

# HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPEAL for PROBATION

## Step-by-Step Guide to Preparing a Thorough & Thoughtful Appeal for Probation

This guide is intended for use by students who have not maintained Academic Eligibility and/or Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at UNC. Are you unable to continue enrollment at UNC due to academic standing? Are you unable to receive financial aid at Carolina due to not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards? Not sure what to do to restore your eligibility to good standing? This step-by-step guide will help you be informed and well-prepared through these appeals processes.



### 1. KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

- Review [Academic Eligibility Standards](#) and [Financial Aid SAP Standards](#).
- [Check your academic eligibility](#) and financial aid SAP Summary in ConnectCarolina.
- Thoroughly read over all appeal application [instructions](#).
- Consider whether full-time, [part-time](#), or [online](#) enrollment would best support your academic success and wellbeing.

### 2. NOTE IMPORTANT DATES

Make note of all important deadlines to include:

- Important appeal for probation, SAP, and readmission dates found online via [Undergraduate Retention's Appeals](#) and the [Financial Aid SAP](#) pages.
- Key course enrollment and drop dates from [University Registrar's calendar](#)



### 3. BE THOUGHTFUL



Read over all [appeal instructions](#) thoroughly. Review appeal tips and resources as needed.



Note any questions you have regarding the process. Consult the Office of Undergraduate Retention (for academic eligibility) or the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid (for financial aid eligibility) to get them answered.



Gather any key supporting documents. Examples: Institutional transcripts, funeral announcement, record of provider or resource appointments.

## 4. EXPLAIN YOUR SITUATION AND DRAFT A PLAN FOR SUCCESS

### LETTER OF APPEAL



- Briefly describe any extenuating situations (death of loved one, change in financial situation, health/mental health issue, etc.) and succinctly describe the impact of the situation on academic performance.
- Reflect and share how you responded to the situation
  - What resources did you seek?
  - How much time did you devote to school work?
  - What action did you take in response to the challenges you faced?

### PLAN OF ACTION



- Draft a plan for future academic success.
  - What new study habits will you incorporate into your routine?
  - How have you successfully navigated challenges that led to Suspension?
- Consider short-term and long-term goals for success.
  - What is necessary to restore “Good Standing”? i.e. target GPA & hours.
  - In which courses do you plan to enroll?

## 5. HAVE A PLAN B



In the event that your appeal is denied, what is your alternative plan? As you prepare your Plan of Action, be sure to research options to develop a sound “plan B”.

Options may include:

- Employment and volunteer service.
- Successful completion of courses at other institutions.
- Treatment for any health, mental health, or substance use issues.

## 6. KEEP CALM, PATIENT & ORGANIZED



- Take time to proofread your appeal and all supporting documentation before you submit.
- Keep a copy of your appeal submission, letter of appeal, plan of action, and any supporting documents in a personal file.
- Be patient with the process as each appeal must be considered individually.

**If you have questions about the appeals process, contact the [Office of Undergraduate Retention](#) or the [Office of Scholarships and Student Aid](#)**

# TIPS FOR WRITING THE LETTER OF APPEAL

The letter of appeal is your opportunity to explain the extenuating circumstances that led to your financial aid suspension and/or academic standing. The following tips are meant to help you prepare a clear, concise, and compelling letter of appeal:

## FORMAT

Your letter of appeal should be formatted as a professional letter to include:

- Date
- Professional greeting and complimentary closing
- Subject line and body

Basic sample letter templates are available in Microsoft Word. The letter should be between one to two pages in length formatted as 10-12 point basic font.

## CONTENT

- Review [academic eligibility standards](#), [financial aid SAP standards](#), and the [appeal for probation](#) instructions before writing your letter of appeal. Note: See "[Appeal Preparation Tips and Resources](#)" for detailed information that will help you prepare a thorough appeal.
- Be honest and factual. The appeals committee wants to know that you understand the circumstances that led to this point. How did you get here? What have you learned?
- Be clear and specific. Do not include details that are not related to your appeal request or your main message. Include relevant dates and event details.
- Be brief. It is more work to write a good, short letter than a long, drawn out narrative. The appeals committee would appreciate the extra effort that it takes for you to write concisely.
- Be compelling. Clearly explain how your situation has improved. How have you demonstrated resilience and persistence?
- Proofread your letter. A letter that is free of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes makes a better impression than one riddled with errors. If you are comfortable with doing so, ask a trusted friend, teacher, or advisor to read over your letter.

