7.12.4 Financial Aid Suspension Appeal Process

Last Revised: February 2012

Policy: Piedmont Community College (PCC) requires that all students receiving federal student aid must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as required by the US Department of Education to continue receiving federal student aid.

Purpose/Definitions: All students who receive financial aid at PCC will be evaluated on the following criteria for SAP:

Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA): Students must maintain a cumulative GPA at or above 2.0. If the cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 after any term, students will be placed on financial aid warning. Students will remain on financial aid warning until SAP is evaluated at the end of the following term. Students who do not have a cumulative 2.0 GPA at this time will be placed on financial aid suspension.

Minimum semester Credit Hour Completion Rate: Students must complete a program within the 150% time frame, as required by federal regulation. The student must also complete 67% of the credit hours attempted at the end of each semester. Only grades of A, B, C, D, or CE (Credit by Exam) will be considered as earned hours. W, WP, WF, F, I, and NC grades are calculated as attempted hours but are not calculated as earned hours. The percentage earned will be evaluated after each term to determine Quantitative Satisfactory Academic Progress. For example, a first year student who enrolls in 12 hours for the fall term must have completed eight hours at the end of the fall term.

Completion of a degree within a maximum number of credit hours attempted: Students receiving financial aid have a maximum time frame to complete their primary program of study. The maximum time frame is 150% of the length of the educational program as published in the PCC General Catalog and Student Handbook. For example, a student enrolled in the Business Administration Associate Degree program (71 hours required) will be able to attempt 107 hours. Once students have completed the maximum number of credit hours and not earned a degree, they will be placed on financial aid warning. Students will be able to receive financial aid for a maximum of one additional term. If they have not completed their degree after their period of warning, they will be placed on financial aid suspension.

Financial Aid Warning: Students not making satisfactory progress will be put on financial aid warning. Students on financial aid warning may be allowed one semester to achieve satisfactory academic progress. During the warning period, the student is eligible to receive financial aid. At the end of the warning period, academic progress will be evaluated to determine whether requirements have been met. If not, financial aid will be suspended until Satisfactory Academic Progress is achieved.

Financial Aid Suspension: Loss of Federal Student Aid because of failure to maintain SAP. Students may enroll but will not be eligible for Federal Student Aid until they meet minimum SAP.

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: Piedmont Community College’s Board of Trustees has approval authority for this policy. The Vice President, Instruction and Student Development has monitoring authority for this policy.
**Procedure:**
Students on financial aid suspension, based on their failure to meet SAP, may appeal their suspension if they have mitigating circumstances. Examples of mitigating circumstances may include injury, illness, illness of immediate family, death of a relative, or undue hardship due to special circumstances beyond a student’s control. Students should submit their appeal form, along with their documentation to the Financial Aid office. The Appeals Committee reviews the student’s appeal and notifies the student in writing of their decision. If an appeal is denied, a student may follow the school’s grievance procedure.

Students who have their appeals approved must achieve a 100% pass rate of all courses until SAP is reestablished. If students do not meet the requirements of the appeal, they will be placed back on financial aid suspension.

Students with extreme mitigating circumstances hindering their academic progress during their appealed term may submit a second and final appeal to the Dean, Student Development.

Students may re-establish satisfactory academic progress by completing 67% of cumulative hours attempted and maintaining an overall GPA of 2.0 or greater.

**Legal Citation:** Department of Education Student Federal Aid Handbook- Student Eligibility - SAP

**History:** Effective February 2012