



Maintaining Eligibility for Financial Aid

The following Standards of Academics Progress (SAP) are adopted for the purpose of determining continuing student eligibility who are receiving or applying for financial aid. Academic progress will be reviewed at the end of each term to determine that the student is making satisfactory progress. This review will include all periods of the students enrollment, even those for which the student did not receive financial aid. Students are expected to be continually aware of their grades (Online GPA Calculator). A student who is placed on SAP warning or suspension may be notified in writing by the financial aid office, however, failure to receive notification will not change the students financial aid status.

FINANCIAL AID STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students who receive financial aid must be enrolled in an eligible program and are required to maintain the following standards of satisfactory academic progress (SAP). These measurements shall be used to determine eligibility for all federal Title IV aid, state and institutional aid, and for other financial assistance unless the terms of a particular grant or funding source require additional terms. SAP is calculated at the end of each term. Some aid programs require higher standards, such as higher grade point averages (GPA) or specific enrollment statuses. Students receiving financial aid must have a declared major in a degree or eligible certificate program. Students are expected to be continually aware of their progress toward their completion. A student who fails to meet the standard of progress (SAP) will be notified by email at the email address on the student record; however, failure to receive notification will not change the SAP status.

Qualitative Progress Measure: Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) achieved after each evaluation period or semester.

To continue receiving financial aid, you are expected to successfully complete your classes with passing grades. You must have at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA (based on all terms of enrollment) and at least a 2.00 term GPA during each period of enrollment. All courses, including college level and developmental will be evaluated.

Quantitative Progress Measure #1: The Pace of Progression or Completion Rate each Semester

When you enroll in classes and receive financial aid to pay for those classes, you are expected to successfully complete those classes. **Effective July 1, 2011**, you must complete at least 67% of the credit hours in which you enrolled during each term. You must also achieve a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67% of all courses attempted during your enrollment. Only passing grades count as successful completions. Incomplete, in progress, failing grades, and drop/withdrawals are not considered completed courses, but are considered attempted courses, and will be calculated in the 67% completion requirement.

Quantitative Progress Measure #2: Maximum Time to Complete a Degree / Program

To ensure that you complete your program in a reasonable amount of time, a limit set by law has been placed on the number of hours that you can attempt. That limit is 150% of the minimum number of hours required to complete your program. For example, if your degree program requires 72 credit hours for completion, you must complete your degree or certificate program within a maximum of 108 attempted credit hours. Once you reach the 150 percent limit or we determine that you cannot complete your program within the 150% limit, you will no longer be able to receive financial aid. Several variables are considered when calculating the 150% limit and the satisfactory progression rules. These variables include, but are not limited to:

1. All attempted credit hours are counted even if you were not receiving aid to pay for them. Attempted hours are the hours in which you are enrolled in every semester.
2. Any transfer hours that are accepted from other colleges and applied toward the completion of your program are counted in the maximum time frame. If you have previously attended any college, you must submit official transcripts from all previous colleges prior to any financial aid being released.
3. If you repeat a course, both attempts will be counted in the maximum credit hours and progression calculation, even if you did not receive aid for both attempts. Financial aid will only pay for 2 attempts in a college level course. Separate rules apply for developmental courses.
4. If you withdraw from a course(s) after the census date for that course, it is still counted as an attempted course and is included in the SAP calculation.
5. All periods of enrollment and attempted credits will be evaluated, as they apply to the current program of study, whether or not financial aid was awarded during prior enrollment periods.

When you receive financial aid to help pay for a program of study, you are expected to complete that program within the specified time frame for that program. You should not enroll in classes that are not required for your chosen program of study. Classes not required for your degree plan are not eligible for financial aid. Additionally, audit courses, continuing education courses, previously passed courses and courses for which you enroll after the census date are also not eligible for financial aid.

Change of Major and Transfer Credits

Students receiving financial aid must have a declared certificate or degree eligible program. Students should register for courses approved for their designated degree plan/catalog year. Change of Program requests will be considered. Change of Program request forms must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. A program/major change will be documented to ensure that the student's new program is tracked for SAP. Students are responsible for notifying the Financial Aid Office and for completing the financial aid documents required, when a student changes their program/major at the Admissions and Records Office.

Transfer credits will be counted in the attempted credits and will be applied to the student's degree plan, if applicable.

Additional Certificates and Degrees

Additional certificates and degrees will be considered or reviewed on a case by case basis. The student must be meeting SAP requirements.

Additional SAP Rules: Remedial or Developmental Coursework

You may be able to take up to 27 hours of remedial or developmental course work and receive financial aid to pay for those costs. These courses will be included in the qualitative and quantitative measurements for SAP. All courses, including failures, incompletes, in progress, or drop/withdrawal are counted toward the maximum 27 credit hour limit. Once you have attempted 27 credit hours of remedial or developmental classes, you will not be able to receive additional financial aid to pay for those courses. Enrollment in these courses is indicated by testing or as recommended by counseling.

Financial aid will NOT pay for:

- Courses taken by audit
- Courses taken outside of your degree plan requirements
- Courses attempted more than two times (except remedial/developmental courses)
- Credits exceeding the 27 maximum credits for developmental courses
- Courses previously passed unless, the course grade failed the minimum grade requirement for the program of study. **Starting July 1, 2011**, only two attempts will be approved, if a course was previously passed. A third attempt will not be paid by financial aid. The student's degree plan must specify the minimum course grade required.
- Credit hours earned by placement tests
- Continuing education courses
- Courses for which you register after the official census date of the term.
- Timeframe and/or credit hours in excess of the 150% maximum program limit
- Courses taken without having a declared eligible program (enrolled as undeclared, undecided, or non-degree seeking)

Failure to Meet the Financial Aid Standards of Academic Progress

Warning Status –This status is assigned to students, who fail to make Standards of Academic progress at the end of a semester. Students in a 'warning' status may receive financial aid, without completing an appeal.

