

Chapter 3. Financial Aid

Subchapter 3–100. General Provisions

Sec. 3–101. Purpose

- a. As a state institution of higher education, the University endeavors to provide higher education for all eligible persons and to assist in the pursuit of their studies those who do not have sufficient financial resources.
- b. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is responsible for administering certain funds for financial aid to students; for keeping abreast of programs relating to financial aid for higher education and to employment opportunities for students funded through federal, state and institutional work-study programs; for disseminating information relating to available financial aid programs and the cost of attending the University to enrolled students and prospective students; and for assisting students who have been accepted for enrollment at the University or who are enrolled at the University in obtaining loans, grants, scholarships, and employment to supplement payment of their educational expenses.

Sec. 3–102. Definitions

In this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning, the following definitions apply.

1. “Advisor” means the single individual a student has elected to accompany him or her to a meeting with the director or a hearing regarding an aid decision. As the student is solely responsible for presenting his or her case during the hearing, an advisor serves only in a support capacity and may not verbally advocate for the student in a meeting with the director or in a hearing. If an advisor poses a conflict of interest, the director or the Subcommittee on Appeals may elect to excuse his or her presence, and advisors may be dismissed from any proceedings if they disrupt the process.
2. “Aid decision” means a written decision regarding the amount of financial aid award to a student by the University under a financial aid program administered by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and includes the findings of fact in support of the decision.
3. “Day” means calendar day.
4. “The Director” means the associate vice provost for financial aid and Texas One Stop or the director’s delegate.
5. “Financial aid record” means a student record as defined in subsection 9–202(a)(4) of the *Institutional Rules* that is maintained by the director in connection with a financial aid program administered by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. The record may include applications, forms, notices, hearing records, aid decisions, and other documents required under this chapter or deemed relevant by the director.
6. “Student” means a person who is currently enrolled at the University, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the University, or who has been enrolled at the University in a prior semester and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester (including summer) that immediately follows.
7. “University” means The University of Texas at Austin.
8. “Senior Vice Provost” means the senior vice provost for strategic enrollment management and student success of The University of Texas at Austin, or his or her designee.
9. “Weekday” means Monday through Friday.

Subchapter 3–200. The Director of The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

Sec. 3–201. Administration of Financial Aid

- a. The director will administer institutional, state, and federal programs for scholarships, loans, grants, and other specified financial aid in accordance with the legal provisions and limitations, if any, of particular funds, or in accordance with policies recommended by the Committee on Financial Aid to Students.
- b. The director is in charge of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and is administratively responsible to and will report regularly to the senior vice provost.

Sec. 3–202. Duties of Staff

Staff members will process applications for students who need assistance in financing their educational expenses.

Subchapter 3–300. The Committee on Financial Aid to Students

Sec. 3–301. Membership

- a. The Committee on Financial Aid to Students has fourteen members and at least three administrative advisors. The members are
 1. five members from the General Faculty, representing five colleges or schools of the University, appointed by the president for two-year staggered terms;
 2. two staff members appointed by the president for staggered two-year terms;
 3. five students (four undergraduate and one graduate), including at least two who are receiving or have received financial aid from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid; four of the students are appointed by the president from a panel submitted by Student Government; the fifth student is appointed by the president from a panel submitted by the chair of the Graduate Student Assembly; student members will be appointed for two-year staggered terms; and
 4. two members from the Faculty Council, appointed by the chair of the Faculty Council for one-year terms.
- b. The director, a representative of the dean of students, and a representative of the Graduate School serve as administrative advisors without vote. The president may appoint additional nonvoting administrative advisors from the general administration areas of the University.
- c. A Subcommittee for Appeals is designated from the full committee. The subcommittee is composed of no fewer than three of the five members from the General Faculty as voting members and the administrative advisors without vote.

