

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: Satisfactory Progress as the Basis for
Continued Federal and State Financial Aid Reference: G-X-a

Source: Vice President, Student Success Eff. Date: July 9, 2013

Approval Auth.: President Approved: _____

Remarks: Replaces previous policy dated February 15, 2013

Date: July 9, 2013

This policy shall be effective for enrollment periods beginning with the 2011 fall semester. The first calculations under this policy will be at the end of fall 2011 for all students receiving financial aid.

This policy is effective for all students regardless of the length of time they have attended or the number of hours completed.

Regulatory Requirement

McLennan Community College is required to establish "satisfactory academic progress" standards for all federal and state financial aid recipients in accordance with the U. S. Department of Education regulations [34 CFR 668. 16(e); and 34 CFR 668.34.] These standards ensure that only recipients demonstrating satisfactory progress toward the completion of their educational program will continue to receive financial aid.

All recipients of financial aid must be enrolled in a program of study leading to an associate degree, MCC certificate, or a program that is transferable toward a baccalaureate degree.

Grades of A, B, C, D, and CR are considered hours attempted and successfully completed (earned).

Grades of F, NC (non-completion), I (incomplete), and W (withdrawals and drops) are counted as hours attempted but not successfully completed (unearned).

Course repeats are counted as attempted hours and either earned or unearned depending upon the grade assigned as noted above.

All course work attempted at the College (including transfer course work) is considered when determining satisfactory progress

regardless of whether the student previously received financial aid.

Course work attempted and grades earned in semesters forgiven through the State of Texas "Academic Fresh Start" program will be included in the hours attempted, hours earned or unearned, and cumulative grade point average for calculating satisfactory academic progress under this policy.

NOTE: There is a limit of one year (30 semester hours) of remedial/developmental course work for any individual student. Remedial hours attempted beyond this 30 hour limit will not be included in course load for financial aid payment purposes.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the student to understand and monitor his/her own satisfactory progress status. Although the Office of Financial Aid attempts to send students correspondence (e-mail or mail) informing them of their status, students who do not receive correspondence will still be ineligible for financial aid.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS CRITERIA

QUALITATIVE COMPONENT (GPA)

Students must have earned and maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average on all college level course work attempted at MCC.

QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT (Completion)

Students must complete 67% of all hours including remedial/developmental attempted at MCC or transferred to MCC regardless of whether financial aid was received for the hours.

Important Note: Federal regulations do NOT allow rounding of financial aid SAP standards. Example: A 66.7% completion rate does not equal 67% and a 1.97 GPA does not equal a 2.0 GPA.

Maximum Time Frame

Students receiving financial aid are expected to complete their educational objective or course of study within a reasonable time frame. The maximum time frame under current regulation is 150% of the published length of the academic program or certificate. This will include all undergraduate hours attempted (including all transfer credit hours). Remedial/developmental coursework will not be counted in the maximum time frame/150%.

Evaluation

Satisfactory progress will be measured three times per year, at the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters. The evaluation will be made regardless of the number of semesters attended or the number of hours attempted during the semester. Only students who were enrolled and received financial aid during a semester will be evaluated.

FAILURE TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

In the following provisions, warning, probation and suspension refer to a financial aid status, not an academic status and should not be confused with academic probation or suspension. Students who are suspended under this policy may remain eligible to attend classes at MCC, but must do so without the benefit of financial aid.

Financial Aid Warning

At the end of the first semester in which the academic progress standards are not met, the student will be placed on "warning" status and will be notified of that status. The student will be eligible to receive financial aid during the warning.

Financial Aid Suspension

The student who fails to meet the academic progress standards while on a Warning or Probationary status will be placed on Suspension and denied financial aid.

Maximum Time Frame Suspension

If a student fails to meet the Maximum Time Frame standards, they will be placed on Maximum Time Frame Suspension and denied financial aid.