## FINAL TIPS

- Make copies of your letter for your personal records.
- Be sure to submit your appeal application in advance of due date.



# SAMPLE LETTER OF APPEAL

**\*DISCLAIMER: This sample letter is a guide ONLY. We do not expect your letter to be formatted or worded in this way. This is merely a sample to help you get started.\***

Date

Dear Appeal Review Committee (or other professional greeting),

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to request academic probation for the upcoming semester (or term). In \_\_\_\_\_ {insert term}, I experienced {briefly describe situation} that impacted my academics in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ {list how grades were impacted by situation}. In addition to this situation, I faced other challenges that led to my academic standing including-- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ {list any other mitigating challenges}.

**Tip: Be clear and specific. Do not include details that are not related to your appeal request.**

Since this time, I have reflected on my challenges and have learned that \_\_\_\_\_ {what did you learn?}. I have engaged in the following activities to address my challenges: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ {list activities}. **Tip: Be sure to provide evidence of how each situation or challenge was managed. Clearly explain how your situation has improved.**

Please see my enclosed plan of action as it includes a detailed plan for my success this semester as well as supporting documentation {that confirms challenges, progress and/or resolution}.

Closing,

Signature



# TIPS FOR WRITING A PLAN OF ACTION

The plan of action is your opportunity to draft a plan for future academic success and demonstrate that you have thought about necessary actions for restoring you to good standing.

## FORMAT

- Your plan of action should be typed and at least 10-12 point basic, professional font.
- Should be no more than 1-2 typed pages.
- May be formatted in paragraph form, as a table, or bulleted list as long as it effectively outlines your academic goals and plan for successful completion of each goal.

## CONTENT

- Review [academic eligibility standards](#) before writing your plan of action.
- Use of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Based) goals for your Plan of Action is strongly recommended.
- Develop a tentative course schedule and explain the reason for taking each course. How will these courses assist you in achieving your academic goals?
- Include plan for resolving incomplete (FA, IN, AB) grades, if any.
- Your plan of action should address each of the following questions:
  - What new study habits have you incorporated into your routine to promote academic success?
  - How have you successfully navigated the challenges that led to suspension? What specific steps have you taken to improve your situation (ie. counseling, moving, reduction of work hours)?
  - Identify campus resources that might assist you in achieving your goals?

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Coursicle UNC - <https://www.coursicle.com/unc/>
- Creating SMART Goals - [topachievement.com/smart.html](http://topachievement.com/smart.html).
- UNC Course Catalog - [www.catalog.unc.edu/](http://www.catalog.unc.edu/)
- UNC Schedule Planner tool - [connectcarolina.unc.edu](http://connectcarolina.unc.edu).



# TIPS FOR INCLUDING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appeal submissions that do not include supporting documentation that corroborates information shared in the letter of appeal are more likely to be denied. This guide provides examples of acceptable forms of supporting documentation for various situations.

## ACADEMIC

- Letter of support from course instructor, TA, or tutor who can attest to your use of office hours and other academic resources
- A copy of [co-curricular transcript \(CCT\)](#)
- Official or unofficial transcript that confirms recent grades from courses completed at another institution
- Copy of email communications from course instructor that confirms plan to resolve IN grade in previous coursework

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

- Letter from health or mental health provider in support of continued enrollment at UNC
- Appointment history and/or relevant medical records
- Copy of any psychoeducational evaluation results (ex. ADHD, test anxiety, etc).

