee and/or academic dean may refer a case to the provost who has the right but not the obligation to consider remanding it back to the committee for further review.

To begin the appeal process, students should contact the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee representative in the dean’s office of their school or college; nondegree-seeking students should contact University Academic Advising at (804) 827-8648. The student then works with the representative to prepare the petition following guidelines established by each school and the college. The first step is for the student to prepare a letter that details the extenuating circumstances supporting the student’s belief that the university should waive its regulations and grant the request. All circumstances cited in the student’s letter must be documented, and the student is responsible for gathering all necessary documentation. Examples of documentation include medical records, police reports, death certificates and employer reports. Things that may not be used as documentation include letters from parents, friends or relatives. Any petition that does not have the required documentation will not be heard.

After the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee representative receives the student’s letter and all necessary documentation, he or she will prepare a petition cover sheet and, if appropriate, gather pertinent information from faculty. When the petition is complete, it will be presented to the committee at one of its semimonthly meetings. Requests are granted or denied by a majority vote of the committee. Decisions are effective immediately, and students are notified by their representative. All committee procedures are confidential and ensure the right to privacy of the student.

Since a request to waive a regulation is itself an appeal, committee decisions are final, and there is no further appeal within the university. However, if new documentable information is provided, petitions may be brought back before the committee. A rewritten student letter does not constitute new documentation. The representative will request that the petition be reheard based upon the new information and the committee will vote on that request.

Certain exceptions may affect current and future financial aid. Students should consult with a financial aid staff member before submitting an appeal.