GUIDE FOR PRESENTING AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE APPLICATION TO THE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CASES

2018–2019
1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this guide is to provide information to students about how to prepare an exceptional case application.

The following notions and principles relate to exceptional cases and waivers for student financial assistance.

1.1 Contribution-based programs

The Loans and Bursaries Program and the Loans Program for Part-Time Studies are contribution-based financial assistance programs. As such, they are founded on the principle that the student is primarily responsible for the cost of his or her education. However, financial assistance may be awarded to students who do not have the means to pursue studies, in order to cover basic needs deemed essential for their education.

1.2 Ministerial discretionary and exceptional case waiver powers

The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports and the Minister responsible for Higher Education (the Ministers) have discretionary power to waive the provisions of the law for the purpose of awarding financial assistance to individuals who did not qualify for the student financial assistance programs or who did qualify but were not entitled to a sufficient amount of assistance.

1.3 The mandate of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases

Prior to using their discretionary powers, the Ministers must obtain the opinion of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases (the Committee). The mandate of the Committee, whose members are appointed by the Minister responsible for Higher Education, is to review the financial assistance exceptional case applications that it receives and submit its opinion to the Ministers for a final decision.

1.4 Studies in jeopardy

The Ministers may award "exceptional" financial assistance if, in their estimation, an applicant's studies would be in jeopardy without it. This is a fundamental criterion that the Committee is required to consider when reviewing applications.

1.5 Applications analyzed case by case

All exceptional case applications are unique, and each one has its own specific profile that is based on a singular combination of component factors. Consequently, applications submitted to the Committee are examined on a case-by-case basis.
IS YOUR EXCEPTIONAL CASE APPLICATION ADMISSIBLE?

Before submitting your exceptional case application, you must be sure that the following conditions are met.

2.1 Application for student financial assistance

You must have applied for financial assistance under the Loans and Bursaries Program or the Loans Program for Part-Time Studies, and:

1) You received a reply informing you that you are ineligible for financial assistance for one of the following reasons:
   - You have reached the maximum number of months of study for which you were eligible for financial assistance.
   - You have reached the debt ceiling allowed for your level of education.
   - You have reached the maximum number of authorized months of study and debt ceiling.

OR

2) You received an amount of student financial assistance that you deem insufficient to pursue your education.

2.2 False declaration or loan in default

If you have received a notice informing you that your Aide financière aux études student financial assistance file has been suspended, processing of your exceptional case application will be put on hold pending a decision in that matter. If you have been declared ineligible for student financial assistance programs due to a false declaration, your exceptional case application will remain invalid for the full period of your disqualification.

Additionally, if you have a loan in default, you will be required to reach an agreement with the debt collection department of Aide financière aux études (Service du recouvrement) before your exceptional case application can be considered.

2.3 Student status

If you are currently a beneficiary under the Loans and Bursaries Program but are a full-time student, you must maintain this status. In other words, if you withdraw from one or more courses and become a part-time student, your exceptional case application will be declined. However, if you are pursuing part-time studies that are deemed full-time, your application will be considered.

You must be enrolled \(\textbf{not deemed enrolled}\) when your exceptional case application is received by the Secretariat of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases.
2.4 Educational institutions that are designated for loans only

The Ministers cannot award additional financial assistance to students who attend educational institutions that are designated for loans only and who receive the maximum permitted amount of $985/month. However, if your application concerns your ineligibility for the Loans and Bursaries Program or a request for additional financial assistance up to the $985/month maximum, it will be considered.

3 WHAT MUST YOUR EXCEPTIONAL CASE APPLICATION INCLUDE?

It is essential that you first consult with the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution. That person will assist in the preparation of your exceptional case application and, in particular, will ensure that all required documents are valid.

The Secretariat will only submit complete exceptional case applications for consideration by the Committee. If your application is not complete, you will receive a request for additional information and/or supporting documents, and processing will be suspended pending their receipt by the Committee. The date of your application to the Committee will be determined as of when all required additional information and/or supporting documents have been received.

Your exceptional case application must therefore include all the following documents:

3.1 A signed cover letter in which you briefly explain:

- Why you have reached the maximum number of allowed months of study or debt ceiling (e.g. the reason for extending your education, your decision to return to your studies, your reorientation).
- How your studies will be jeopardized if you are awarded no financial assistance.
- The amount of financial assistance that you deem necessary to pursue your studies, as well as a clear explanation of your calculations.
- The efforts you have made to contribute to the cost of your education.

