

Financial Aid

2025 – 2026 SAP Appeal Processing Guide

In order to maintain financial aid eligibility, students must meet [satisfactory academic progress](#). Students who fail to meet the minimum criteria, and have extenuating circumstances, such as injury or illness, death of a relative or other circumstance that affected their ability to meet the minimum requirements, may submit an appeal to the Financial Aid Office. Please review this guide to and follow the recommendations in order to maximize the possibility of your appeal being approved.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1. Recommendation:** Have all academic transcripts from all prior institutions attended, turned in to the Records Office (I4-102), regardless of your desire to use that academic history. Once posted by the district, you must formally request in the counseling office that all transcripts be evaluated. This process may take several weeks or months. High School transcripts are not required. For more information, please see our school catalog on transcript submission requirements.
- 2. Recommendation:** The Financial Aid Office of San Diego Mesa College offers virtual [Financial Aid SAP Appeal Workshops](#) during each semester's Appeal Submission window. The Financial Aid Office highly recommends attending one of these workshops that focuses on the SAP Appeal Process. Please visit our website for more details as well as a link to sign up.
Please Note: Attendance at a workshop is not mandatory nor does it guarantee an approval, but may help give you a better understanding of the Financial Aid Appeal process as a tool for potential re-instatement. The information you will learn by attending a workshop prior to submitting your Financial Aid Appeal (such as key terminology, what may constitute an extenuating circumstance, detailed written statement and required supporting documentation), may help you to submit a more thorough appeal or come to an understanding if you don't have a case to appeal for. Due to the amount of material covered at the workshop, please plan to be on time as students will not be admitted once the session begins. Unfortunately, those who are late will need to reschedule.
- 3. Required:** Copy of your Comprehensive or Abbreviated Educational Plan approved by a counselor, based on your current educational goal as stated on your Appeal Form must be included. You are allowed to follow only 1 (ONE) Academic Plan, with 1 transfer school [if applicable]. Contact [Counseling Services](#) (I4-303) to make an appointment with an Academic Counselor. If you are an EOPS, DSPS, a Veterans student, or belong to another program that offers counseling support, please see your assigned counselor in that program.
- 4. Required:** The Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form fully completed, including your detailed signed statement and supporting documentation, if available. **Please Note:** Submitting an appeal form does not guarantee it will be approved. Please make sure to include documentation that support statements made in your appeal letter such as (but not limited to) hospital bills, death certificate(s), eviction notices, etc.
- 5. Denied Appeals:** Students whose appeal is denied have an opportunity to request a secondary review of their appeal. The additional review process will be conducted by a secondary appeal committee that differs from the standard SAP appeal committee. To request a second review, complete the [2025-26 SAP Appeal Secondary Review Request](#). Please note, request must be submitted prior to the appeal deadline for the semester your appeal was denied. The SAP Appeal Committee and the Secondary SAP Appeal Committee are comprised of staff from various Student Services Departments, including Counseling Services, EOPS, DSPS, Basic Needs and Admissions.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards

I. Overview of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Per federal regulations, the San Diego Mesa College Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standard requires the review of each student's academic record at the end of each academic year. The pace of progression/maximum time frame (quantitative) and GPA (qualitative) standards apply to all financial aid students regardless of their previous history of financial assistance. The standards outlined in this document must be met to maintain eligibility for all federal programs, including Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work Study (FWS), and Federal Direct Loans, as well as the state Cal Grant programs and Chancellor's Office Programs, such as the Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG). A similar but separate academic progress standard applies to the California Community College Promise Grant (CCPG) (formerly known as the Board of Governors [BOG] Fee Waiver).

The following pages serve as a guide for students who are appealing the loss Financial Aid to the Financial Aid Office with the exception to the loss of the California Community College Promise Grant which loss must be appealed to the Dean of Student Development. Note that completion of the suggested guidelines does not equate to guaranteed approval of the financial aid appeals. This document is designed to provide guidance with the process.

II. Extenuating Circumstances and Supporting Documentation for an SAP Appeal

Extenuating circumstances are considered unforeseen situations or events beyond the student's control that directly impact academic performance. For Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals, students should provide supporting documentation regarding their extenuating circumstances. The appeal must explain how the circumstances have been resolved and will no longer hinder academic performance and progress. Supporting documentation should be obtained through an objective third party. They include but are not limited to: counselors, doctors, lawyers, social workers, religious leaders, daycare providers, state/government agencies, etc. Below is a list of possible circumstances and examples of supporting documentation. Note that the list below is not exhaustive. Additionally, providing extenuating circumstances with supporting documentation from the list below does not guarantee approval. Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a review committee.

POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES	SUGGESTED DOCUMENTATION
Death in the family	Death Certificate, Obituary
Divorce or Separation	Court documents, lawyer statement
Domestic Violence	Court documents, restraining orders, police records
Crime Victim	Legal documents, police records
Physical and/or mental illness	General statement from a medical provider
Learning Disability	Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Disability Accommodation letter
Babysitter, Daycare Issues	Daycare provider letter
Change in economic situation	Unemployment statement, employer letter of discharge, proof of funding stoppage
Imposed residential changes	Eviction notice, legal papers
Improper grading practices	Hearing documents, communication from instructor
Unjust arrest or incarceration	Court documents
Involuntary call to military service	Official military orders
Jury duty/court appearance	Court documents
Ward of state/Foster care issues	Municipal documents

III. Sample Financial Aid Appeals Letter

Please use this letter as an example of how to frame your statement of circumstance. The statement, or appeal letter, and your supporting documents are the items you must submit in order to have your appeal reviewed.

SAMPLE LETTER for reference tool only:

Date

*San Diego Mesa College Financial Aid Office
7250 Mesa College Drive, 14-107
San Diego, CA 92111-4998*

Dear Financial Aid Appeals Committee:

My name is _____, and I have been a student at San Diego Mesa College since _____. Indicate specific challenge(s) in meeting your educational goals.

1. In this paragraph, explain who you are to the committee. Be concise but thorough. This is your opportunity to introduce and set the tone for the rest of the letter.

2. In this paragraph, explain your extenuating circumstance(s) in detail, how did you get into the situation(s). If there are multiple issues discuss the timeline. Be clear and provide details by class and/or semester. Be sure to account for all Ws, Fs, incompletes, etc. This is a place to indicate if you have evidence that are attached for support and refer to the elements of the evidence you want to committee to see and review.

3. In this paragraph, explain what has changed in your life. What changes or steps have you made to demonstrate your ability to succeed in classes? What is your plan moving forward that will help you with academic success. For example, did you switch jobs and now work for a supervisor that supports employees who are going to school while working? Or perhaps are working less hours? Did the situation at home improve? Were you able to seek counseling and student support services to ensure your success, or perhaps you are now living in a safe place surrounded by those who love you and support your education and career goals? Be clear and concise.

4. In this closing paragraph close with your plan for change/solutions, how much longer to complete your goal, and/or discuss any good progress you have had since the semesters with circumstance.

Sincerely,

Signature here

Student ID here