

NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

3070 SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Introduction

Standards of academic progress are established to require students to progress satisfactorily and timely toward the completion of their degree, diploma or certificate. Additionally, federal regulations require that recipients of federal and/or state financial aid make satisfactory academic progress towards a degree, diploma or certificate to remain eligible for aid. In compliance with federal regulations, the college has established and will apply the following standard of academic progress to all students. The qualitative and quantitative standards of this policy are cumulative and include all periods of enrollment, whether or not a student received financial aid. The registrar's office is responsible for implementing and monitoring the satisfactory academic policy.

Students are responsible for their academic progress and for seeking assistance when experiencing academic difficulty. Students are encouraged to work closely with an advisor or a counselor to ensure that they are successfully completing graduation requirements and maintaining satisfactory progress.

Qualitative Measure (GPA)

All students are required to maintain the following minimum GPA levels:

- **Any student who has attempted 1 to 16 cumulative credits must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 1.75**
- **Any student who has attempted 17 or more cumulative credits must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0**

Grades of A, B, C, D, and F shall be included in the GPA calculation.

Quantitative Measure (Completion Percentage)

All students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 67% of cumulative attempted credits. Successfully completed credits include A, B, C, D, and P.

Maximum Time Frame

Students whose cumulative attempted credits exceed 150% of the credits required to complete their intended degree, diploma or certificate are not eligible for financial aid. Up to 30 remedial and developmental credits shall be excluded from maximum time frame calculation. Maximum time frames for students pursuing double majors, students enrolled in consecutive programs or with previous degrees may be based on specific curricular requirements.

Evaluation Period

Satisfactory academic progress will be evaluated for all students with registered credits at the end of each semester; fall, spring and summer. Any non-standard session courses shall be evaluated during the semester in which they are transcribed. Programs less than one year in length will be evaluated at the midpoint of the program.

Failure to Meet Standards (Warning and Suspension)

Warning Status: If at the end of the semester, a student has not met either the required cumulative GPA standard or required cumulative completion percentage standard, the student shall be allowed to enroll and retain their financial aid eligibility under **warning status** for one semester. Students on warning status are encouraged to meet with an advisor or counselor and complete an Academic Improvement Plan at the beginning of the warning term of enrollment. This document will be placed in the student's file.

Reinstatement of Students on Warning Status: If at the end of the warning period a student who has been on warning status has met both the institution's cumulative GPA and cumulative completion percentage status, NCTC shall end the student's warning status.

Suspension for Students on Warning Status: A student on warning status who fails to meet both the required cumulative GPA and cumulative completion percentage, shall be placed on suspension immediately upon completion of the evaluation. The earliest that a student suspended for the first time may reenroll at NCTC is as follows: if suspended after spring or summer semester, the student may enroll the following spring semester; if suspended after fall semester, the student may enroll the following summer semester. The second suspension will be for one calendar year. The third suspension will be for five calendar years. Students returning after a period of suspension should not assume that financial aid will be reinstated. An appeal to the financial aid office will be required.

Financial Aid Suspension of Students

Maximum Time-Frame Failure: If at the end of the evaluation period a student has failed to meet the maximum time frame measurement, the student shall be suspended from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

Suspension for Extraordinary Circumstances: NCTC may immediately suspend students from financial aid eligibility in the event of extraordinary circumstances which may include but are not limited to the following:

- i) previously suspended students who have been reinstated whose academic performance falls below acceptable standards during a subsequent semester;
- ii) students who register for courses, receive financial aid, and who do not attend classes; and
- iii) students whose attendance patterns appear to abuse the receipt of financial aid.

Suspension for Inability to Meet Program Requirements within the Maximum Time Frame: If at the end of any evaluation period NCTC determines that it is not possible for a student to raise her or his GPA or course completion percentage to meet NCTC's standards before the student would reach the end of the program for which he or she is receiving financial aid, NCTC shall suspend the student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

Appeals and Probation

Appeal for Reenrollment

Any student who has been suspended from enrollment due to failure to make satisfactory academic progress may appeal their ability to enroll in courses based on documented unusual or extenuating circumstances which may include but is not limited to death of a relative, illness, hospitalization, or injury of the student by using the college Academic Appeal Procedure. The student must complete the Appeal Form accurately and submit the form to the campus registrar. The student shall submit, as part of the appeal, information regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next semester. If the student wants to present their case in person to the Academic Appeal committee, they must notify the campus registrar of that decision at the time the appeal is submitted.