If you deem that the amount of student financial assistance awarded to you is insufficient:

- How your studies will be jeopardized if you receive no additional financial assistance.
- Why your situation should be considered exceptional or why, during the award year, you will face extraordinary expenses that are not provided for under the Loans and Bursaries Program.
- The additional amount of financial assistance you deem necessary to pursue your studies, as well as a clear explanation of your calculations.
- The efforts you have made to contribute to the cost of your education.

3.2 An official letter from your educational institution’s academic services department, stating the name of your program and the date on which you expect to receive your diploma.

---

1 If you fail to reply within 45 days of receiving the information request, your file will be closed without prior notice.
The letter can be written by the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution if they can confirm the requested information. For graduate or doctoral programs, include a letter from your thesis supervisor.

3.3 An **official copy of all transcripts** of your post-secondary studies (if you are currently pursuing vocational studies, a copy of your Secondary School Diploma is required).

3.4 A **duly completed and signed Student’s Budget Within the Framework of an Exceptional Case Application** form. This form is available from your educational institution’s student financial assistance office and on the Aide financière aux études website.

You need to fill out all sections of the form and ensure that the income you report matches the amount you previously declared to Aide financière aux études. If there is any discrepancy, you will need to correct the income you originally declared before submitting your exceptional case application.

3.5 A **duly completed and signed Spouse’s Budget Within the Framework of an Exceptional Case Application** form (if applicable). This form is available from your educational institution’s student financial assistance office and on the Aide financière aux études website.

3.6 Any **official document in support of your exceptional case application** that will enable the Committee to provide the Ministers with its opinion on whether or not your studies are in jeopardy and, as the case may be, the amount of financial assistance to be awarded to you (e.g. a lease, medical report, letter from a psychosocial worker, proof of your exceptional expenses).
3.7 A signed cover letter from the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution, who is also responsible for mailing your exceptional case application to the following address:

Secrétariat du Comité d’examen des demandes dérogatoires  
Direction de l’accès à l’information et des plaintes  
Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur  
1035, rue De La Chevrotière  
Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5  

(Faxes and e-mails will NOT be accepted.)

4 WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR APPLICATION ONCE IT HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SECRETARIAT OF THE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CASES?

- As soon as your exceptional case application has been registered by the Secretariat of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases, a written acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to you.

- Your exceptional case application will be examined to ensure that all the prerequisites have been met, that all required documents have been provided and that your explanations are clear, concise and relevant.

- Once your exceptional case application is complete, the Secretariat of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases will prepare it for presentation to the members of the Committee. You will receive written notification informing you that your application will be submitted to the Committee at its next meeting. (See calendar of meetings, item 5.)

- The Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases reviews each application on the basis of the documents and explanations provided.

- All opinions relating to exceptional case applications are referred to the Ministers for a decision.

- Once the Ministers have reached a decision, it is recorded in the computer system of the Secretariat of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases. You will receive a written letter informing you of the outcome.

- Save unusual circumstances, you will receive a reply to your exceptional case application within two to three weeks of the Committee meeting.

If you have questions regarding the processing of your exceptional case application, please contact the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution.
## 2018–2019 Calendar of Meetings of the Examination Committee for Exceptional Cases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Deadline for receipt of applications by the Secretariat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>22, 23, 24</td>
<td>June 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>26, 27, 28</td>
<td>August 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October and November 2018</td>
<td>31, 1, 2</td>
<td>September 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
<td>November 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>23, 24, 25</td>
<td>December 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February and March 2019</td>
<td>27, 28, 1</td>
<td>January 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>8, 9, 10</td>
<td>April 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>12, 13, 14</td>
<td>May 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Subject to change without prior notice. Please check with the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution.
### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>A signed <strong>cover letter</strong> that addresses the issues that apply to your situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>An official letter from your educational institution’s academic services department stating the name of your program and the date on which you expect to receive your diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>An <strong>official copy of all transcripts</strong> of your post-secondary studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>A duly completed and signed <em>Student’s Budget Within the Framework of an Exceptional Case Application</em> form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>A duly completed and signed <em>Spouse’s Budget Within the Framework of an Exceptional Case Application</em> form (if applicable to your situation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Any official document in support of your exceptional case application that could enable the Committee to provide the Ministers with its opinion on whether or not your studies are in jeopardy and, as the case may be, the amount of financial assistance to be awarded to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>A signed <strong>cover letter</strong> from the person in charge of student financial assistance at your educational institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>