



Maryland Higher Education Commission
 Office of Student Financial Aid
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 MHEC.MARYLAND.GOV

FIFTH YEAR OF AWARD

Appeal Criteria / Required Documentation

2026-2027 Academic Year

The Maryland Higher Education Commission understands that students may experience circumstances that result in them failing to meet certain requirements for consideration or reinstatement of State grant and scholarship programs. Therefore, the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has developed an appeal process for certain allowable programs and circumstances that allows students to request (re)consideration of a State award

Appeal Process

1. Students determine if they meet the criteria to submit an appeal based off the program and allowable appeals under that program.
2. Student gathers all required documentation for the appeal.
3. Student completes the [2026-2027 MHEC Grant and Scholarship Appeal Request](#) Form, uploading all required documentation, by the published deadline.
4. OSFA staff will review the appeal and make a determination within 45 business days, unless the student is informed otherwise.

Important Reminders

- Appeals must be submitted through the Appeal Request Form and will not be accepted by any other means.
- It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they have provided all required documentation for their appeal. Incomplete appeal requests will be denied.
- It is the student’s responsibility to submit their appeal by the published deadline. Late appeals requests will be denied.

2026-2027 Fifth Year of Award Appeal Information	
Eligible Programs	Guaranteed Access Grant Educational Assistance Grant
Appeal Opens	April 1, 2026
Appeal Closes	September 1, 2026
Allowable Reasons for Appeal	Required Documentation
Academic program requires 5 years to complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student’s circumstance for the appeal • Letter or other form from institutional registrar’s office confirming the student is enrolled in a 5-year program OR other official documentation from the institution the shows the enrolled academic program is 5 years in length (i.e. course catalog) • Copy of most recent transcript
Serious illness or injury of student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student’s circumstances that includes timeline • Letter or documentation from medical practitioner verifying injury and impact on student • Letter from academic advisor or department chair supporting student’s circumstances • Copy of most recent transcript
Serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family (parent, spouse, sibling, dependent children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student’s family member’s circumstances that includes timeline • Letter or documentation from medical practitioner verifying injury and impact on family member • Letter from academic advisor or department chair supporting student’s circumstances • Copy of most recent transcript

Allowable Reasons for Appeal (cont.)	Required Documentation (cont.)
<p>Serious emotional difficulties (student)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student's circumstances that includes detailed timeline • Letter from medical practitioner, psychologist, social worker, counselor, or advisor supporting and confirming explanation of circumstances • Letter from academic advisor or department chair supporting student's circumstances • Copy of most recent transcript
<p>Extenuating financial circumstance(s) beginning on or after <u>January 1, 2026</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student's change in financial circumstances that impacts their educational timeline • Copy of most recent transcript • 2024 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 for student, parent(s) or student's spouse (if married) or 2024 W2s or 1099s • Estimated 2026 total income and pay stubs or other documentation showing income earned between January 1, 2026 and date of appeal submission for student, parent(s), or student's spouse (if married) • Supporting documentation that validates explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If due to involuntarily unemployment: Copy of job termination documentation ○ If due to separation or divorce of parent or student: Copy of divorce degree or separation agreement ○ If due to death of parent or student's spouse: Copy of death certificate

IMPORTANT: Students who have previously received the Educational Assistance Grant (EA) cannot be considered for the Guaranteed Access Grant, regardless of any changes to their circumstances. **Appeals for GA consideration from students who have previously received an EA will be denied.**