Probationary Students

Students who have had an appeal approved will be placed on probation for one semester. If the student again fails to meet the satisfactory progress standards at the end of this semester, they will be suspended until they can meet the satisfactory progress standards by completing coursework without the benefit of financial aid. Appeals cannot be approved in consecutive semesters.

REINSTATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

Financial aid eligibility will be reinstated after a student meets the Satisfactory Academic Progress criteria (listed above), both the completion rate (67%) and cumulative grade point average (2.0); or, has an appeal approved as described below. **Students who regain eligibility by completing required coursework must notify the Office of Financial Aid in order to have their progress reevaluated.**

APPEAL PROCESS FOR GPA AND COMPLETION RATE

A student who has been denied financial aid for failure to meet the satisfactory progress requirements outlined in this policy due to mitigating circumstances may appeal the suspension decision by completing an appeal form, explaining why they failed to make satisfactory progress, providing adequate, appropriate documentation to support their claim, and providing an explanation of what has changed in the student's situation that would now allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory progress at the next evaluation period. The Financial Aid Appeal Committee shall evaluate individual mitigating circumstances, supporting

documentation and notify students of the decision regarding their appeal, usually within three weeks.

NOTE: Appeals are generally not approved so a student should make payment arrangements while waiting for a committee decision.

A student may file an appeal to the Financial Aid Appeal Committee under the following conditions:

- A medical condition, separation/divorce, or death in the immediate family was a factor in the student not making satisfactory academic progress
- Student activation into military service
- Mitigating circumstances as deemed appropriate for consideration by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee
- Change of major caused the student to exceed maximum time frame

The following must also be included as part of the appeal:

- Documentation to provide support for the appeal.
(Example: verification from a doctor, copy of a death certificate, etc.)
- Letters from counselors/instructors if appropriate.

The condition or situation must be resolved showing the student has the ability to complete course work successfully or the request cannot be approved.

AN APPEAL MAY BE APPROVED ONLY IF THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO FULLY MEET THE SATISFACTORY PROGRESS STANDARDS AFTER THE SUBSEQUENT PAYMENT PERIOD. APPEALS CANNOT BE APPROVED IN TWO OR MORE CONSECUTIVE SEMESTERS OR PERIODS OF ENROLLMENT.

ACADEMIC PLANS

The use of an institutional academic improvement plan may be considered in the appeal process for regular suspension statuses and maximum time frame suspensions. Students will be expected to enroll only for courses listed on their active degree plan (in the Colleague system), and to successfully complete all courses for which they have enrolled with a passing grade. In some cases, the Office of Financial Aid may request a copy of the official degree plan signed by the student's advisor.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR MAXIMUM TIME FRAME

If one of the above mitigating circumstances has caused the student to exceed the maximum time frame, the appeal should address those issues, and provide adequate documentation. The College will use this information to recalculate the timeframe excluding the affected semester/courses. If the recalculation allows further enrollment the appeal can be approved.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR CHANGE OF PROGRAM/MAJOR OR ADDITIONAL DEGREE

A student who changes programs/majors and exceeds the maximum time frame must submit an appeal form explaining their intentions, along

with a degree plan (academic plan) signed by their advisor and must include a summary of all credit hours required to complete the new program. The student must complete 100% of all attempted credit hours with a 2.0 semester GPA. Financial aid eligibility will be limited to only those courses required to complete the new degree. Students must be meeting the completion (67%) and GPA (2.0) requirements to be considered for this appeal.

SECOND APPEALS

Students' whose first appeal has been denied may appeal to the Director of Financial Aid if they feel that they have not been treated fairly according to this policy. This appeal must be in writing and include any information and documentation necessary to support the claim made. The decision of the Director of Financial Aid is final.

Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Director of Financial Aid. All awards from financial aid programs funded by the federal or state government are administered according to laws and regulations governing those programs. This policy is subject to change as required by federal or state guidelines and/or by the College.