

# **FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY (SAP)**

Federal regulations (34 CFR 668.34) require Miles Community College to establish minimum academic standards that students must maintain to be eligible for federal, state, and institutional aid. **All periods of enrollment count toward SAP, including periods students are not receiving financial aid.** These regulations require schools to determine whether students are progressing through their programs of study in a satisfactory manner. Students who are receiving financial aid or wish to be considered for financial aid in the future must maintain satisfactory progress by meeting the following requirements. Students who fail to meet any of the requirements listed below will lose their eligibility to receive financial aid.

- **QUALITATIVE COMPONENT (GPA):** All students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 or greater. Review of GPA will be performed after each semester of enrollment (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Any student with a cumulative GPA less than 2.00 will be placed on financial aid warning.
- **QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT (PACE):** All students must pass no less than 67% of attempted credits. Pace of progression is calculated by dividing cumulative hours successfully completed by cumulative hours attempted. Review of pace will be performed after each semester of enrollment. Only grades of A, B, C, D, or P will be counted towards progress. Any other grade including E, F, I, W, or NP will not count towards pace of progression. Any student who falls below a cumulative pace of progression of 67% of credits attempted will be placed on financial aid warning.
- **MAXIMUM TIME FRAME (CREDIT LIMIT):** Students are expected to complete their program of study in a reasonable time period. A student's aid eligibility is limited to 150% of the required credits for each program of study. Any student who exceeds the maximum time frame will be placed on financial aid suspension (see maximum credit limits below).

## **FINANCIAL AID WARNING**

- Students are placed on financial aid warning if their cumulative GPA is below a 2.00 OR if their cumulative pace of progression falls below 67%.
- Students on financial aid warning will continue to receive financial aid for one subsequent semester (warning period).
- A review will be performed after the warning period, and aid will continue if the student is making Satisfactory Academic Progress at the time of review. Any student who does not have a 2.00 GPA or has not passed at least 67% of cumulative credits attempted after the warning period will no longer be eligible for financial aid at Miles Community College.

## **FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION:**

- Students who do not meet the qualitative and quantitative components listed above after a warning period will be placed on suspension. Students on financial aid suspension are not eligible to receive financial aid for any subsequent terms.
- Students exceeding the maximum timeframe allowed to obtain a degree or are mathematically unable to finish their program within the maximum time frame, will be placed on immediate suspension. Please see the table below for maximum timeframe criteria and examples.

## **Regaining Eligibility**

- A student may qualify for reinstatement of financial aid eligibility by enrolling at his/her own expense and bringing his/her cumulative GPA above 2.00 and by completing the appropriate percentage of credit hours attempted to meet the 67% cumulative pace of progression rate.

- A student may also appeal his/her financial aid suspension status (please review the appeal process below).

### **Financial Aid Appeal/Probation**

A student may appeal his/her financial aid suspension if extenuating circumstances (death of a relative, injury or illness of the student, or other mitigating circumstance) exist. Appeals must be made in writing to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee, and must include supporting documentation of the extenuating circumstance. In the appeal request, the student must provide the following information: 1) why the student failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress and 2) what has changed in the student's situation that would allow him/her to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation. If a student's appeal is granted, he or she will be placed on **Financial Aid Probation** allowing the student to receive aid (federal, state or institutional) for one payment period. At that point, the student must meet Miles Community College's standards of academic progress or the requirements of an academic plan that was established on an individual student basis as a result of the appeal process. The Committee's decision is final and may not be appealed further. A student will be allowed one appeal only unless a separate extenuating circumstance occurs. Although rare, a second appeal may be granted with special approval from the Financial Aid Director and the Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

### **OFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS**

Student Withdrawal Procedure: Students who wish to completely withdraw from MCC may do so by completing the official withdrawal form, or by sending written notification, email, or by oral request. If the request is received via email or orally, the Registrar will request (not require) written notification with a signature.

Official Notification: Students may request a withdrawal form from any staff member within Student Services. Prior to receiving the form certain information is recorded in the Student Withdrawal Log. The students' Banner ID number, signature, and date are recorded in order to accurately document the start of the withdrawal process. The withdrawal process starts the day the student provides official notification by signing the Student Withdrawal Log. If available, the official withdrawal date will be determined by the last dates of academically related activity as provided by the student's instructor(s).

Other Official Notification: In the case of a student providing written correspondence, email, or a phone call requesting a withdrawal, MCC has designated the Registrar responsible for documenting the requests. Upon receipt of the correspondence or oral communication the Registrar initiates the withdrawal process by completing the required information on the Student Withdrawal Log. The withdrawal process starts the day the student provides other official notification to the Registrar. If available, the official withdrawal date will be determined by the last dates of academically related activity as provided by the student's instructor(s).