The first time that a student fails to meet the qualitative (minimum 2.0 semester or Cumulative G.P.A.) or quantitative requirements (minimum 67% courses completed for the term or cumulatively), the student will be placed on financial aid warning. The only exception is for exceeding maximum hours, which results in immediate suspension. Failing to meet any one of the SAP measurements during the warning period will place a student on suspension.

Suspension

There are several conditions that may place a student on suspension. The student is responsible for paying all expenses during any enrollment period(s) while on suspension. Students can be placed on suspension after a warning or probation status. Reaching the maximum time frame for the program of study can also lead a student to suspension.

A student who fails to meet any of the standards of academic progress measures during a warning period will be placed on financial aid suspension and will lose eligibility for all financial aid until all SAP measures have been met.

Students, on probation, who fail to meet the academic or Success Plan measurements will be placed on suspension.

If the Financial Aid Office mathematically determines that a student cannot complete the program of study within the 150% limit, the student will immediately be placed on financial aid suspension. Once the 150% limit has been met, the student cannot regain satisfactory progress or financial aid eligibility.

Warning – Following Suspension status

A student who was placed on financial aid suspension and who regains eligibility for financial aid by achieving a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, a term GPA of 2.0 or higher for their last term of enrollment, a 67% cumulative completion rate and a 67% term completion rate for their last term of enrollment will be placed on Warning status. While on warning after a suspension status, a student must meet all satisfactory academic progress requirements in order to retain aid eligibility.

Probation- After Appeal Approval

This status is assigned to a student who fails to make SAP and who has appealed, due to mitigating circumstances, and has had eligibility for Title IV reinstated. While on probation status a student must be making progress according to an academic plan which dictates that a student must achieve a term GPA of 2.0 or higher and a term completion rate of at least 67% in order to continue to retain aid eligibility. Failure to meet the academic plan outlined will be cause for suspension.

Notification of Financial Aid Warning, Probation, or Suspension Status

Standards of Progress statuses will be updated at the end of each semester. All students, whether on financial aid or not, will be notified via email regarding warning, probation, or suspension statuses. **However, failure to receive notification will not change the student's financial aid status.** Not enrolling for one or more terms does not remove the probation or suspension status.

Reinstatement

If you are on financial aid suspension, for reasons other than reaching the maximum timeframe, you may have your aid reinstated in one of the following manners:

1. Continue to attend Texas State Technical College without financial aid until you are able to achieve both:
 - A cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher along with 2.0 GPA for your last term of enrollment.
 - A 67% cumulative completion rate along with a 67% completion rate for your last term of enrollment.

Once you have met both of these standards, you will be placed on continued financial aid warning and may receive aid as long as you continue to maintain academic progress. It may require multiple terms for students with an extremely low GPA and or completion rate to regain financial aid eligibility.

2. File an appeal demonstrating mitigating circumstances and be approved and be placed on warning status.

Note: If you have reached the maximum time frame, you may not regain eligibility to receive additional financial aid.

Appeal Process

Note: Appeals submitted without documentation will be denied

The student is responsible for any payments and meeting payment deadlines, during the appeal process. The student should not miss payment deadlines, while waiting for a response. Failure to pay for tuition and fees may result in deregistration. The student is responsible for balances due, if the student withdraws before or after an appeal is denied.

Appeals will only be granted for conditions causing extreme hardship to the student, such as the death of a family member, illness or injury of the student, or other mitigating circumstances. The appeal must include supporting documentation regarding your mitigating circumstance, such as medical statements or death certificates, or other supporting documentation. Appeals for mitigating circumstances will be considered during a student's enrollment at TSTC, on a case by case basis. Submitting an appeal does not guarantee approval of the appeal. The Financial Aid Office will consider recommendations from counselors or advisors when reviewing appeals. The Financial Aid Office will review the appeal and approve or deny your appeal. The decision of the financial aid office appeal process is final.

- Level 1 Appeal - Financial Aid Officer/Representative
- Level 2 Appeal - Assistant Director
- Level 3 Appeal - Director
- Level 4 Appeal - Financial Aid Advisory, Appeals and Scholarship Committee (final appeal level)

An appeal must include the following:

- A completed Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form.
- Your name, TSTC ID number and email address
- A written description of the mitigating circumstances
- Documentation to support any claims
- If appealing because you have exceeded the maximum hours limit or because of a change in major, a degree plan must be submitted showing the number of hours remaining until graduation.
- A description of the steps you have taken to remedy the situation (Success Plan)

Once you are notified of not being eligible for financial aid (financial aid suspension), you have (5) working days to submit an appeal or up to the subsequent semester census date, whichever comes first. If your appeal is denied at any level (with the exception of a level 4 appeal) and you wish to appeal to the next level, you must submit a written notice immediately to the next level. Note: Education and career planning tools such as Kuder and Discovery are tools available for students. The assessment may be required for students requesting reinstatement, appeals, or change of program.

REPAYMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDS Return of Title IV

If you receive federal financial aid and stop attending or withdraw from all courses at or before 60% of the term is completed, you will be required to repay all or a portion of the federal aid you received, including that used to pay for your college expenses. If you received a grade of F in all courses for any term, you will be required to repay a portion of the federal aid received, based on last date of participation, unless an instructor certifies and documents that you were participating in at least one class after the 60% point of the term or until the end of the term. A term may consist of one or more blocks or modules.