

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS STANDARDS

Effective 02/24/2020

Section 668.34 of the Higher Education Act as amended, requires that in order to receive any Title IV aid, a student must be maintaining satisfactory progress in the course of study the student is pursuing. Further, a student must be maintaining satisfactory progress regardless of whether he previously received Title IV aid.

Northern Oklahoma College Standards of Satisfactory Progress:

Satisfactory Academic progress in regards to federal financial aid eligibility will be evaluated at the end of each semester including summer if applicable. To remain in good standing students must meet the following requirements:

- Students will be required to maintain a cumulative GPA of **2.0**.
- Student will be required to have a completion rate of at least **67%** calculated by dividing the cumulative hours completed by the cumulative hours attempted. Attempted hours include all those graded with AW, AU, W, F, I, or N. Remedial hours, transfer hours and repeated courses are included as attempted hours.
- As required by Federal regulations, the student must have a 2.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the second year of attendance regardless of the student's enrollment status (full time, part time).

Students are expected to complete the requirements for an associate degree within 150% of the published length of the program. This standard will be applied using credit hours, thus for a 62 hour program the maximum time frame allowed is 93 credit hours. For a 70 hour program the maximum length allowed is 105 credit hours.

Students(including transfer) who fail to meet the criteria outlined above will be given a financial aid warning for one semester. They will be notified of the action taken by means of a letter or email. During the warning semester the student will remain eligible to receive federal aid but must bring cumulative GPA and/or hours completed up to compliance levels.

Students who fail to meet the criteria during the warning period will be placed on financial aid suspension and given an option to appeal based on extenuating circumstances. The appeal must be submitted in writing by the deadline for the semester they plan to enroll in and explain what happened to impede progress and what has changed that will allow the student to succeed during the next period of enrollment. Documentation must be attached to confirm the circumstances. The appeal will be evaluated by the Financial Aid Committee, although the Director of Financial Aid or a designated representative in the Financial Aid Office is authorized to make decisions on appeals without convening the

committee. The following conditions may be viewed as mitigating circumstances meriting some special consideration:

- A: Personal and/or family emotional trauma impacting upon ability to perform such as a death or serious illness in the family.
- B: Severe social problems in adjusting to college life, independence, and self-direction, which now appear to have been corrected through maturity and social growth.
- C: Absence from class (or withdrawal from courses) because of the student's illness or accidental injury.
- D: Change of academic goals when documented by counselors or other professional staff with an optimistic projection for future progress.
- E: Discovery of academic deficiencies in basic or pre-requisite classes, when the deficiency is being corrected by current enrollment and/or specific plans for remediation.
- F: Other conditions which in the view of the committee or director placed the student under a discernible handicap in academic performance.

Documentation must be included with the appeal to confirm the circumstances. Examples of acceptable documents may include obituary or death certificate of family member, Dr. statement regarding illness or injury, written statement from clergy, family member, or other third party familiar with the student's situation, and written statement from academic advisor, counselor or professor.

The allowance for mitigating circumstances should not be looked upon by students or the appeal committee as a means of setting aside progress standards, but rather as a means for consideration of definite and legitimate circumstances which make the failure to meet the criteria understandable and allow the student to continue to receive aid on a probationary basis. The arrival by the committee or the director at a conclusion of mitigating circumstances must be clearly stated in the record and must fall within the purview of one of the above conditions.

If a student fails to turn in the appeal by the deadline listed in the heading of the appeal document it will not be considered until the following semester.

Students will not be allowed to abuse their financial aid privileges by claiming mitigating circumstances when there is insufficient evidence thereof and when an optimistic projection for future progress appears doubtful or inappropriate.

As the committee (or in some cases the Director of Financial Aid) reviews the individual cases of students not meeting the satisfactory progress standards as stated, there are

certain options open to them in disposition of these. Essentially, these are as follows:

- A: Disallowance of the appeal and denial of financial aid during the student's next or further enrollment periods.
- B: Acceptance of the appeal and supporting documents and allowance of aid eligibility for the next enrollment period by placing the student on financial aid probation for one period of enrollment if the student can be brought back into good standing at the end of the probationary semester.
- C: Require the student to meet with an academic advisor or counselor to formulate an academic plan to bring the student back into good standing within a specified period of time.

At the end of one semester of financial aid probation, the student **must** meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards or meet the requirements of the academic plan developed by the institution and the student. If the student fails to do so he becomes ineligible for further Title IV federal aid at NOC.