An appeal may be approved only if NCTC:

1. Has determined that the student has documented unusual or extenuating circumstances and should be able to meet SAP standards at the end of the next evaluation period; or
2. Develops an academic plan with the student that, if followed, shall ensure that the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time. If the academic plan includes term standards of GPA and percent of completion, they shall be higher than the institution's cumulative standards.

The academic plan may include but is not limited to the following:

- i) a restriction on the number of credits;
- ii) a requirement that certain courses be taken;
- iii) a requirement regarding class attendance;
- iv) a requirement that scheduled meetings occur with a counselor or advisor to review student progress.

The Academic Appeal committee will notify the student of the outcome in writing. Notification of approved appeals shall include the standards that the student is expected to meet or the academic plan that the student is expected to complete. Notification of denied appeals shall describe the reason(s) for the denial and the institution's process for appealing that denial according to NCTC Student Complaints and Grievances procedure 3240P. A separate process exists to appeal for reinstatement of financial aid. This process is explained below.

Probationary Status:

A student who has successfully appealed shall be placed on probation for one semester. If at the end of the next semester, a student on probation status

1. Has met the institution's cumulative GPA and cumulative completion percentage standards, the student shall return to good standing.
2. Has not met the institution's cumulative GPA and cumulative completion percentage standards but has met the conditions specified in his/her academic plan, the student shall retain probationary status for a subsequent evaluation period.
3. Has not met the institution's cumulative GPA and cumulative completion percentage standards and has also not met the conditions specified in his/her academic plan, the student shall be re-suspended immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

Appeal for Reinstatement of Financial Aid

Any student who has been suspended from financial aid may appeal their ability to receive financial aid directly to the financial aid director by using the Appeal/Petition for Reinstatement of Financial Aid Form. The student must accurately complete and submit the form with supporting documentation to the financial aid office; the financial aid director will notify the student of the outcome in writing. Neither paying for their own classes nor sitting out a period of time is sufficient in and of itself to re-establish a student's financial aid eligibility. Students whose financial aid eligibility has been suspended may regain their eligibility only through this appeal process or when they are again meeting the institution's financial aid satisfactory academic progress GPA and completion percentage standards.

Appeals will be granted in situations that demonstrate unusual or extenuating circumstances. Unusual or extenuating circumstances may include but are not limited to the following: death of a relative, illness, injury, or hospitalization of the student. It is required that students attach appropriate supportive documentation, such as doctor's statements to their form.

The student shall submit, as part of the appeal, information as requested regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next semester

An appeal may be approved only if the financial aid director:

1. Has determined that the student should be able to meet SAP standards at the end of the next evaluation period; or
2. Develops an academic plan with the student that, if followed, shall ensure that the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time. If the academic plan includes term standards of GPA and percent of completion, they shall be higher than the institution's cumulative standards.

Notification of approved appeals shall include the standards that the student is expected to meet or the academic plan that the student is expected to complete in order to retain financial aid eligibility at the end of the next evaluation period. Notification of denied appeals shall describe the reason(s) for the denial and the institution's process for appealing that denial.

A student who files an appeal with the financial aid director requesting to have financial aid reinstated and is denied, may appeal the financial aid decision by using the college Student Appeal Form within five days of receiving the financial aid director's decision. The student must complete the Student Appeal Form accurately and submit the form to the campus registrar; the student must attach a copy of the denied appeal/petition for reinstatement of financial aid; if a student wants to present their case in person to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and the Dean of Student Services, they must notify the campus registrar of that decision at the time that the appeal is submitted; the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs will notify the student of the joint outcome in writing.

The decision of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Dean of Student Services is final and binding.

Notification of Status

NCTC shall notify a student in writing any time the student is placed in a warning, suspension or probation status.

1. Notification of warning – NCTC shall notify a student in writing any time the student is placed in a warning status, and shall inform the student of the conditions of that warning status.
2. Notification of suspension – NCTC shall notify a student in writing any time a student is placed in a suspension status, and shall inform the student of their right to appeal the suspension.
3. Notification of probation – NCTC shall notify a student in writing any time a student is placed in a probationary status, and shall include the standards the student is expected to meet or the academic plan the student is expected to complete at the end of the next evaluation period.

Treatment of Grades

Earned Credits: Successfully completed credits that count toward the required percentage of completion. Earned credits include only A, B, C, D, and P (pass).

