

# Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Denial and Appeals Process

The Institutional Review Panel (IRP) is responsible for rendering a decision in order to deny or revoke an applicant's TELS award. Each institution shall establish written procedures for an applicant or recipient to appeal a decision of an institution to deny or revoke a TELS award.

To appeal the denial or the revocation of a TELS award, students must take the following steps:

1. Complete the "TELS Appeal" form and submit it to the Institutional Review Panel (IRP).
2. Attach documentation of verification of the reason for appealing. (The better the documentation, the better the chance of the appeal being approved.)
3. Attend an appeal hearing if required by the IRP.
4. If appeal is denied by the IRP and student chooses to appeal further, submit proper appeal to the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) TELS Award Appeals Panel within 14 calendar days from the date the denial was delivered to the student.

Initial TELS appeals should be sent to:  
TELS Institutional Review Panel  
Financial Aid Office  
10915 Hardin Valley Road  
Knoxville, TN 37933-0990

## Denial of Initial Eligibility – Failure to Timely Enroll

Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship regulations require that a high school graduate or recipient of the GED enroll in a postsecondary institution within sixteen months from the date of graduation or sixteen months from the date the student took the GED. A student who fails to timely enroll as required by law "may be granted an exception if the student failed to meet the requirement for any reason provided for in this rule. An exception shall be granted only for medical or personal reasons. Acceptable medical or personal reasons shall include, but not be limited to:

- illness of the student,
- illness or death of an immediate family member,
- extreme financial hardship of the student or student's immediate family,
- to fulfill a religious commitment expected of all students of that faith, or
- other extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control where timely enrollment by the student would create a substantial hardship."

In the event a student's request for an exemption for failing to timely enroll is denied, the student may appeal the decision to the TSAC TELS Award Appeals Panel.

## **Pellissippi State's Appeal and Exception Process**

Each institution shall also establish a process to:

- ensure students applying for or receiving a TELS award are notified of the procedures to appeal the denial or revocation of a TELS award including;
- the timeframe within which an appeal must be filed with the TELS Award Appeals Panel
- No eligible institution official rendering a decision to deny or revoke a TELS award shall participate in the appeal process for the same applicant or recipient
- Includes financial aid staff

“The IRP at Pellissippi State is comprised of a pool of staff in which a three person panel is selected for the actual review of each appeal. “The IRP may award or reinstate the student’s TELS award without a hearing and shall make such determination no later than 14 calendar days after an applicant or recipient properly files an appeal. If the IRP determines that a hearing is required the IRP shall hear the appeal no later than 14 calendar days after an applicant or recipient properly files an appeal. Except where exigent circumstances exist, the IRP shall render a decision no later than seven calendar days after hearing an appeal. Such decision shall be reduced to writing and shall include a summary of the pertinent facts and issues and the panel’s decision. The IRP shall provide a copy of the written decision to the appellant as soon as practicable. For the purpose of this rule, it will be presumed that the decision was delivered to the appellant two calendar days after the decision was placed in the U.S. Postal Service addressed to the appellant’s official mailing address.

A student seeking an appeal of a decision rendered by an IRP shall request an appeal, to include a written statement outlining the basis for the appeal as well as all pertinent information related to the appeal, with TSAC within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date that the decision was delivered to the student. A complete record of the institutional IRP ruling shall be provided to TSAC by the student. TSAC Appeals Panel may award or reinstate the student’s TELS award without a meeting. This decision shall be made no later than thirty (30) calendar days after an appeal is properly filed and the record from the IRP meeting is received.

## **TSAC's Appeal and Exception Process**

The TELS Award Appeals Panel shall be appointed by the Corporation’s Executive Director for the purpose of meeting to consider appeals from decisions rendered by the IRPs. No official of an eligible postsecondary institution shall sit as a member of the Appeals Panel where the denial or revocation being appealed involves such official’s eligible postsecondary institution. A student seeking an appeal of a decision rendered by an IRP shall request an appeal, to include a written statement outlining the basis for the appeal as well as all pertinent information related to the appeal, with the Corporation within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date that the decision was delivered to the student. A complete record of the institutional IRP ruling shall be provided to the Corporation by the student.

The Appeals Panel may award or reinstate the student's TELS award without a meeting. This decision shall be made no later than thirty (30) calendar days after an appeal is properly filed and the record from the IRP meeting is received. If the Appeals Panel determines that a meeting is required the Appeals Panel shall consider the appeal no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after the appeal is properly filed, unless an extension is requested by the appellant and granted by the Appeals Panel. Except where exigent circumstances exist, the Appeals Panel shall render a decision no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after ruling on an appeal. Such decision shall be reduced to writing and shall include a summary of the pertinent facts and issues and the panel's decision. The Appeals Panel shall provide a copy of the written decision to the appellant and the appellant's home institution as soon as practicable. The Appeals Panel is the final administrative appeal.

The authority of the IRPs and the TELS Award Appeals Panel shall be strictly limited to consideration of appeals arising from eligibility determinations made by an institution or TSAC. No official of an eligible postsecondary institution shall sit as a member of the Appeals Panel where the denial or revocation being appealed involves such official's eligible postsecondary institution. Neither appeals panel shall have the authority to rule on the validity of any information provided to the institution or TSAC by another entity on which its decision to deny or revoke a TELS award was based, including, but not limited to:

- High school grade point average,
- ACT or SAT scores, or
- Grades from another eligible postsecondary institution.

Additionally, neither appeals panel shall have the authority to consider requests for exceptions to the high school or collegiate grade point average.