### **UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS**

At the end of each payment period the Financial Aid Director checks the transcripts of all enrolled students and identifies any students who did not receive a passing grade. As MCC does not have a grading policy to determine whether a student unofficially withdrew, the Financial Aid Director uses attendance records and/or drop slips to determine if the student unofficially withdrew. Instructors who issue a failing grade to a student submit the last date of attendance along with the grade report. This date and/or correspondence from the instructor is used to determine if a student has unofficially withdrawn or "earned" their failing grade.

### **MAXIMUM TIME FRAME (CREDIT LIMIT)**

Students are expected to complete their program of study in a reasonable time period. A student's aid eligibility is limited to 150% of the required credits for each program of study. Any student who exceeds the maximum time frame will be placed on financial aid suspension. A student's maximum time frame is based on total credit hours attempted at Miles Community College plus any transfer credits accepted towards his/her program of

study. These limits apply regardless of whether or not the student has received financial assistance during prior semesters. Required credits include pre-requisite classes for any program. Examples of credit limits are listed below:

Credits Required for Program in Catalog	Credits of Financial Aid Eligibility
30 required credits (1 year Certificate)	(30 X 150% = 45) 45 attempted credits
60 required credits (2 year Degree)	(60 X 150% = 90) 90 attempted credits
72 required credits (2 year Assoc. of Science-Nursing Degree)	(72 X 150% = 108) 108 attempted credits

## **All “F” Grades**

MCC has developed a mechanism to identify students who began attendance and received Title IV funds and unofficially withdrew without providing notification. At the end of each payment period the Financial Aid Director checks the transcripts of all enrolled students and identifies any students who did not receive a passing grade. As MCC does not have a grading policy to determine whether a student unofficially withdrew, the Financial Aid Director uses attendance records and/or drop slips to determine if the student unofficially withdrew. Instructors who issue a failing grade to a student submit the last date of attendance along with the grade report. This date and/or correspondence from the instructor is used to determine if a student has unofficially withdrawn or “earned” their failing grade. If it is determined that the student did not “earn” the failing grade and no other passing grades are reported a return of title IV funds calculation is performed.

## **Incomplete Grades**

MCC academic policy allows instructors to issue an “I” grade for incomplete coursework. The student must have completed 75% of the course to earn the “I” grade. The instructor is also required to submit a last date of attendance for the student receiving the incomplete grade. Incompletes do not the GPA but are counted as credits attempted but not completed for SAP purposes. If a student fails to earn a passing grade and also receives an incomplete grade, the incomplete is treated as a failing grade and a R2T4 calculation is performed. If the grade is changed to a passing grade within the specified timeframe the student’s eligibility will be recalculated at that time.

## **W/WF Grades**

“WF” grades are issued to students who drop a class past the last day to drop without penalty deadline and are failing and the time of the drop. WF grades effect a student’s GPA the same as an “F” grade, and also count as credits attempted but not completed.

## **Repeat Coursework**

For financial aid purposes, repeat coursework will be considered as hours attempted and may be used to determine enrollment status. A student may receive financial aid for repeated coursework if the student has not previously received a passing grade in the course. Students who repeat a previously passed course may receive financial aid for that course one time only.

## **Dual Degree Seeking Students**

Although rare, students may seek two degrees simultaneously. This may occur when a student seeks to obtain degrees in similar programs. For financial aid purposes, no more than two degrees may be funded at one time. Students who are seeking two degrees must inform Student Services prior to enrollment. Students seeking multiple degrees may receive funding for courses applicable for both degrees if the student has a reasonable possibility of obtaining both degrees. Academic advisors have authority to grant dual degree seeking status; students must meet with their academic advisor for approval. The max time frame rules still apply to students seeking multiple degrees.

## **Change of Major**

Students must be aware that a change in major may prohibit them from graduating within the maximum time frame previously described. Credit hours attempted prior to a change in major program of study are counted towards the maximum time frame if those credit hours are applicable to the new degree.

## **Remedial Course Work**

Students may include as part of their minimum credit load certain sub-100 remedial courses which do not apply toward graduation requirements. These courses may be funded, and also count towards credits attempted. However, some remedial courses are “direct assessment” and are **not** financial aid eligible. Direct assessment courses do not award credit. Student’s progresses at their own pace and receive a passing grade with the successful completion of an ending assessment exam.

## **Courses Not Financial Aid Eligible**

Continuing Education (CE) coursework, workshops, independent study, challenge courses, CLEP, noncredit and credit Ed2Go classes are not eligible for financial aid funding.