Completed Credits: Credits that include A, B, C, D, F, and P. They do not include I (incomplete), W (withdraw), AU (audit), NC (no credit), Z (grade not yet entered), or drops (classes dropped during the drop/add period). Completed credits may qualify for retroactive payment of financial aid.

Successfully Completed Credits: Credits for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, and P are included in the calculation of cumulative completion percentage of credits successfully completed.

Credits Attempted But Not Successfully Completed: Credits for which a student receives a letter grade of I, NC, W, F, and Z shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted as credits attempted.

Incompletes: A grade of “I” may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor in exceptional circumstances and is a temporary grade. It is to be given only to students who cannot complete the course work on schedule because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control. An incomplete grade will automatically become an “F” grade at the end of the next semester if requirements have not been satisfactorily met. Instructors have the option of setting an earlier completion date.

Grade Point Average (GPA): GPA is the quotient of the student’s grade point total divided by the grade point credits. “P” does not carry a grade point value and as such is not calculated in the GPA. A “P” will neither raise nor lower a student’s GPA. However, “P” counts toward registered and completed credits.

Grade Points: A letter grade is assigned at the end of the semester for each course in which the student is enrolled. A grade point value for each credit in the course is assigned to each letter grade. Only grades of A, B, C, D and F carry grade point value and shall be included in the GPA calculation.

Grade Point Total: The sum of grade points earned as determined by multiplying the grade point value of the grade by the number of course credits.

Fresh Start (Academic Amnesty): Credits for which students have been granted a Fresh Start (Academic Amnesty) shall be recorded and retained in the Student Data System in such a way that they will be included in both the qualitative and/or quantitative measurements of financial aid satisfactory academic progress.

Audited Courses: Audited courses (AU) are not funded by financial aid and are not included in any financial aid satisfactory academic progress measurements.

Consortium Credits: Credits for which a student is registered at another college which are accepted by NCTC for the purposes of processing financial aid are to be included for purposes of calculating satisfactory academic progress (cumulative GPA, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame calculations).

Remedial/Developmental Courses: Credits awarded for remedial or developmental course work (below 100 level) shall be included in the qualitative and quantitative percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress. Students may receive financial aid for these credits up to a maximum of 30 semester credit hours. Up to 30 remedial and developmental credits shall be excluded from maximum time frame calculation.

Repeated Courses: In order to successfully complete a course as defined by program requirements, a student may repeat a course no more than two (2) times. Repeating a course will not remove previous attempts from the student's transcript. The best grade will become the grade calculated for GPA purposes. All repeated credits are included in the completion percentage calculation for satisfactory academic progress and are taken into consideration when calculating maximum time frame. A student shall not be permitted to receive financial aid for more than one repetition of a previously passed course. In order for repeated courses to be calculated into a student's GPA, a passing grade must be earned. Repeating a course will not remove previously posted Satisfactory Academic Progress notations on the student's transcript.

Transfer Credits: Transfer credits are credits earned at another college which are accepted by NCTC. Transfer credits accepted by NCTC and applied to the student's program requirements shall be counted as credits attempted and completed for calculation of cumulative completion percentage. Grades associated with these credits shall not be used in calculating cumulative GPA. Transfer credits will be counted when calculating the 150% timeframe if the credits apply towards the student's current degree, diploma, or certificate.

Withdrawals: Credits for which a grade of “W” is received are considered attempted credits but not successfully completed credits for the purpose of monitoring satisfactory academic progress. A “W” does not impact GPA, but does negatively impact the cumulative completion percentage.

Date of Implementation:

Date of Adoption: 6/2/04

Date & Subject of Revisions: AASC Approved 5/9/06; Executive Council Approval 5/18/06; Revision based on MnSCU Changes, First Read AASC 11/15/06; Rev.5/23/07 requested by Financial Aid; Rev. 2/1/08; Rev. 2/29/08; AASC Approval 4/7/08; Rev. Position Titles 6/9/08

12/16/08 – Revised

3/26/10 – Revised (same language as Fresh Start Policy for third suspension)

4/6/10 AASC 1st Read

4/22/10 – Revised with recommendations

Approved AASC 2nd Read

Cabinet Approval 5/24/10

12/2/10 Made change to title of form; Student Appeal/Petition to Student Appeal

04/29/11 Updated

05/20/11 Revised

Cabinet Approved 6/9/11

11/9/11 System Change