

## PURPOSE

An academic appeal letter is your opportunity to present the circumstances in your life that led to the academic concern and to demonstrate that you have the ability, commitment and a plan to succeed in your academics.

## FORMAT

### Elements found in letters generally include:

- a. full mailing address of the sender
- b. date on which letter is written
- c. address of person to whom letter is addressed
- d. subject line
- e. salutation
- f. body (the main message)
- g. complimentary closing
- h. signature line (Be sure to sign your letter.)
- i. enclosure and copy notations

### Sample Letter:

The sample letter below uses all the elements from the aforementioned list. The overall layout is a matter of personal choice as is the decision to include a phone number and email address. You will notice that the text of this sample letter is exceptionally brief. Most appeal and request letters will be at least a page.

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- a. Peter Anteater  
123 ABC Street  
Irvine, CA 92616  
Email address, fax and/or phone number
  - b. November 20, 20XX
  - c. Dismissal Appeals Committee  
UCI School of Social Ecology  
Office of Student Services  
102 Social Ecology I  
Irvine, CA 92697-7055
  - d. Subject: Request for Appeal of Dismissal
  - e. Dear Committee,
  - f. I am writing to request an appeal of the dismissal decision. There were several factors that contributed to my current academic standing.  
Describe the circumstances that affected your studies (e.g. family or life hardships, health, disability, etc.).
  - f. Address what you have done/will do to improve your performance for future studies.
  - g. Thank you for taking the time to consider my request. Please contact me by e-mail or phone if you have any questions.
  - h. Sincerely,  
  
*Your signature*  
  
Peter Anteater  
ID# 04567890
  - i. encl. (use to note any additional documentation you provided)  
cc: (List anyone you copied on the letter)
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## CONTENT AND TONE

While the appearance of a letter is important, the content and tone will determine the effectiveness of your letter. Review any relevant policy and pay particular attention to what the decision maker needs to know to consider an appeal or request. Be sure to include that information in your letter.

### Opening Statement

The first couple of sentences should clearly state the purpose of the letter.

*I am writing to appeal my current dismissal status...*

*I am writing to request a review of a recent decision....*

### Be Factual

Include factual detail but avoid dramatizing the situation.

*In late October, I was diagnosed with tonsillitis. I was sick for over a week and missed most of my midterm exams.*

NOT *In late October after feeling really sick for a few days, I finally dragged myself to Student Health....*

### Be Specific

If an appeal or request depends on particular facts which the decision maker will want to verify, be specific.

*I missed a test January 23 because I flew to San Francisco on October 19 for my grandfather's funeral and returned only October 24. I enclose the airline receipt and can provide further corroboration if that would be helpful.*

NOT *I had to attend a funeral out of town so I missed the test on January 23.*

### Documentation

Include any documentation required by policy or needed to substantiate your claims. If documentation is being sent by a third party, state that with details.

*I have included verification of attendance at LARC workshops (or previously turned in copies of attendance at LARC workshops)...*

*Dr. A., my father's physician, has agreed to write to you about this matter....*

### Stick to the Point

Don't clutter your letter with information or requests that have no essential connection to the main message.

### Do Not Try to Manipulate the Reader

Threatening, cajoling, begging, pleading, flattery and making extravagant promises are manipulative and usually ineffective methods.

*If you give me a chance to continue my studies, I promise to work really hard, get rich, and donate a million dollars to the University....*

### How to Talk About Feelings

It is tempting to overstate the case when something is important to us. When feelings are a legitimate part of a message, own the feeling, and state it as a fact.

*When I saw my grade, I was very disappointed.*

### Be Brief

It is more work to write a good short letter than a long one. Busy decision makers appreciate the extra effort.

### Avoid Errors.

A letter will make a better impression if it is typed; free of spelling and grammar mistakes; free of slang; and placed in the right sized envelope. BUT it is much more important to meet deadlines and state the purpose clearly than to submit a letter which is completely error-free.

### Keep Copies.

Until a matter is settled, keep copies of all letters sent or received, as well as relevant documents and forms.