

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES POLICY:

Appeals for Lost Books and Overdue Fines

APPROVED BY: Management Team

EFFECTIVE: June 16, 1994

REVISION DATES: 6/01, 12/14, 03/16

The following appeals policies have been formulated to define the borrower categories that may file appeals, to identify cases for which appeals may be filed, and to ensure that all appeal cases are handled in a fair and impartial manner.

Borrower Categories

1. NIU academic staff: ranked, unranked, full and part-time, visiting, adjunct, affiliate, retired, and temporary faculty, and Supportive Professional Staff (SPS).
2. NIU students: graduates, undergraduates, dissertation and theses candidates, at-large, and part-time.
3. NIU operating staff: full and part-time, and retired.
4. Corporate members (fees applicable).
5. NIU Courtesy Card holders, which include:
 - a. Alumni (non-contributing).
 - b. State of Illinois residents.
 - c. Minors (with parental consent only).
6. I-Share affiliates: faculty, students, and operating staff of other I-Share institutions.

Libraries Appeals Committee

All appeals are reviewed by the Libraries Appeals Committee, excluding the Regional History Center.

The Libraries Appeals Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) shall consist of the following members: Library Operations Assistant (Circulation), Senior Library Specialist (Circulation), and a Library Specialist (Reserves). The Head of User Services will act in an advisory capacity to the Committee.

Appeals Cases

The Committee will consider all written appeals and in-person appeals. To initiate an appeal, an appeals form must be completed and returned to the Libraries Appeals Committee. In-person appeals will be scheduled to coincide with the regular committee meetings. If necessary, a special meeting will be arranged to accommodate the patron's schedule. Failure to attend a scheduled meeting will result in denial of the appeal unless the appellant can provide evidence of extenuating circumstances for their absence.

Appeals for Lost Books and Overdue Fines

Consideration will only be given to appeal cases that are within one year of the date of the incident that generated the need to file an appeal. Patrons may initiate appeals for the following reasons at NIU Libraries:

- Overdue notices;
- Lost book billing charges;
- Damaged book charges;
- Overdue fine charges (including Reserves); and
- Suspension of borrowing privileges.

Appeals may not be initiated through this Committee for violations of circulation policies at other institutions, over which the Committee has no control.

Outcomes of Appeals

The outcome of an appeal will be decided through a majority vote of the Committee members. The appellant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal by email or by mail (if no email is available).

Requests for reconsideration of appeal outcomes will be handled by the Head of User Services. Requests for reconsideration of appeal outcomes must be forwarded to the Head of User Services within one year of the outcome of the first appeal, or else the appeal is ineligible for reconsideration and the original outcome stands.

There are four outcomes for appeals. They are:

- A. Appeal Granted
- B. Appeal Denied
- C. Reduction of Fines
- D. Case Pending

A. Appeal Granted

Appeals may be granted under any of the following conditions:

- Reasonable doubt exists about the accuracy of the library's records;
- Patron provides verification that they returned other items at the same time;
- There is a possibility of error due to multiple copies and/or volumes of an item;
- Patron provides proof of extenuating circumstances, e.g., illness or personal emergency.

B. Appeal Denied

Appeals may be denied under any of the following conditions:

- No proof of error on the part of the library can be found;
- The patron has not supplied adequate and/or relevant information about the incident to substantiate their case.

C. Reduction of Fines

Overdue fine charges or payment schedules for fines may be reduced. Considerations for reduction include, but are not limited to:

- First violation of library policies;

Appeals for Lost Books and Overdue Fines

- Economic hardship case.

D. Case Pending

Appeals will be declared “pending” if more information is required from the patron or from the library. The required information will be submitted to the Committee within 60 days of the original appeal. Appeals that are “pending” will be denied after 60 days if the request for additional information from the patron is not forthcoming.