

# General Appeals Process Information

The appeal process will commence after the Administrative Appeals Team (AAT) confirms receipt of your appeal and any supporting evidence.

After your appeal has gone through the process, AAT will issue the final decision via email to the individual with legal standing who filed the appeal on behalf of the school.

## STEP 1

### SCU/SAOC Review

The official who made the unfavorable decision (i.e., the School Certification Unit [SCU] or SEVP Analysis & Operations Center [SAOC] adjudicator) reviews the appeal. This official decides whether favorable action is warranted.

- If favorable action is warranted, the reviewing official may treat the appeal as a motion to reopen or reconsider solely for the purpose of overturning the earlier decision and taking favorable action. If favorable action is warranted, SCU or SAOC will contact you directly, and the case will no longer be tracked in the School Appeal Status Tracker.
- If favorable action is unwarranted, the reviewing official forwards the appeal and the record of proceeding (ROP) to AAT for adjudication of the appeal. The school will not receive notice of the appeal and ROP moving forward to AAT but may check its status in the School Appeal Status Tracker on Study in the States.

**SCU/SAOC Review takes approximately 20 business days.**

## STEP 2

### In Queue

Your case sits in a queue while it waits for an AAT adjudicator to pick it up for a preliminary review. AAT is unable to provide exact time frames for how long a case will wait in the queue. Once an adjudicator picks up a case, it takes roughly 60 business days to complete the appeal process. Please note that AAT may extend this time frame if complicating factors arise during a case's review.

## STEP 3

### AAT Adjudicator Preliminary Review

An AAT adjudicator reviews your entire case and the evidence submitted to reach a preliminary determination regarding your school's appeal. After completing the preliminary review, AAT adjudicator drafts an initial appeal decision for legal and regulatory review.

**AAT Adjudicator Preliminary Review takes approximately 10 business days.**

## STEP 4

### Legal and Regulatory Review

A legal entity within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement reviews the AAT adjudicator's initial

appeal decision to ensure regulatory compliance and legal sufficiency.

**Legal and Regulatory Review takes approximately 10 business days.**

## STEP 5

### AAT Adjudicator Review of Legal and Regulatory Comments

The AAT adjudicator considers the legal and regulatory review and makes changes as deemed appropriate. If requested or deemed necessary, the adjudicator may send the appeal decision back to the legal entity for additional review.

**AAT Adjudicator Review of Legal and Regulatory Comments takes approximately 10 business days.**

## STEP 6

### FAA Review

The Final Appeals Authority (FAA) reviews the entire case proceedings to ensure understanding of your case, including both comments from the AAT adjudicator and from the legal entity. After the initial signatory review, the FAA returns the appeal decision to the AAT adjudicator with any applicable questions, comments or edits.

**FAA Review takes approximately 10 business days.**

## STEP 7

### AAT Adjudicator Review of FAA Comments

The AAT adjudicator reviews the decision and makes final edits, if applicable. If there are significant questions or concerns, the appeal decision may return to the FAA for additional clarification before the adjudicator finishes their edits. Once these edits are made, the decision returns to the FAA for final review.

**AAT Adjudicator Review of FAA Comments takes approximately three business days.**

## STEP 8

### FAA – Final Review

The FAA completes a final review of the decision before approving the final version and signing the decision.

**FAA – Final Review takes approximately five business days.**