

How to Write an Appeal Letter

The Request: Clearly state what your appeal is about. For example, “I am appealing my two-week suspension from UC Riverside.” Or “I am appealing to drop a class (Western Art, #10204, Spring 2010).”

Explanation of Extenuating Circumstances: Explain why your appeal should be granted. This is where students typically talk about a situation beyond their control — physical illness, psychological challenges, domestic or family problems, financial pressures, or an unusual academic event. You can be brief, but it’s important to describe how your personal circumstance affected your academic performance.

Be specific as possible, including course names, dates and assignments missed. Make a direct connection whenever possible to specific incidences and how they impacted your ability to attend class or complete your coursework. Depending on your case, third-party documentation from your doctor or counselor may also be helpful in supporting your claims.

Explain what steps you have taken to overcome your extenuating circumstance and why you feel confident that you are able to attend class now. Be realistic in your self-assessment. Saying you have “learned your lesson” is not enough.

Future Plans: Describe your future plans. What is going to be different this time? How do you intend to achieve academic success should your appeal be granted? What adjustments are you going to make? (For example, if you’re appealing to drop a class, your plan should include retaking the course at a specific future date.) Whether it’s taking a lighter course load, changing programs or meeting regularly with a physician or a counselor, your appeal letter should support your academic goals.

Remember to proofread and sign your appeal, including your student ID number, contact phone number and email address.

Double-check the recipient’s name, job title and address to make sure they are accurate.

Include copies of any documentation relating to your request or complaint. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.**

Make a copy of your appeal letter for your records.