



**OVERVIEW:** This policy explains the federal academic requirements to maintain eligibility for Federal Title IV financial aid.

**OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Academic Advisement, Financial Aid, Student Accounts

**DATE UPDATED:** March 2012

### **Federal Academic Standards for Title IV Recipients**

**Award programs affected by the federal standards:**

- Federal Nursing Loans
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
- Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant (TEACH)
- Federal Work-Study
- William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans-Subsidized Stafford Loans
- William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans-Unsubsidized Stafford Loans
- Federal PLUS Loan (for Parents and Graduate students)

**Maximum Time Frame Standard:**

Federal law requires that students receiving funds under Title IV must complete their educational programs in no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program for full-time students. In addition, students must show evidence of making satisfactory progress toward their degree objectives to remain eligible for further funds. This requirement also applies to students with a second major and Second Degree students.

**Academic Performance Standard:**

Pace measures a student’s progression to ensure the student will graduate within the maximum time frame of their program. The student’s pace progression is calculated by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of hours the student has attempted. Students must maintain an acceptable GPA and complete 67 percent of courses attempted. The following chart is used to determine federal aid eligibility:

<b>Credits Attempted</b>	<b>Pace</b>	<b>GPA</b>
0 < 24	67%	1.0
24 < 54	67%	1.5
54 < 84	67%	2.0
84 ≥	67%	2.0

Based on the number of attempted credits, a student must complete at least 67 percent of their attempted courses with the required GPA to continue receiving federal aid.

In calculating the pace completion rate, the following grades are treated as attempted but not successfully completed E, I, PR, N, U, and W. Remedial/developmental courses will be included in the calculation until a student reaches junior status, and then remedial courses will be removed from the calculation. Courses that are repeated to improve a grade are counted as attempted each time they are taken, but are only counted as completed once.

Title IV financial aid will pay for only ONE retake of a previously passed course. Students must be registered for 12 credit hours in addition to any course repeated more than once. In other words, after the second taking of a course in which a passing grade has been received, the course will no longer count as part of the student's enrollment for federal aid purposes. Students who are taking 12 credit hours and 3 of these credits are from a course that is being taken for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, they would be considered  $\frac{3}{4}$  time for Title IV financial aid eligibility. Courses that are allowed to be repeated for additional credit are not subject to this requirement unless the maximum number of credits has been attained.

Transfer credits will be counted towards both the attempted and completed credit hours. Transfer credit from two-year colleges may not exceed 64 credits. Total transfer credits may not exceed a maximum of 90 credits from one or more four-year colleges or a combination of two- and four- year institutions.

Courses removed by the Forgiveness Policy for students readmitted after dismissal will be counted in credits attempted.

Students who are in danger of losing their federal aid will be notified after the fall grades are calculated and will receive an alert of the potential loss through BMAIL – the college's official mode of communication. An annual review of Good Academic Standing is completed at the end of the spring semester for all students. Students who do not meet satisfactory academic progress at the end of the spring semester will be considered out of compliance and ineligible to receive federal Title IV aid for future semesters. Notification of ineligibility following the spring term will be sent to students after the semester grades have been analyzed.

### **Regaining Eligibility for Federal Title IV Aid:**

A student will not be eligible to receive federal Title IV aid until they have re-established satisfactory academic progress. A student may re-establish eligibility by:

- Meeting satisfactory academic performance standards
- Completing a Mitigating Circumstance Appeal
- Completing a Mitigating Circumstance Appeal with an approved Academic Plan of Study

Students who fail to meet the established standards for reasons beyond their control may appeal their loss of eligibility due to mitigating circumstances. Such "mitigating circumstances" may include injury or extended illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances. Appeals must explain why the student failed to meet the standards and what has changed in the situation that will allow the student to meet the standards by the next evaluation. Mitigating Circumstance Appeals will not be accepted without third party

documentation. If the student will not be able to regain satisfactory standards in one semester, an Academic Plan of Study may be developed to ensure meeting satisfactory academic progress standards within a specified amount of time or by successful completion of program. Federal regulations, however, do not allow for mitigation under any circumstance for students not completing their program of study within 150 percent of the published length of the educational program for full-time students.

Completing a Mitigating Circumstance Appeal and/or Academic Plan of Study does not guarantee approval. Failure to meet satisfactory academic progress at the end of the payment period or failure to establish and meet an Academic Plan of Study may result in termination of federal Title IV aid.

The Mitigating Circumstance Appeal is available through the Financial Aid Office. Completed appeals, including third party documentation, should be returned to the Financial Aid Office. The Good Academic Standing Committee will review the appeal and will send a letter of decision within two weeks of receiving the appeal. All committee decisions are final. If the Mitigating Circumstance Appeal is approved, the student will be placed on financial aid probation for one payment period and will be eligible to receive federal Title IV aid. If the student fails to meet satisfactory academic progress standards at the end of the payment period, the student will no longer be eligible for federal aid. A new Mitigating Circumstance Appeal cannot be submitted unless there is a new and different situation has occurred.

**Academic Plan of Study - Undergraduate:**

An Academic Plan of Study may be required with an approved Mitigating Circumstance Appeal. If an Academic Plan of Study is required, the student must follow the Plan for a specified period of time to regain satisfactory academic progress. The student must successfully complete a specific number of credit hours with a 2.0 GPA for the semester. Plans will be adjusted accordingly on a student-by-student basis.

Students requiring an Academic Plan of Study must meet with their advisor(s) to plan for current and future semesters to determine courses, number of credits and required GPA for each semester. The plan will be reviewed at the end of each semester to determine if the student is eligible to continue receiving federal Title IV aid. Students will be eligible to receive federal Title IV aid for the semester in which the plan is implemented. Students must notify the Academic Compliance Officer of any changes to the Academic Plan of Study. The Plan must be updated for all academic changes such as adding or dropping a major/minor, dropping or withdrawing from course(s), taking a Leave of Absence, or changing enrollment status (full-time, part-time). Failure to meet the terms of the Plan or to notify the Academic Compliance Officer of changes to the Plan will void the current plan and may result in termination of federal Title IV aid. If the current Plan is made void, the student may appeal the Plan, but ONLY if a new and different situation has occurred. Only appeals with third party documentation will be considered.

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