

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE

FINANCIAL AID/VETERAN SERVICES/SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial Aid Suspension Appeal (rev. Jan 2012)

2012-2013

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tax payers provide the funding for federal aid awarded to students through PELL, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant, College Work Study, and the Ford Direct Loan Program. Pensacola State College has legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure taxpayer monies are wisely invested. Students completing and passing courses is a wise investment. You asked to be “hired” for the job of student. In accepting your “job” of student you agreed to go to school, attend and pass your classes.

APPEAL TIMELINES

| SEMESTER | Deadline to be guaranteed a decision by fee payment due date* |
|--------------------|--|
| Fall 2012 | Aug. 15th fee payment due date – August 1, 2012 |
| Spring 2013 | Jan. 3rd fee payment due date – December 3, 2012 |
| Summer 2013 | May 9th fee payment due date – April 22, 2013 |

***Your financial aid file must be complete for an appeal decision to be made.**

All appeals are considered “pending” until the committee makes a final decision. You will be notified via your Pensacola State College Pirate e-mail and/or a letter sent to your mailing address on file with the College’s Admissions/Registrar office. Appointments are not scheduled with the Appeals Committee.

If you do not receive a decision on your appeal by the time your tuition payment is due, you must make other personal arrangements to pay your fees for the current or upcoming semester in order to secure your schedule of classes. In making those arrangements you should not assume your appeal will be granted or that you will have your financial aid reinstated.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibility is to earn grades that maintain financial aid satisfactory academic progress. The degree or certificate program you selected as your goal at Pensacola State College will determine the courses and the number of credits required to reach that goal.

To be eligible for federal and/or state financial aid, you must maintain financial aid satisfactory academic progress. Academic progress is evaluated at the end of each semester of enrollment. The required standards are described in detail in the Pensacola State College catalog.

STUDENT RIGHTS

The college has a process by which you may appeal for eligibility reinstatement when you can demonstrate and document the mitigating circumstances which directly attributed to your failure to meet the required standards. Many events can negatively impact a student's academic performance, however, not all are considered mitigating and beyond student control. The following list is intended to give you a brief understanding of events or situations that **CAN NOT** be considered "mitigating" or justification for poor academic performance.

Instructor or other college personnel said it would be OK to withdraw (exception – FA Staff member)
Felt overwhelmed
Did not have transportation
Changed my work schedule
Did not like my instructor or have a conflict with instructor
Did not understand college and wasn't ready or mature enough
Death or illness of friends
Withdrew or stopped attending to avoid a bad grade
Nobody told me that...

HOW DO YOU BEGIN THE APPEAL PROCESS?

Carefully READ and follow all instructions. The importance you place on regaining your financial aid eligibility will be demonstrated to the committee by how well your appeal is prepared.

APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS

There are four (4) required attachments. Failure to include these 4 items will result in an automatic denial.

The committee will make its decision based solely upon your past performance and the information you furnish in the required attachments. When possible, type your appeal letter. The committee will not try to decipher poor handwriting. It is advisable to have someone you trust proofread your appeal packet prior to submitting it to the Financial Aid/Veteran Services/Scholarship office. You must sign all documents.

Attachment 1

Appeal Request

Read, complete, and sign Attachment 1 - Appeal Request.

Attachment 2

Detailed Letters of Explanation of Mitigating Circumstances

Make sure you address ALL semesters where you experienced academic problems or withdrawals. Your letter must clearly detail the circumstances that were **beyond your control** which blocked your progress. Focus on events and how they affected your academic progress.
YOU MUST SIGN YOUR LETTER.

Content of Your Appeal Letter MUST EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING THREE (3) AREAS - A, B, C as outlined:

- A. The reasons or circumstances that caused you to:
- 1) not complete 67% of your attempted credits
 - 2) exceed the maximum number of credits required to complete your program
 - 3) fail to earn successful grades of C or better in courses you attempted

Include what actions you took to try to prevent or to limit the negative impact of these circumstances. For each term in which you had academic problems, you must explain the circumstances.

- B. Describe in detail the changes you have made that will now enable your academic success in your next term of enrollment.

- C. Give a detailed description of how and when you plan to complete your program. If you are enrolling for an additional degree (or certificate) explain the reasons for pursuing another program. After graduation from your Pensacola State College program, petitioning for reinstatement of aid to complete pre-requisites for a degree at another school is not sufficient cause for approval and will be denied. In general, federal aid is awarded to students to complete their initial certificate/degree. Changing majors is not in and of itself a mitigating circumstance.
- D. **Sign your appeal letter.**

Attachment 3

Proofs - Required Documentation

Document the mitigating circumstances you described actually occurred. Examples: copy of death certificate and proof of relationship with the deceased; statements from physicians, medical excuse, letters from counselors or therapists, copy of police report, court documents, etc. A letter from the treating physician is acceptable. Letters from physicians, therapists, or agencies must be on official letterhead stationery and must be signed by the physician. Medical records or hospital bills will not be accepted.

