VCSU - SATISFACTORY PROGRESS POLICY

Introduction

Federal regulations require that all institutions participating in Title IV Student Financial Aid Programs establish, publish, and apply standards of satisfactory progress for each student enrolled.

To ensure compliance with these regulations, the following policy will be in effect governing standards of satisfactory progress for all students attending Valley City State University. Students who fail to meet these standards of satisfactory progress will be ineligible to receive financial aid until eligibility has been reestablished.

Satisfactory Progress Policy

To be eligible to receive all federal aid, the student must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment and determined to be a “regular student” enrolled in an “eligible program” for the purpose of obtaining a degree. The student must be in good academic standing and must be making satisfactory progress toward the completion of a degree.

All periods of the student’s enrollment count when assessing progress, even periods in which the student did not receive federal student aid funds.

Pace standards include a maximum time frame allowed for financial aid eligibility. All credits transferred to the University and/or credits earned at VCSU will apply towards the maximum number of credits allowed. The maximum time frame for completion of a student’s degree program must not exceed 150% of the published length of the program (equates to 180 credit hours attempted for a baccalaureate program). Drops/withdrawal credits are counted as ‘attempted’ and can affect eligibility. Changing majors, degree programs, or pursuing a second degree will not exclude previous attempted credits when determining maximum credits attempted.

The following qualitative measures have been established as grade point average standards indicating satisfactory progress toward a degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Cum GPA Required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Semester</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Semester</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Semester</td>
<td>2.00</td>
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</table>

A student ‘admitted’ into teacher education must maintain a 2.75 cumulative GPA in order to receive financial aid.

The standards apply to all regularly enrolled students. Students will be evaluated at the completion of each semester. A student not making satisfactory progress, as indicated by this standard, will be placed on “financial warning” the next semester.

To maintain PACE satisfactory progress a student (i.e. full-time, ¾ time, ½ time, and less than ½ time) is required to complete a minimum of 66.67% of the credit hours attempted each academic term.

In addition, all students are required to complete no less than 25% of attempted credits each semester or face immediate Financial Aid Disqualification.

Additional Standards Used to Evaluate Satisfactory Progress

1. All students, including transfer students, enrolling at Valley City State University for the first time will be assumed to be making satisfactory progress.
2. Cumulative credit hours attempted for each academic year will be a total of the greatest number of hours a student is registered for on any of these given dates: First day of classes, last day to add, last day to drop, last day of classes for each academic semester.
3. Non-credit remedial courses will be counted in ‘hours attempted’ evaluation. However grades will not be counted in GPA. If the courses are failed/incomplete they will not be counted as completed in the evaluation.
4. Students must be making satisfactory progress according to the requirements of this policy PRIOR to receiving financial aid.
5. Credit hours completed with a grade of “D” or better, or “S” attempted on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis, will be used to calculate hours earned as well as all GPA Calculations.
6. Incompletes are considered the same as ‘failed’ when evaluating Satisfactory Progress. When an incomplete grade is changed to complete satisfactory progress will be recalculated as soon as the office is notified or at the end of the semester.
7. If a student receives a grade change, Satisfactory Progress will be recalculated as soon as the office is notified or at the end of the semester.

8. Grades of Failed (F), Unsatisfactory (U), Incomplete (I), Withdrawn (W), and Not Reported (NR), count as credits attempted but not completed and will be applied towards the maximum number of credits attempted.

9. Students who receive all F’s (F = Attended, FN = Stopped Attending and requires last date of attendance, FNN = Never Attended) for a term will be evaluated based on Last Date of Attendance (LDA) submitted by instructors. Using the most recent LDA a calculation will be performed on aid to determine if funds were earned for time attending. If necessary funds will be returned to the federal government and the student will be responsible for any bills incurred at VCSU while enrolled.

10. Courses that are repeated will count in the calculation of hours attempted and completed hours earned if the student receives a passing grade. Repeated courses are limited for aid consideration. You may repeat a course one time only to improve a grade. However, if the course was ‘failed’ it may be repeated as needed to get a passing grade. Courses repeated to improve grade status DO NOT QUALIFY FOR AID CONSIDERATION if repeated more than once! If you withdraw from a ‘repeated’ course before the end of the semester, it will not be counted as a repeat but it will count as attempted credits.