## EMPLOYMENT OBLIGATIONS

- Copy of work schedule that includes hours worked
- Letter of support from employer
- Deployment information (for military affiliated students)

## FINANCIAL

- Relevant financial statement(s) – *Be sure to redact SSN*
- Apartment/leasing contracts

## OTHER RELEVANT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Copy of obituary if experienced loss of loved one
- Photos of any damage incurred in instances of car accident, natural disaster, etc.
- Police reports or court documents (as appropriate)





## APPEAL FOR PROBATION EVALUATION GUIDE

### How is the appeal for probation evaluated?

The Appeals Committee evaluates both the content of the Appeal (Letter of Appeal, Plan of Action, and Supporting Documentation) as well as the quality of the information presented. The appeal content should accurately explain the extenuating circumstances that has led to your current academic standing. The guidelines that inform how we make decisions related to these extenuating circumstances include:

- Semester or term GPA of at least 2.0 (semester or term GPA of at least 2.3 preferred).
- Demonstrated academic improvement.
- Completion of previous academic intervention(s).
- Engagement with resources and support.
- Specific and realistic Plan of Action.
- Demonstrated resolution of problems that led to current academic standing.
- Use of time while away from the University, if appropriate.

In addition, we have developed an evaluation guide for you to consider as you prepare your appeal for committee review. This evaluation guide provides guidance related to the Appeal Committee's standards and expectations for the quality of appeal information that is presented. Please see this content in the table below.

Please keep in mind that these two components – content and quality – both inform the Appeal Committee's decisions. **The two are not mutually exclusive.** For example, a student with a 1.99 GPA who did complete the intervention, but whose appeal is only a few sentences, riddled with errors, and does not demonstrate reflection and readiness *is not guaranteed* approval for Probation. Therefore, we **strongly** encourage you to consult with a Counselor in Undergraduate Retention as you prepare your Appeal for Probation.

Criteria	Standards & Expectations			
	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Needs Work
Self-Reflection & Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates in-depth understanding of challenges that led to current academic standing</li> <li>Shows comprehensive understanding of what is required to return to good standing (target GPA, credit hours, etc.)</li> <li>Connects all challenges to identified solution(s), resource(s), and/or action steps</li> <li>Highly proficient use of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, &amp; Time-bound) goals</li> <li>Appeal includes detailed plan for resolving any incomplete (IN, FA, AB) grades and includes supporting evidence</li> <li>Thoughtful/purposeful course schedule that supports return to good standing; identifies strategies for success in each selected course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates understanding of challenges that led to current academic standing</li> <li>Shows understanding of what is required to return to good standing</li> <li>Connects challenges to identified solution(s), resource(s), and/or action steps</li> <li>Acceptable use of SMART goals</li> <li>Appeal includes plan for resolving any incomplete (IN, FA, AB) grades, does not include supporting evidence</li> <li>Demonstrates reasonable amount of self-awareness; course selection and decision-making is sound and justifiable; some explanation of how course selection would support return to good standing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates basic understanding of challenges that led to current academic standing</li> <li>Shows basic understanding of what is required to return to good standing</li> <li>Fair use of SMART goals</li> <li>Appeal mentions the need to resolve incomplete grades, but does not include a plan for doing so</li> <li>Demonstrates some self-awareness; course schedule choices lacks clear explanations for how courses support return to good standing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little understanding of challenges that led to current academic standing</li> <li>Shows little or incorrect understanding of what is required to return to good standing</li> <li>Does not connect challenges to possible solution(s), resource(s), and/or action steps</li> <li>Ineffective use of SMART goals; goals are not realistic or reasonably attainable</li> <li>Appeal does not acknowledge incomplete grades reflected on academic record; does not include plan for resolving any incomplete coursework</li> <li>Plan of action and course selection demonstrate lack of awareness of problem/challenge and/or does not support return to good standing</li> </ul>
Clarity of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses direct and clear language</li> <li>Information presented in a logical order and is easy to follow</li> <li>Free of spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content and language is mostly clear and direct</li> <li>Information is presented neatly and is easy to follow</li> <li>Few (1-5) spelling and grammatical error</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content and language is a little disorganized</li> <li>Some content is not easily understood</li> <li>Includes some (5-10) spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not use direct and clear language</li> <li>Information presented in an order that is confusing and difficult to follow (ex: rambling)</li> <li>Presence of significant (10+) spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>
Mindset & Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level of engagement with academic intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory level of engagement with academic intervention and campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair level of engagement with academic intervention and campus resources; completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of engagement with academic intervention and</li> </ul>



