

Financial Aid Guidelines for Faculty and Staff – Concerning Academic Connections to Receiving Financial Aid

Provided by the Registrar's office from an AACRAO Conference Session

Academic Standing - Federal Aid definition vs. Institutional definition

Federal Definitions

- Quantitative as well as qualitative
 - Qualitative standard must be at least as strict as the standard for non-aid recipients and must be at least a passing grade
 - Quantitative standard requires that programs be successfully completed in no more than 150% of the standard time frame
 - Both standards must show progress toward completion (GPA goes up not down and ratio of completed courses versus attempted courses goes up and not down)
 - For financial aid purposes all registered courses are attempted including Incompletes, Withdrawn and all separate attempts at a Repeated courses
- Loss of eligibility and granting of FA probation (only if reviewed after every term)
 - FA probation can be granted only if academic progress is reviewed each term and requires an academic plan
 - FA probation can be granted for more than one term if the student has met the requirements of the prior academic plan
 - The approval of probation should include monitoring and interventions as needed
- Academic Warning
 - Academic warning status is a one term extension of financial aid eligibility. It can be granted once without appeal and without an academic plan in place. It cannot be granted in two sequential terms
 - The approval of a warning should include monitoring and interventions as needed
- Academic Plans
 - These are plans that are mapped out by an academic department, advisor, and a copy provided to the Director of Financial Aid

Enrollment Status – full time, part time, periods of non-enrollment

- Institution must define full time, part time, and less than half time in their academic policies
- There is no loan eligibility in any term in which the student is enrolled at less than half time in eligible courses
- Courses that do not apply toward the eligible degree or certificate program do not apply to enrollment status for receiving financial aid
- The institution must define its policy on Repeat courses. Financial aid cannot be allowed more than once for a course that was previously passed

Attendance

- There is no eligibility for financial aid for a course in which the student did not begin attendance. This is referred to as “Never Attending.” A student that is registered for a course but did not show must be reported by the end of the drop/add period, than dropped from the class roster, reported to the Bursar and Financial aid offices, and with “timely” dates.
- If a student stops attending all courses during a term, a “timely” full withdrawal must be processed, financial aid must perform a federal re-calculation to determine if any federal aid must be returned to the government

- Modules (courses that are a shorter in length than the start and end of a term) are treated separately in a fairly complex manner

Withdrawals (official and federally defined “unofficial withdrawals”) – Return of Federal Aid

- The federal calculation determines aid that is “earned” by the student based on courses in which they began attendance and the last date attended before withdrawal
- The federal calculation looks at aid that is disbursed and aid that “could have been disbursed”
- The requirement to return federal aid or offer post-withdrawal disbursements of aid does not care if there is a tuition credit or debt on the student’s account after the withdrawal has been processed

Key Points

- There is no aid eligibility if a student does not begin attendance (academic activity) in an “eligible course.” A course enrolled in, but is not a degree, concentration, or certificate requirement, must be paid for by the other means that Federal Title IV funding.
- Financial Aid rules are almost always federal requirements, thus a financial aid office is rarely able to waive the rules
- Students must be well informed on the rules so that informed decisions maybe made and unpleasant outcomes avoided whenever possible

Where to Find More Information:

<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/>