



# SAP appeal support

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the process colleges are required to take to make sure that students are keeping up with academic standards and progressing to graduation within a reasonable time frame

**Understanding your school's SAP policy is important because students who do not meet SAP at their college risk losing their financial aid**



**Students who are not meeting SAP are given the opportunity to appeal the loss of their financial aid if they experienced extenuating circumstances**

## SAP appeals terminology

*\*These are general definitions. Your college may define these term differently.*

**Academic plan:** A contract between the student and a school that documents which courses a student will take in order to make progress toward their degree. The student is required to follow this contract in order to continue receiving federal, state, and institutional financial aid at the school.

**Appeal letter:** A student's written request to regain eligibility for financial aid, that often includes explanations for their circumstances and a plan for improvement in the future. A successful appeal letter will allow the student to continue receiving financial aid.

**Documentation:** Proof that helps document or verify that what the student said in the appeal letter is factual.

**Extenuating circumstances:** Conditions that impede a student's ability to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress and pass their classes. Most often this is a situation that is out of a student's control, that may impact them emotionally, physically, mentally, or financially.

**Probation period:** Many schools provide for this period of one or two terms in their SAP policy, during which a student whose SAP appeal has been approved is still able to receive financial aid. A student should be making progress toward bringing their grades back into compliance with SAP during this time.

**SAP appeal:** An appeal process that a student undertakes when they have a SAP violation but there are extenuating and special circumstances that impacted the student's ability to meet the SAP requirements.

## How is SAP reviewed and communicated?

- Depending on your college and your program, the financial aid office may evaluate SAP at the end of each term OR annually at the end of the spring term.
- Students who are not meeting SAP requirements will be informed by email, student portal, or physical mail.
- You may also have a hold placed on your student account, stopping you from doing things like registering for classes.

## What is considered an "extenuating circumstance"?

*Extenuating circumstances that would allow you to appeal your SAP might include:*

- Major physical or mental illness or injury
- Loss of employment of students/parent
- Victim of assault or domestic violence
- Death of an immediate family
- Deployment to active duty/reserve
- Natural disaster
- Adjustment to college
- Other\*

*\*Note: Even if you are not sure your circumstance will not qualify, file an appeal anyway!*

# Steps to appeal SAP

If you have received a notification that you have violated your college's SAP policy, the appeals process might include:



- Attending a SAP workshop
- Filling out an appeals form and writing an appeal letter
  - See our sample appeal letter on the next page
  - Check out this free resource for SAP appeal letter templates:  
<https://formswift.com/swift-student>
- Meeting with with your academic advisor to create a plan

## SAP appeal decisions: what happens next?



- If the SAP appeal is **approved**:
  - You will receive financial aid and be placed on probation for one or two terms - depending on the college. At the end of probation, your SAP will be reviewed again to determine your financial aid eligibility for the next term
- If the SAP appeal is **denied**:
  - You will not receive financial aid for the following term, or until you bring your grades up. In most cases, the decision is final

## SAP appeal tips

- Proofread your letter and send it to your advisor for additional help!
- Submit the SAP appeal as soon as possible! Financial aid at most schools is first-come-first-serve!
- Follow the instructions provided by the college such as where to send the forms and what other documents need to be submitted
- Be honest in the letter. Your situation may be very personal, but the college needs all the facts to review your appeal

# SAP appeal letter sample

- 1 Address letter to your college and include:**
  - Date, your full name, your student ID number
- 2 Describe what happened:**
  - Introduce yourself (year in school, major)
  - Explain the extenuating circumstance(s) that impacted your grades
- 3 How will next term be different?**
  - What changes will you make moving forward?
  - What resources will you utilize?
- 4 Provide supporting documentation:**
  - Letter from medical professional
  - Death certificate, obituary, etc.
  - Letter from employer, etc.
- 5 Close letter and say thank you:**
  - Explain why receiving financial aid is important to your education

**1** July 14, 2023  
Sally Sample  
ID #12345678

To SAP Appeal Committee,

**2** My name is Sally Sample and I'm a rising sophomore at XYZ University. I am writing you this statement to explain why I was not able to meet the SAP Policy. My mother fell ill with stage 3 breast cancer during January 2022. She needed needed assistance getting to and from doctor appointments, receiving chemotherapy, and general day-to-day needs. While I was able to maintain my attendance in each class, I was unable to successfully complete my homework and set aside adequate time to study.

**3** Fortunately, I have a great academic advisor, Dr. Cook, who has helped me create an academic success plan for the upcoming semester. We scheduled classes for Monday to Thursday, so I can spend Friday to Sunday at home taking care of my mother. I also cleared out the basement in my house to create a quiet study space at home.

**4** Please find attached the following documents:

- Doctor's note confirming my mother's illness
- A copy of the academic success plan I created with Dr. Cook
- Statement from the Student Center

**5** Please let me know if I need to provide other documents or information. Financial aid is a key piece in making sure I can afford to attend college. I hope you will consider my SAP appeal and give me me another chance to be successful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sally Sample