NOTE: Any letter of support written by a third party must include a name, address, phone number and relationship to you and must relate to the circumstances described. Letters must be signed.

NOTE: If you do not have documentation, submit a written statement outlining the reason(s) you do not have documentation. You must have valid reasons for not submitting documentation. Submitting this statement does not imply your appeal will be favorably considered. The Committee will determine if a statement without supporting documentation will be acceptable.

Attachment 4

Your Educational Plan & Degree Audit

You must meet with your academic advisor or program director to review your degree plan and to complete the Educational Plan form which will outline the courses you must take to graduate with your declared major. You must attach a copy of your degree audit for the program you plan to complete. Access your degree audit online via your Pensacola State College Spyglass at *www.Pensacola State College.edu*.

APPEALS COMMITTEE PROCESS

Only when your financial aid file is complete will your appeal packet will be forwarded to the Appeals Committee for review.

The committee meets weekly to review student appeals for federal aid reinstatement. If your appeal form and documentation is complete, your appeal will be reviewed in the date order it is received and you will be notified via your Pirate Mail email and a letter mailed to your mailing address on record with the college's Admissions/Registrar office. Students will not be scheduled for appointments with the committee, therefore, it is of the utmost importance that you follow all directions, provide all required completed forms, and attach all documents being sure to put your name and student ID on each additional page. Unsigned forms will NOT be processed. Except during periods of registration, the processing time is 14-21 business days. For continuing appeals, grades for the current term must be posted and evaluated prior to a determination by the committee.

Approved Appeals

Students should carefully read the letter sent to them by the committee and make plans to carefully adhere to all the conditions set for them in that letter of approval. Please direct any questions concerning the conditions of the approved appeal to the office of the committee member who signed the appeal letter. Failure to follow and comply with the conditions will result in the denial of federal aid eligibility.

Denied Appeals

Students will be notified as to the reason(s) their appeal for reinstatement was denied by the committee. The letter will be sent to your address on record with the college's Admissions/Registrar office. Carefully read the information in the letter from the committee.

If you do not agree with the denial and have additional documentation that you believe would impact the original denial of reinstatement that should be reviewed by the Director of Financial Aid/Veterans Affairs, you may submit the additional information and documentation with a written request for further review of your denied appeal. This must be done within 14 days of your receipt of the committee's decision.

Warning: Do not resubmit a copy of your original appeal packet. You must submit new substantive information and documentation plus a new letter for your appeal to be forwarded for further review by the Director.

The Director will review the initial appeal packet on which the committee based their decision. Your letter requesting the additional review of the denial must include the reasons you believe the denial was in error plus the additional documentation. Together, this will be use by the Director to make a determination as to the status of your re-appeal for reinstatement. When needed, the Director may schedule a meeting with you to discuss your appeal prior to a final decision. A letter will be mailed to you with the Director's determination as to whether or not the denied appeal will be overturned. Should the Director determine that your denied appeal status is appropriate no reinstatement of eligibility will be approved. If you disagree with this decision, you may request in writing to the Director, within 14 days of receiving that written notification that your denied appeal packet be forwarded for further review by the Vice President for Business Affairs whose decision is final.

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Attachment 4 – Your Educational Plan & Degree Audit

To ensure successful completion of your declared program of study, you must meet with an academic or faculty advisor to evaluate your academic progress and to determine the number of credits required to complete your declared program. This completed and signed form must be submitted with the other required attachments and supporting documentation.

Student _____ SSN*/Student ID _____
(see note below)

Program of Study (Major) - **current** _____

1. Academic/Faculty Advisor: Attach a copy of the Degree Audit Report

Total # Credit Hours Currently Enrolled _____ Year/Term _____/_____
Total # Credits Required for Pensacola State College Degree/Certificate _____
Total # Credits Earned toward Pensacola State College Degree/Certificate _____
Total # Credits needed to complete Pensacola State College Degree/Certificate _____
(do not include additional credits needed only for transfer purposes)

2. Based on student's current enrollment status, program of study, enrollment plan, and academic progress, the student's anticipated graduation date: **Year/Term** _____/_____

3. **Advisor's evaluation and description of student's plan to reestablish satisfactory academic progress.**
(Attach additional page if necessary).

4. **Advisor's Comments regarding student's Educational Plan.** (Attach additional page if necessary)
If student is listed as an "Applicant" for a particular program, please address the student's potential for admission and completion of that program.

Student Statement: *I certify that I have met with an advisor to discuss my program. I have received a copy of the degree audit and I understand that if I fail to follow this Educational Plan, I risk losing my eligibility for receiving federal financial aid.*

Student Name (Print name) Student Signature Date

Advisor Statement: *I certify that I have met with this student and have discussed their academic progress and their program and course requirements. I have provided the student with a copy of this Educational Plan and a copy of the degree audit.*

Advisor Name (Print name) Advisor Signature Date