When goal changes result in a conflict with standards of satisfactory progress cited earlier, or when holders of academic degrees enroll and apply for federal financial aid, the following guidelines will be followed:

- A: If the change in goal does not result in an extension of the total time frames cited or expansion of the credits required past the normal totals for the new goal, it will be approved without questions.
- B: If the change in goal will extend the time frames stated in the criteria or the total number of credit hours which the student may be expected to complete at the institution with support of federal financial aid, the following steps must be taken:
 - 1. The student must apply in writing for a change of goal stating the reason(s) for the change.
 - 2. An advisor, registrar, or counselor must complete a degree check and the student must submit a copy to the Financial Aid Office.
 - 3. The student must enroll in the required credits as soon as possible. If approved, federal aid will pay only for the required courses.

Students who already hold baccalaureate degrees will not be considered to be eligible to pursue an associate degree with federal financial aid except under unusual circumstances. All applications by students holding baccalaureate degrees will be carefully and critically screened by the Financial Aid Office. A student who holds an associate degree will be carefully and critically evaluated when applying for financial aid

toward another Associate degree. In these cases the steps above will be followed.

Reinstatement

A student suspended from federal financial aid who does not meet the minimum criteria during their probationary semester or who does not appeal or whose appeal is denied may be reinstated on a probationary basis by meeting **both** of the following criteria:

- A: Achieve the required cumulative GPA **and**
- B: Successfully complete 67% of the total cumulative hours attempted.

These requirements may be met while attending NOC for the semester without financial aid or by transferring hours meeting the requirements to NOC from an accredited institution. Transfer hours must be shown on the NOC transcript to be considered for purposes of financial aid eligibility. The student may also be required to submit an academic plan prepared with the help of an advisor which will enable the student to reach SAP compliance at a specified time.

The student must, of course, continue to qualify for the specific financial aid program requested in terms of the currently existing federal and institutional guidelines at the time of application for reinstatement and funds must be available. If all these conditions are present, the director is authorized to use his/her discretion and allow reinstatement. A denial of reinstatement by the director on subjective factors of judgment (not quantitative criteria) may be appealed to the hearing committee.

Transfer students

Transfer students from other colleges and universities must meet the same criteria of satisfactory progress that the college's own continuing students are required to meet. However, instructional and/or environmental conditions known or alleged to exist at the previous institution may be considered as an additional type of hardship or extenuating circumstance as a basis for appeal and consideration by the hearing committee. Redirection of academic and career goals may also be a special factor for transfer students. This and other concerns are covered in other sections of this policy statement.

WEEKEND SEMINARS

NOC will consider up to 3 hours enrollment in weekend seminars as eligible for financial aid. These should not be repeated classes unless the student was unable to complete the class during previous enrollment. This is consistent with NOC graduation standards and Federal policy regarding repeated classes.

Students enrolled in weekend seminars must be regular students enrolled in a degree-

seeking program in order to be eligible to receive Title IV aid. Tuition may be charged to the Pell grant with the understanding that if the student withdraws before the class begins, the student's Pell will be recalculated and may be adjusted.

REPEATED COURSEWORK

Students are allowed to repeat courses and receive federal aid for the repeat until they earn a passing grade in the class (subject to eligibility under satisfactory academic progress policy). Students are allowed to repeat coursework in which they have received a passing grade only one time using federal aid. Students who are required to enroll each semester in a class which carries the same course number but has different content are not considered to be repeating a class (i.e. music courses).

TRANSFER STUDENTS

The institution will determine whether or not a student has previously attended any other institution during the current award year. Responsibility for this determination rests with the Registrar and Financial aid officer. The following procedures are used to make this determination: The student is asked by the FAA to complete a form requesting information about previous attendance. The financial aid officers will also check the ISIR for evidence of Pell grants or student loans received during the current academic year. This information is also requested in the Registrar's Office. Academic transcripts are printed which in many cases contain this information.

For students who transfer during the academic year, the institution will not award aid before the student's records have been reviewed in the NSLDS website and the student is placed on a transfer monitoring list maintained by NSLDS. This cannot be done more than 30 days before the student is scheduled to begin attendance at NOC. If changes are made to the student's NSLDS record after being placed on the transfer monitoring list, an email is sent to NOC advising that a transfer monitoring file has been placed in our SAIG mailbox. This file is printed and reviewed for the pertinent changes.