

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

School policy: 34 CFR 668.16(e); Student eligibility: 34 CFR 668.32(f), 34 CFR 668.34

To be considered administratively capable, a school must have a satisfactory academic progress policy that, for an FSA recipient, is the same as or more strict than the school's standards for a student enrolled in the same educational program who is not receiving assistance under an FSA program.

Basic Elements of a Satisfactory Progress Policy

According to these federal rules, a school's policy must contain certain basic elements:

- a **qualitative component** consisting of grades or comparable factors that are measurable against a norm, (a GPA component)
- a **quantitative component** that consists of a maximum time frame in which a student must complete his or her educational program, subdivided into increments (aka the 150% rule), and
- a **measurement of progress**, meaning the student must be completing a certain percentage of classes to be considered making adequate progress.

Student Eligibility

To be eligible for FSA funds, a student must make satisfactory academic progress as defined by the school.

Collin College's Institutional Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid (Effective November 2013)

This is an official statement of Collin College policy related to the financial aid operational definition of Satisfactory Academic Progress for students at Collin College effective for 2013-14 and subsequent academic years.

At the end of each period of enrollment, the Financial Aid Office evaluates satisfactory academic progress of all enrolled students. This evaluation considers Financial Aid GPA*, the percentage of hours completed and maximum allowed hours attempted. Please note, the evaluation takes place at the end of fall, spring and summer.

At the end of each period of enrollment, a student must meet the following requirements:

I. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement

A student must maintain a Financial Aid GPA* of 2.0 or higher in order to receive federal student aid. The Financial Aid GPA is the calculation of grades from all credit coursework, including developmental and ESL coursework. Please note, that the Financial Aid GPA* may differ from the Academic GPA.

II. Percent Completion Requirement

A student must complete 67% of all attempted hours; calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student has successfully completed by the total number of hours attempted.

- a. Successfully completed hours: Passing grades of A, B, C, and D, (including developmental and ESL coursework), accepted transfer coursework and repeated courses (one time only for previously passed course).
- b. Attempted hours: Withdrawals, grades of F, incomplete courses, repeated courses, courses taken during the summer sessions, developmental and ESL coursework, accepted transfer coursework and all hours for which student received passing grades are counted toward attempted hours. Please note, all periods of enrollment count when assessing progress, even periods in which a student does not receive federal student aid.

III. Maximum Time Frame Requirement

The maximum number of hours a student may attempt is limited to 150% of the published length of the program. For example, a certificate program that requires 30 hours would have a maximum time frame of 45 credit hours.

All hours, including those taken while not receiving Title IV aid, those taken under a different major, hours attempted during summer sessions, remedial hours, ESL hours and hours transferred in from previous/other institutions, etc., shall be counted towards total hours attempted and earned. Students that reach the maximum time frame are immediately given a status of "Exceeds Max Hours", making them ineligible for any student aid, including student loans, state aid, etc.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on academic plan for one semester. At the end of that semester, the student must maintain the SAP requirements or they will lose eligibility permanently.

Failure to Meet the Standards of Academic Progress - GPA and Percent Completion

A student who fails to meet the requirements in I and/or II above will automatically be placed on *warning* for the next semester of enrollment. Students on warning will still be able to receive student financial aid they would otherwise be eligible to receive. At the end of the next semester of enrollment, the student must be making Financial Aid satisfactory academic progress (Financial Aid GPA* of 2.0 or greater and a cumulative percent completion of 67% or higher.) If the student is not making satisfactory academic progress by the end of the semester, they will automatically be placed on financial aid suspension and will no longer be eligible for any student aid including loans, state aid, etc.

Students on financial aid suspension for Financial Aid GPA* and/or percent completion will remain on suspension until such time that the Financial Aid GPA* and/or percent completion reaches the minimum requirements.

The Appeal Process - GPA, Percent Completion and Complete Withdrawal

In rare circumstances, a student is allowed to appeal his/her financial aid suspension. These circumstances may include a *serious* personal illness documented by a doctor, the *serious* illness of an immediate family member where the doctor documents student was required to give care to the family member and other rare, exceptional circumstances that prevent a student from attending class. The circumstances must have occurred during the semester(s) of attendance. Please note that appeals will not be accepted without documentation and that appeals submitted with documentation are not automatically approved.

The deadline for submitting an appeal is 30 days after the official first day of classes for a semester.

A student who meets the condition to appeal must complete and submit the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form, along with ***required documentation*** that supports the rare circumstances, to the Financial Aid Office. The appeal must also contain a ***typed*** letter explaining the circumstances that the student faced and what measures have been taken so that the same problem does not negatively impact their academic progress.

The Appeal Process - Maximum Timeframe

An appeal to request an extension of hours can be submitted if there are extenuating circumstances that caused the student not to be able to complete within the 150% time period, but those circumstances must be documented. Extenuating circumstances include: a *serious* personal illness documented by a doctor, the *serious* illness of an immediate family member where the doctor documents student was required to give care to the family member and other rare, exceptional circumstances that prevent a student from attending class.

A student who meets the condition to appeal must complete and submit the Financial Aid Request for Extension of Max Hours form, and a degree audit, along with ***required documentation*** that supports the rare circumstances, to the Financial Aid Office. The appeal must also contain a ***typed*** letter explaining the circumstances that the student faced and what measures have been taken so that the same problem does not negatively impact their academic progress.

A student is not allowed to appeal the maximum time frame if his/her Financial Aid GPA* is below 2.0 and/or completion rate is below 67%.

The Appeals Committee

An appeals committee has been established at Collin College to review all financial aid appeals. The committee will review the appeals electronically as needed. The determination of the appeal will be sent to the student through Cougar Web. Appeals without documentation or that do not meet the requirements of the appeal process will automatically be denied.

While the normal process is for appeals to go to the committee for review, the financial aid leadership team and other people as designated by the Director are authorized to review and render a decision on an appeal.

A student, whose appeal is approved for GPA or percent completion, must complete a financial aid academic plan. In order to remain eligible for financial aid while on an academic plan, the student may not withdraw from any coursework and must make a grade of at least "C" in every class until the student is back in good standing.

A student whose appeal is approved for maximum timeframe will have the approved hours added to the 150% of the program length.

All decisions of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee (leadership/other authorized person) are final.