Sec. 3–302. Duties of Committee

- a. The full committee initiates and reviews policies and procedures for the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.
- b. The Subcommittee for Appeals hears appeals regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Subchapter 3–400. Appeals to the Committee on Financial Aid to Students

Sec. 3–401. Procedure for Denial due to not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

- a. A recipient of a loan, grant, or scholarship administered by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid who does not make satisfactory academic progress (SAP) will be notified in writing. An appeal process is available to students who do not meet SAP due to extenuating circumstances.

Sec. 3–402. Appeal

- a. A person whose aid has been denied or revoked under section 3–401, after exhausting all internal review processes through the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, may appeal the decision to the Subcommittee for Appeals.

Sec. 3–403. Appeal to Subcommittee for Appeals

- a. To appeal a denial or revocation of aid to the Subcommittee for Appeals, the student must submit a written appeal to the director. The appeal must state the student's name, the date the director issued the aid decision, and specific reasons for the appeal, including any related argument and all relevant documentation.
- b. The appeal must be submitted by letter or e-mail within 10 days from the date the student received the aid decision from the director. A letter will be considered to have been received on the third day after the day of mailing. An e-mail message will be considered to have been received on the second day after sending the message.

Sec. 3–404. Hearing Before the Subcommittee for Appeals

The Subcommittee for Appeals will preside over the hearing and will:

1. facilitate the hearing process, which includes the ability to excuse any party present at the hearing if he or she is disrupting the process; render a written decision, which will contain findings of fact; approve, reject, or modify the decision of the director; and provide the student and the director with a copy of the decision.

Sec. 3–405. Duties of the Director

The director, in consultation with the Subcommittee for Appeals, will:

1. set the date, time, and place for the hearing and notify the student of the date, time, and place;

Sec. 3–406. Notice of Hearings

- a. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will notify the student by letter or by e-mail of the date, time, and place for the hearing. The notice will be delivered in person or sent to the student by e-mail or postal mail at an address listed in the registrar's records.
- b. The notice will specify a hearing date at least ten days after the letter or e-mail message is received. A letter or an e-mail message sent to an address listed in the registrar's records will constitute full and adequate notice. A letter will be considered to have been received on the third day after the day of mailing. An e-mail message will be considered to have been received on the second day after sending the message.
- c. The student may request, in writing, that an earlier hearing date be set if feasible to arrange.

Sec. 3–407. Preliminary Matters in Hearings

- a. At least five days before the hearing date, the student will furnish the Subcommittee for Appeals with
 1. any objection that, if sustained, would postpone the hearing; and
 2. the name and relationship of the advisor to the student, if any, who will appear with the student.

Sec. 3–408. Hearing Procedure

- a. The Subcommittee for Appeals will review written arguments and then meet with both parties together to ask questions, seek clarification, and hear any final comments from the parties.
- b. The Subcommittee for Appeals' meeting with the parties is informal and is closed.

Sec. 3–409. Evidence in Hearings

- a. The Subcommittee for Appeals will review the aid decision made under section 3–401 and subsection 3–402(a) based on admitted evidence. The Subcommittee for Appeals may consider the student's financial aid record admitted into evidence at the hearing in determining an aid decision.

Sec. 3–410. Decision of the Subcommittee for Appeals

- a. Within 14 days from the completion of the hearing, the Subcommittee for Appeals will render a written decision. The student and the director will each be given a copy of the decision. The Subcommittee for Appeals' written decision is the official decision on the matter from which any appeal is taken.
- b. The criteria the Subcommittee for Appeals' decision will be based on are fairness, reasonableness, compliance with the Institutional Rules and federal and state law, and the student's financial aid record, if any. The Subcommittee for Appeals may approve, reject, or modify the director's decision.

Subchapter 3–500. Suspected Federal Financial Aid Fraud

Sec. 3–501. Procedures Reporting Suspected Federal Financial Aid Fraud

It is the responsibility of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to report any suspicions or evidence of fraud, or intent to defraud, or indication of other disciplinary offenses regarding a student's application for aid to the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Department of Education, following federal and state law.