

Category: Financial
Responsible Office: AVP Finance and Operations & University Registrar
Approval date: October 6, 2023
Last Updated: December 2025
Next Review Date: December 2030
Review Period: Every five years or as circumstances warrant

STATEMENT:

The Financial Relief & Appeals Committee (“FRAC”) is an ad-hoc committee of Algoma University consisting of employees of Algoma University from Finance & Planning, Student Success and the Office of the Registrar.

FRAC considers requests for financial relief from students who are experiencing documented, exceptional circumstances that have resulted in unplanned and unexpected financial hardship.

Members of FRAC operate at their discretion within processes established from time to time by Algoma University and in compliance with directives of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research, Excellence and Security, if applicable.

All decisions of FRAC are final and binding and not subject to appeal to Algoma University.

All appeals by students must fall within the defined eligibility criteria and must be supported by verifiable documentation acceptable to members of FRAC at their sole and absolute discretion.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

A student may submit an appeal to FRAC if they are experiencing an exceptional circumstance that has resulted in unplanned and unexpected financial hardship and meet one or more of the following conditions:

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1. The student has outstanding fees from a previous term that are preventing registration for subsequent semesters.
2. The student has successfully petitioned the Senate Committee on Academic Regulations and Petitions (ARP) for an honourable withdrawal and seeks a fee reversal related to that withdrawal.
3. The student withdrew from courses after the refund deadline and seeks a fee reversal.
4. The student is requesting the release of official documents while having outstanding fees.
5. The student's refund request through the International Student Withdrawal and Refund Request process was denied, and they wish to appeal the decision.

The following requests will not be considered:

- Where the student remains registered in the affected courses.
- For courses with grades on file, where the student has completed the courses and expects to retain credit.
- Where financial hardship is the sole reason for the appeal.
- Where a student was required to withdraw from a course or program, unless granted Authorized Withdrawals for the term in question.
- Where discipline relating to academic/non-academic misconduct was imposed, impacting the requested term or course.
- Where the student is deemed culpable for the situation which precipitated the withdrawal from the course or program.

TIMELINES:

Filing Deadline – If your appeal falls under categories **2–5** set forth above, it must be submitted within **one (1) year** from the first day of the term to which the appeal relates. Appeals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

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If your appeal falls under **category 1** set forth above, the following specific timelines apply:

- Fall Semester: July 1
- Winter Semester: November 1
- Spring Semester: March 1

Appeals submitted after this filing deadline will not be considered.

Processing Time – The standard review period for complete submissions is six (6) to eight (8) weeks from the date all required documentation is received. Processing time may be extended if additional information or clarification is requested.

Response Requirement – Students must provide any requested additional documentation or clarification within ten (10) business days of the request. Failure to do so may result in the appeal being closed.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT:

All appeals must be accompanied by **supporting documentation** that clearly substantiates the exceptional circumstance. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- For all medical situations, [Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form](#) must be filled out by a licensed health care provider. Written medical notes will not be accepted.
- Approved ARP application
- Proof of income
- Any other documents to support your application

Failure to provide complete documentation at the time of submission will result in delays or denial of the appeal.

PROCEDURES

Student's Responsibilities:

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- 1. Confirm Eligibility:** Students must be able to demonstrate their exceptional circumstance and are experiencing one of the conditions noted above in Eligible Criteria.
- 2. Submission:**
 - 2.1. Prepare and submit all documentation that substantiates the reason for your appeal. Incomplete documentation will delay the decision
 - 2.2. Submit your appeal along with your supporting documentation via the [Financial Relief and Appeals Form](#). Students will receive a confirmation after submission indicating that the approximate turnaround time is 6 to 8 weeks for a decision.

Important notes:

- FRAC will communicate with students via SmartSheet. Students should monitor their email (including spam folder) for additional information/documentation requests from FRAC.
- Once a decision has been made on your submission, the student will receive an email from noreply-frac@algomau.ca
- All decisions made by the FRAC are final and binding without recourse.

Algoma University's Responsibilities:

3. Preliminary Review Prior to Submission to FRAC:

When a submission is received, prior to submission to FRAC, the following qualifying steps will be completed by designated Algoma University staff members in Student Financial Services:

- 3.1. Verify student's enrolment status;
- 3.2. Review the submission for completeness and confirm eligibility based on the above criteria;
- 3.3. Request additional documentation if necessary;
- 3.4. If required, review student file with Registrar's Office to gain further insight;

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- 3.5.** Determine, based on the information and documentation submitted if the student's application satisfies the eligibility requirements for referral to FRAC;

 - 3.5.1.** If the application does not meet the eligibility requirements, advise the student accordingly in Smartsheets. The student is notified through the smartsheet. This determination is final unless there is a material change in the student's circumstances.
 - 3.5.2.** If the application meets the eligibility requirements, change the FRAC status to "FRAC Review" in Smartsheets and the matter proceeds to the FRAC committee for determination.

 - 3.5.2.1.** Prepare the "Description of Request" category on the Financial Relief and Appeals Smartsheet for the FRAC committee in preparation for a FRAC meeting.
- 3.6.** The designated staff member will meet with the FRAC committee to bring student(s) case(s) forward during FRAC bi-weekly meetings.

- 4. Committee Review:** The Financial Relief & Appeals Committee will meet on a bi-weekly basis to work through the Relief and Appeals as brought forward by the Registrar's Office/Student Financial Services. The Committee will:

 - 4.1.** Assess each appeal individually, without prejudice and without precedent.
 - 4.2.** Should more information be required, the designated Finance staff will work directly with the student to receive the additional information;
 - 4.3.** Decisions require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote;
 - 4.4.** Once a decision has been made, the Committee will document the decision on the Smartsheet column "Decision of Request" and mark the "FRAC Status" as approved or denied. The *Notice of Decision* Form will automate and upload to the column where the SAO will send it to the student.

5. Follow up:

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5.1. Any follow up required from the decision (IE payment plan, academic advising, etc.) will be monitored by the appropriate department. Notes are to be added to the student's account regarding the committee's decision. Payment plans will be monitored by Student Accounts.

AUTHORITY

All FRAC decisions are final and not subject to further appeal within the University. Only materially changed circumstances, supported by new documentation, may warrant re-submission.

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