## **RETURN OF TITLE IV FUNDS**

Effective July 1, 2000, Miles Community College adopted a Return Policy that conforms to the updated version (Section 668.22) of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. Students with Title IV funding who withdraw or cease attendance will be subject to both the Federal Refund Policy regarding the possible return of Title IV funds awarded to the student, as well as the Miles Community College Return of Funds Policy. Only that amount of the semester's aid that has been earned (as a result of the prorated amount of time the student has been in school for the semester) will be eligible for retention on the student's behalf on or before the 60% point in the semester. Title IV and all other aid is viewed as 100% earned after that point in time. Any aid that is not earned must be returned back to its source. If there is a student account balance resulting from these adjustments, the student is responsible for payment. Students who withdraw without attending any class owe a repayment of 100% of the aid they received. Title IV funds will be returned to its source in the following order: Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, Subsidized Stafford Loan, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Plus Loan, Federal Pell Grant, SEOG, Montana Grant, Other Title IV Programs, Students/Parents. **Funds will be returned to the Federal Government within 45 days.** Students who withdraw before receiving all the funds that they could have earned might be eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement. If the post-withdrawal disbursement includes loan funds, students may choose to decline the loan funds so that they don't incur additional debt. Miles Community College will automatically apply grant funds to current charges on the student's account balance. If no balance exists, the student must accept the post-withdrawal grant funds in order for the school to disburse grant funds directly to the student. No portion of a second or subsequent disbursement may be disbursed to students as a post-withdrawal disbursement.

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**Official Notification:** Students may request a withdrawal form from any staff member within Student Services. Prior to receiving the form certain information is recorded in the Student Withdrawal Log. The students' Banner ID number, signature, and date are recorded in order to accurately document the start of the withdrawal process. The withdrawal process starts the day the student provides official notification by signing the Student Withdrawal Log. If available, the official withdrawal date will be determined by the last dates of academically related activity as provided by the student's instructor(s).

**Other Official Notification:** In the case of a student providing written correspondence, email, or a phone call requesting a withdrawal, MCC has designated the Registrar responsible for documenting the requests. Upon

receipt of the correspondence or oral communication the Registrar initiates the withdrawal process by completing the required information on the Student Withdrawal Log. The withdrawal process starts the day the student provides other official notification to the Registrar. If available, the official withdrawal date will be determined by the last dates of academically related activity as provided by the student's instructor(s).

#### **UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS**

MCC has developed a mechanism to identify students who began attendance and received Title IV funds and unofficially withdrew without providing notification. At the end of each payment period the Financial Aid Director checks the transcripts of all enrolled students and identifies any students who did not receive a passing grade. As MCC does not have a grading policy to determine whether a student unofficially withdrew, the Financial Aid Director uses attendance records and/or drop slips to determine if the student unofficially withdrew. Instructors who issue a failing grade to a student submit the last date of attendance along with the grade report. This date and/or correspondence from the instructor is used to determine if a student has unofficially withdrawn or "earned" their failing grade. If available, this date will also be used as the last date of attendance in the Return of Title IV Funds calculation as applicable.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Enrollment Status**

Enrollment Status: full-time student, 12 or more credit hours; three-quarter time student, 9-11 credit hours; half-time student, 6-8 credit hours; and less than half-time student, up to 5 credit hours. For financial aid purposes, enrollment status is based on credit hours for which the student is enrolled as of the published date considered to be the eighth day of the term for Fall and Spring semesters and the fourth class day for Summer semester. Financial aid will be adjusted to reflect less-than-full-time status if the student is not registered for at least 12 credits hours on that date. Financial aid will not be adjusted to reflect credit hours added or dropped after that date. However, when a student is registered for a class on the first day of the term but does not begin attendance, aid will be adjusted as a non-attended class cannot count towards enrollment status. All summer courses are considered one term.

### **Financial Aid Disbursements**

Most types of financial aid (with the exception of work study) are credited to students' accounts to pay institutional charges, such as tuition, fees, room, and board. Any remaining balance after school charges are deducted will be refunded directly to the student no later than 14 days after initial disbursement. These funds are to be used for students' other expenses such as books, supplies, and living expenses. Fee payment and financial aid disbursement occurs on fee payment days, which are on or before the 16th day of the semester. Financial aid disbursements during the summer session will occur on or before the 8th class day. Financial aid disbursement for the mini-sessions will occur on or before the 8th class day of each session.

### **MILES COMMUNITY COLLEGE REFUND POLICY**

Students who begin attendance and drop courses on or prior to the eighth class day as published in the MCC catalog are not responsible for charges associated with those courses. A student is responsible for 100% of charges incurred for all courses not dropped by the eighth class day. Financial aid funds are credited to the student's account to pay institutional charges, such as tuition, fees, room and board. Certain non-institutional charges may also be paid with financial aid funds; however a student may waive the payment of non-institutional charges by contacting the financial aid office.