

# Appealing Ineligibility for Financial Aid

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Students suspended from receiving financial aid for not meeting required Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) guidelines, may appeal a suspension if unusual or extenuating circumstances contributed to their failure to meet the guidelines. If the appeal is granted, students are placed on SAP Probation status and are allowed to receive financial aid for the next semester.

Students may appeal the termination/suspension of financial aid by completing the Steps to Appeal. Appeals must be submitted with supporting documentation explaining any unusual circumstances that caused the student's academic progress to be less than required. Appeals should also include:

- a) reasons why minimum standards were not met (what happened), and
- b) reasons why eligibility should be reinstated instead of terminated (what changed).

Appeals must be submitted with supporting documentation explaining the unusual circumstances that caused their academic progress to be less than required. Federal law gives some examples where allowances might be made for mitigating circumstances; for instance, a serious illness or injury, or the death of a relative. An appeal may not be based upon the need for financial aid or a lack of knowledge that the assistance was in jeopardy. Failure of the student to adequately explain circumstances and actions may result in an appeal being denied.

## Regaining Federal Student Aid Eligibility

Except for when an appeal is granted for unusual or mitigating circumstances, students can reestablish eligibility only by taking action that brings them in compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components of the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards. A student for whom an SAP appeal is approved is expected to complete 100% of all attempted credit hours with a minimum 2.0 grade point average the semester following the approved appeal. Satisfactory progress must be demonstrated by the end of the specified probationary term before further aid can be awarded.

## Financial Aid Academic Plan

Students may successfully appeal a financial aid suspension, but have an academic situation making it mathematically impossible for them to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) eligibility for the next semester. Per Federal SAP guidelines, the Financial Aid Office may use discretion in whether to place such a student on a Financial Aid Academic Plan. This plan is designed to outline steps of progress that, if followed each semester by the student, would lead to regaining SAP eligibility within a specified time frame. If the student does not meet the progressive steps each semester, financial aid is immediately terminated. Students can reestablish eligibility only by taking action that brings them in compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components of the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress standards.

## Appealing Financial Aid Ineligibility Due to Exceeding Maximum Credits Allowed

Students who attempt more than 150% of the credits required for their program of study do not meet requirements for satisfactory academic

progress. Students disqualified from receiving financial aid due to exceeding the 150% maximum time frame may appeal that decision by completing the Steps to Appeal Maximum Credits Time Frame.

## Regaining Federal Student Aid Eligibility

Students who successfully appeal the 150% time frame are required to complete 100% of all course credits attempted from that point forward to complete their degree. They may not earn any grade lower than a "C", they may not withdraw from any class, and they may not take an Incomplete status in any class. Students who have been suspended from receiving financial aid, due to exceeding the maximum credits allowed, cannot take action to reestablish progress unless an appeal is approved.

**Note: Students participating in the Federal Work-Study program who are suspended from financial aid due to exceeding the maximum time frame allowed, cannot continue working.**

## Appealing Financial Aid Ineligibility Due to Unusual Enrollment

The U.S. Department of Education has established new regulations to prevent fraud and abuse in the Federal Pell Grant Program by identifying students with unusual enrollment histories. Some students with an unusual enrollment history (UEH) have legitimate reasons for their enrollment at multiple institutions. However, the Central Piedmont Financial Aid Office is required to review files of students with unusual enrollment history to determine future federal financial aid eligibility. If selected by the Department of Education (via the FAFSA), a resolution must be determined before they can receive financial aid.

## Definition of Unusual Enrollment History

The Department of Education selects students for review who received a Federal Pell Grant at multiple institutions during the past three academic years. Once the Department of Education indicates students with an unusual enrollment history, the Central Piedmont Financial Aid Office must review the educational history of those students to determine their federal financial aid eligibility.

## Review Process

- The Central Piedmont Financial Aid Office notifies students who are selected by the Department of Education for unusual enrollment.
- Those students must complete the Unusual Enrollment History Appeal Form and provide a copy of all transcripts from previous institutions attended during the past three years. They must have received academic credit at any school, while receiving the Federal Pell Grant, during those relevant academic years.
- The Financial Aid Office verifies whether academic credit was obtained at each school during the relevant years. Students are notified when the requirement is satisfied. If students failed to receive academic credit at any institution during the relevant award years, their federal and state financial is denied and they are notified.

## Steps to Appeal Denial of Financial Aid

Students can appeal the financial aid denial by submitting the following three items.

1. An Unusual Enrollment History (UEH) Appeal Form
2. A letter explaining the unusual enrollment history
3. Documentation supporting the explanation provided in the appeal letter

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All appeal forms and documentation are reviewed by the Financial Aid Office, before notifying students of the decision.

### **Processing Appeals**

Appeal forms and documentation must be submitted to the Central Piedmont Financial Aid Office at least 15 working days before the semester start date. Appeals after that date are processed by the end of the semester. Students are informed of their appeal decision through their Central Piedmont student email account. Students also may find their Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status and the determination of their appeal on their MyCollege account. Classes are not held by financial aid for students submitting an appeal.

### **Regaining Federal Student Aid Eligibility**

Students denied federal student aid based on unusual enrollment history may have their financial aid eligibility reinstated once they have completed one academic term consisting of six credit hours of curriculum coursework in an eligible program of study. Students also must meet the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid eligibility. Please note, in this situation, students may not drop or withdraw (officially or unofficially) from any course after the term begins. At the end of the completed semester, they must submit a letter requesting reinstatement with their final grade report.

Students who regain eligibility, either by appeal or by completing a successful term, will receive financial aid beginning in the payment period for which approval is given. For example, students denied in the fall term who complete a minimum of six credit hours, do not withdraw from any courses, maintain a 2.0 GPA and successfully meet stipulations at the end of the fall term, are eligible for federal aid in the spring term.