11. Courses taken for audit only will not be considered for aid.

12. Students with a previous Bachelor’s Degree from another institution and wishing to pursue a second degree from VCSU, will be considered by filing a ‘Previous Degree Request form’ and submitting a list of ‘required only courses/credits needed for a second degree and approved by an advisor.

13. Any student who withdraws from the University because of extenuating circumstances (such as lengthy and serious illness, family emergencies, legal or emotional reasons) and thus fails to make satisfactory progress may appeal to reestablish financial aid eligibility.

Evaluation

The Financial Aid Office will perform a QUALITATIVE and PACE review of academic records. Those students currently receiving financial aid and who fail to meet the GPA standard or the pace standard of satisfactory progress will receive notification regarding financial aid warning or financial aid disqualification by email and letter. However, since all students are required to meet these standards of satisfactory progress, the academic transcripts of those students who have not previously received financial aid will be reviewed at the time they make application for financial aid and they will be notified regarding their eligibility status at that time.

Warning/Disqualification

A student who is on a financial warning due to qualitative GPA and/or pace hours must bring his/her cumulative grade point up to the required level both by term and cumulatively. The student must also bring his/her cumulative PACE requirement up to 66.67% for the term and cumulatively or he/she will be disqualified from financial aid.

Any student failing to meet the standard of this policy will be ineligible to receive financial aid.

Reestablishing Eligibility

Any student who loses FSA eligibility because he/she is not meeting VCSU’s satisfactory academic progress standards will regain eligibility once the student meets the standards. Implicit in this provision is the fact that the student must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress before financial aid eligibility can be reestablished (i.e. successful completion of 66.67% of hours attempted and meeting the minimum GPA standards). Students who are determined ineligible to receive financial aid are encouraged to remain in school in order to reestablish their eligibility by attaining the required minimum 2.00 quantitative GPA and 66.67% cumulative Pace standard (but do not qualify for FSA until the standards are met).

Appeal

A student who has been placed on financial aid disqualification may appeal by submitting an appeal in writing to the Financial Aid Director. Specific guidelines have been established and must be followed for consideration. A written appeal must explain why the student failed to make satisfactory progress and what has changed in his/her situation that will allow him/her to make satisfactory progress at the next evaluation. If this is not the student’s first appeal, the student must submit a three semester plan of study (POS) with the appeal for consideration. If the appeal is due
to extenuating circumstances such as family emergency, death in family, illness, etc. documentation must be attached and a plan as to how circumstances will be dealt with in the future. Appeals (and all required information) should be submitted as early as possible BUT NO LATER than the first three days of the semester in question.

Appeals may be submitted in writing or by email BUT must be delivered to the Financial Aid Office by the deadline. The Financial Aid Committee will review the appeal, and the student will be notified regarding the results. The Financial Aid Committee shall consist of the Director of Financial Aid (Chair and non-voting member unless to break a tie), the Foundation Director (or his/her representative), the Director of Enrollment Services, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Business Affairs, two Faculty Association members and one Student Representative.

Probation
A student who has a successful appeal will be placed on financial aid probation for one term only. If at the end of the next semester the student fails to meet the requirements of the probation status determined by the Financial Aid Committee, the student will be disqualified from financial aid for the future. Students who complete 100% of attempted credits and earn a 2.00 semester GPA but fail to meet the Satisfactory Progress requirements cumulatively, are eligible to apply for another appeal the next semester.

Approved appeals
Approved appeals will require students to sign a contract which states they understand they must complete 100% of attempted credits and attain a 2.00 term GPA or better for the term or the student will be unable to re-appeal at the end of the semester.

Appeal Denial
Should the appeal be denied on first review, a student has the right to resubmit a second appeal along with a formalized/approved (by advisor) plan of study for the next three semesters outlining projected grade goals and GPA by term. There is no guarantee that a second appeal will be approved.

(Revised 2/12/2015)