

FAIRNESS RESOURCE

WHAT DOES FAIRNESS MEAN?

Fairness does not require that we all be treated the same — in fact, inequity can arise if we treat everyone identically in every situation.

Consideration must be given to the nature of the situation, the impacts on the individual, and the level at which the decision is being made.

Fairness is not about getting the outcome you want.

Fairness means that the process should be consistently applied, you should be heard, and you should be treated with respect.

TYPES OF FAIRNESS

- **Substantive Fairness** – “What was decided?”
- **Relational Fairness** – “How were you treated?”
- **Procedural Fairness** – “How was it decided?”

Ensuring procedural fairness in decision-making across Western is one of the central roles of our office. It relates to the steps taken by the decision-maker before and after deciding or responding to a complaint.

COMPONENTS OF PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

1. Notice / Information – Advance notice of consideration of a decision must be given to the student; the student must have access to the information that is being considered.
2. Right to Respond / Opportunity to be Heard – The student must be given a meaningful opportunity to have their opinion heard and considered.
3. Impartiality – The decision-maker must be impartial and unbiased.
4. Reasons / Right to Know the Case – The decision-maker must give meaningful reasons for the decision or the outcome; the student has the right to know the case against them.

NOTE Information based on ACCUO Fairness Guide and Queen’s University Fairness Tip Sheet.

