

# **Sandhills Community College Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients**

## **Purpose**

All financial aid recipients are required to meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) according to Federal regulations and policies set by Sandhills Community College (SCC). The intent of these policies is to insure that students who are receiving financial aid are making measurable progress toward completion of an approved degree, diploma, or certificate program in a reasonable period of time and within a reasonable number of credit hours attempted in their program of study.

## **Scope**

Regulations require a student's progress for financial aid purposes to be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. In addition to a student's cumulative grade point average, students are also required to pass a percentage of all attempted coursework, and to complete their program of study within the maximum time frame established by the institution. To reasonably measure a student's satisfactory academic progress for financial aid, the student's academic record will be evaluated including credit hours earned at other post-secondary institutions and transferred into the student's program of study at SCC. This requirement applies to all students who apply for financial assistance from Federal, State and institutional aid.

## **Standards of Progress**

To receive financial aid, the student must maintain satisfactory academic progress toward an eligible program of study. There are two standards in the Financial Aid Office's standards of progress that students receiving financial aid must meet in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress:

### **Qualitative Standard**

The minimum **cumulative** grade point average (GPA) requirement the student must maintain to receive and/or continue receiving financial aid assistance is **2.0**. This includes all degree, diploma and certificate programs.

### **Quantitative Standard** - 67 % Completion Rate and 150% Maximum Time Frame

The student must maintain the minimums as listed below:

#### **Completion Rate Requirement:**

The student must successfully complete 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted to meet the minimum requirement. Example: if the student attempts 60 credit hours during enrollment, the student must successfully complete 40 credit hours ( $60 \text{ hours attempted} \times 67\% = 40 \text{ hours}$ ). Successful completion is defined as receiving a grade of A, B, C, D.

#### **Maximum Time Frame:**

The maximum timeframe for a student to complete a program is 150% of the published length of the program. Example: if 75 credit hours are required to complete a degree, the student may attempt a maximum of 113 credit hours before the student exceeds his eligibility for financial aid ( $75 \text{ credit hour program} \times 150\% = 113$ ). One academic year of credit (30 credit hours) may be added for required remedial coursework.

## **Treatment of Selected Grades**

**Withdrawals/Drops:** Credit hours in which a student receives a grade of "FW", "WP" or "DR" are included in the number of attempted hours, but do not count toward successfully completed hours. Students who withdraw may have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements.

**Incompletes:** Credit hours in which a student receives a grade of "I" are included in the number of attempted hours, but do not count toward successfully completed hours. Students with "incompletes" may

have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements at the time of evaluation, but may request reevaluation upon completion.

**Transfer Credit:** Students transferring from another college will be considered making satisfactory progress at the time of enrollment at SCC. A student's maximum time to receive financial aid will be reduced by the equivalent transfer of credit hours towards his/her degree.

**Audit and Never Attend:** An audit (AU) or never attend (NA) grade is not considered attempted course work. It is not included in the grade point average or completion rate determinations. A student cannot receive financial aid for courses that he or she audits or is considered a no show (AU or NA).

**Repeat Courses:** For financial aid purposes, all hours attempted will continue to be counted in the student's cumulative total of hours.

**Credit by Exam:** While credit by exam (CE) is not included in enrollment status for purposes of awarding financial aid, the attempted and completed credits are counted in each component of the quantitative standard.

### **Summer Session**

Credit hours attempted and earned during summer session will be included in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress, just as any other enrollment period.

### **Complete academic record**

In order to measure a student's satisfactory progress toward degree, diploma, or certificate requirements, the student's total academic record at Sandhills Community College must be evaluated whether or not the student received financial aid for the entire time of enrollment. When students complete course work for more than one major, college and financial aid academic progress standards must be met to receive student financial aid.

### **Eligibility Status**

#### **Satisfactory**

Satisfactory status is achieved when all criteria explained above is met.

#### **Financial Aid Probation**

Students (who are not currently on probation) who do not have the required grade point average and/or have not successfully completed 67% of their attempted credit hours, will be **placed on probation for the following semester**. Satisfactory progress will be monitored at the end of the semester to determine if the student met the standards of progress and is eligible to continue to receive financial aid.

#### **Financial Aid Suspension**

Students on financial aid probation who have not attained at least a cumulative 67% completion rate and/or earned the minimum required grade point average listed above will have their financial aid suspended at the conclusion of the probation period. Students who have attempted the maximum allowable credit hours for their program of study will have their financial aid suspended.

#### **Notification of Financial Aid Probation or Suspension**

The Financial Aid Office will send a warning letter to any student who is placed on financial aid probation or a suspension letter to any student who is no longer eligible to receive financial aid.

#### **Regaining Eligibility**

Students who attend SCC (without federal financial aid) may regain financial aid eligibility by achieving a 67% completion rate and earning the required GPA based on hours attempted. A student may request

reconsideration of eligibility for financial aid by submitting a written request to the Financial Aid Office once all requirements are met.

Students who have exceeded the 150% regulation may also appeal. These students must provide a graduation plan completed and signed by their academic advisor. If the plan is considered reasonable, the student may receive financial aid on probation for one more semester, as long as the conditions set forth are met.

### **Appeal of Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards**

Students who have been disqualified from receiving financial aid may petition the Financial Aid Office to waive the satisfactory progress requirements only where there are special circumstances. A student may submit written documentation to the Financial Aid Office that explains unavoidable circumstances that have affected academic performance. Supporting documentation must be presented. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to: illness of student, immediate family member or the death of a family member. If a student is allowed to continue based on mitigating circumstances, the student will be given an additional increment of time to meet the standard requirements.

Returning students are evaluated on a continuing basis from the first enrollment at SCC unless a mitigating circumstance is considered. Returning students who were previously enrolled under an academic progress policy other than the current academic progress policy will be required to meet the standards of the current policy upon returning.

#### **Appeals Process:**

A student not eligible for financial aid may appeal financial aid eligibility. The process for appeal is as follows:

1. A student may appeal in writing to the Director of Financial Aid explaining why satisfactory academic progress requirements were not met. Supporting documentation for the extenuating circumstance is required. The Director of Financial Aid then submits the student's appeal request and documentation to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee for review. A decision will be rendered in five (5) business days to the Director of Financial Aid. The Director of Financial Aid will inform the student of the appeal decision by letter.
2. If a student disagrees with the determination by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee, he or she may appeal their decision to the Vice President of Student Services and Academic Support. This appeal must be submitted in writing within five (5) business days from the date of the letter from the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. The decision of the Vice President of Student Services and Academic Support is final.

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Revised