

**Mississippi State University
Instructions for Preparing
an Appeal of Financial Aid Suspension**

Mississippi State University, as required by federal regulations, monitors minimum standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (S.A.P.) as it relates to your eligibility to receive federal student aid funds, including grants, loans and work-study, and the Sumners Scholarship program funds.

If **extenuating circumstances beyond your control** prevented you from making satisfactory academic progress, you may appeal to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee (the Committee) for an exception to the policy.

Important Facts Concerning Your Appeal

Read and understand the following statements before beginning your appeal.

1. Financial aid policies are not directly related to policies for academic admission. Reinstatement to the University after academic suspension or dismissal does not ensure that your financial aid will also be reinstated.
2. The Committee realizes that you may not be able to immediately continue your education without financial assistance. However, financial hardship is not an extenuating circumstance that can be considered by the Committee.
3. If you were employed while attending the University, your employment may have had a negative impact on your academic performance. Similar to financial hardships, the impact of employment is not an extenuating circumstance that can be considered by the Committee.
4. All documents to be included in the appeal should be submitted to the Department of Student Financial Aid. Documents submitted with your appeal will not be returned.
5. Appeals that do not include an (1) Appeal Cover Sheet and Academic Plan signed by you and your academic official, and (2) letter of appeal from you will not be considered by the Committee and will be denied.
6. Including supporting documents, such as medical records, although not required, significantly increases the chance of your appeal being approved.
7. The Committee's decision on your appeal will be communicated in writing to the address you enter on the appeals form.
8. Ensure that your appeal materials are complete since the Committee will only consider your appeal once during the semester.

Preparing Your Appeal

Regardless of the reason for your suspension from financial aid, you must complete an (1) Appeal Cover Sheet and Academic Plan, and (2) letter using the following instructions:

1. Obtain and complete the Appeal Cover Sheet and Academic Plan form: An Appeal Cover Sheet and Academic Plan form can be obtained by contacting the Department of Student Financial Aid in Garner Hall or through the web at: <http://www.sfa.msstate.edu/pdf/sapaf.pdf> (PDF file).
2. Complete the Appeal Cover Sheet and Academic Plan form by including:
 - a. Your current contact information (this information will be used to contact you concerning the outcome of the appeal)
 - b. A list of each course (number and description) in which you should enroll for the semester in which you are appealing.
 - c. The signature of your academic official (academic advisor or other official from the department of your academic major).
3. Prepare a well-written letter that clearly explains every circumstance you believe prevented you from maintaining satisfactory academic progress and what you have done to overcome these circumstances. Be specific as your appeal will be decided solely on the basis of the written information and supporting documents that you submit.

The following sections provide guidance for writing the letter and collecting documents to be included with your appeal. The content of your letter will depend on the reason for your financial aid suspension. Read and follow the instructions in each section that relate to the reason your financial aid was suspended. If you have not been enrolled in the University for 2 or more years, also refer to section 3.

1. GPA, Complete 67% of Courses Attempted, and Excessive Withdrawals

The nature of each circumstance will influence the content of your letter and the appropriate supporting documentation you submit. Circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- A. **Medical problems** (physical or mental) – Identify the inception and duration of the illness, supported by appropriate medical reports. The letter and supporting documents should clearly state whether the medical condition is under control, thus allowing you to be academically successful. Supporting documents should include, but are not limited to, medical reports and letters from your doctor or professional counselor.
- B. **Accidents** – Identify the date of the accident and describe the resultant medical problems (see point A above). Supporting documentation should include, but are

not limited to, police and medical reports.

- C. **Family problems** (divorce, separation, spousal abuse, death, illness) – Identify your relationship to the family member(s) involved and the inception and duration of the problem. Clearly state what actions have been taken to control these problems, thus allowing you to be academically successful. Appropriate supporting documents should include, but are not limited to, police and medical reports, death certificates, and letters from a professional counselors.
- D. **Military Service** – Identify the dates and status of your military tours of duty. Appropriate supporting documentation would include military orders and discharge papers.

2. **Maximum Hours/Time**

The letter should describe every circumstance you believe caused you to accumulate hours in excess of the number allowed, or length of time allowed (depending on your degree objective) by financial aid policies. The letter must enable the Committee to understand clearly the number of semesters that will be required for you to complete your degree.

3. **Returning Students**

If you have not been enrolled in any college or university for 2 or more years, the letter should clearly state what circumstances in your life have changed that will enable you to be academically successful. Appropriate supporting documents could include, but are not limited to, employment evaluation forms and employer recommendation letters.