	<p>(if applicable) and campus resources; successful completion of all academic intervention requirements; academic intervention initiated within first 1-3 weeks of academic semester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attends all scheduled appointments</li> <li>• Student is respectful, fully present, punctual, and prepared for required meetings</li> </ul>	<p>resources; completion of all academic intervention requirements; academic intervention initiated before midpoint of academic semester or term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attends most scheduled appointment and initiates timely cancellation of appointments (at least 24 hours in advance) when scheduling conflict occurs</li> <li>• Student is generally positive, respectful, and moderately prepared for meetings</li> </ul>	<p>of some academic intervention requirements; academic intervention initiated after midpoint of academic semester or term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional missed appointment with some advanced notice (includes same-day cancellations)</li> <li>• Student is respectful, but does not demonstrate complete focus, attention, or preparedness during meetings</li> </ul>	<p>campus resources does not meet expectation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent missed appointments without prior cancellation or notice</li> <li>• Student is disinterested or disdainful</li> </ul>
Preparation & Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides accurate information related to current academic standing (GPA, terms in residence, hours attempted, hours completed)</li> <li>• Completed appeal is thorough and compelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides accurate information related to current academic standing (GPA, terms in residence, hours attempted, hours completed)</li> <li>• Completed appeal meets standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides some inaccurate or incomplete information related to academic standing (GPA, terms in residence, hours attempted, hours completed)</li> <li>• Completed appeal can be improved with little effort; is just enough to meet standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inaccurate or incomplete information related to academic standing (GPA, terms in residence, hours attempted, hours completed)</li> <li>• Appeal not completed in a satisfactory manner; appeal demonstrates minimal levels of preparation and effort</li> </ul>
Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes supporting documentation that confirms information shared in the letter of appeal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes some supporting documentation (as appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal mentions the existence of supporting documentation that is not included, or speaks to situations in which documentation should be available but not included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting documentation not included; appeal could be strengthened by support</li> </ul>
Timely Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal submitted in advance of posted deadline(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal submitted on time or just prior to posted deadline(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal submitted on time, but not early</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal submitted after posted deadline(s)</li> </ul>



# Academic Eligibility and SAP Appeal Checklist

## AS YOU PREPARE YOUR APPEAL, MAKE SURE YOU ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	Thoroughly review appeal instructions found at <a href="http://studentsuccess.unc.edu">studentsuccess.unc.edu</a> . <i>Note: The “Important Resources and Appeals Preparation Tips” section contains detailed information for preparing a thorough appeal.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult a Counselor in Undergraduate Retention to learn more about your academic eligibility status and to answer any questions that you have regarding the appeal for probation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult a Counselor in Scholarships and Student Aid to discuss Satisfactory Academic Progress and Financial Aid Eligibility (if applicable). <i>Note: The <a href="#">Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)</a> standards differ from the academic eligibility standards.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make note of Appeal deadlines, process timeline, registration information, and other pertinent dates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reflect on the situation that led to your current academic standing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Write a Letter of Appeal explaining the circumstances that led you to your academic or financial aid suspension. For tips, see the “Tips for Writing the Letter of Appeal” document.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a Plan of Action for restoring your eligibility. For tips, see the “Tips for Writing a Plan of Action” document.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gather relevant Supporting Documents.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a copy of appeal materials for personal file to include: Appeal submission, Letter of Appeal, Plan of Action, and copies of any supporting documents.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proofread Appeal materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for <a href="#">readmission</a> (if applicable). <i>If you were not enrolled in on-campus courses during the most recent semester (fall, spring) OR you withdrew during the most recent semester, you must apply for readmission in order to re-enroll at Carolina for all courses during any semester or term. This includes Carolina Courses Online as well as Summer courses.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check your student record on ConnectCarolina and create plan to address any holds in order to facilitate timely course registration.

