

# Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid

## Acceptable Academic Progress & Academic Standing for Federal Aid

In accordance with federal regulations, the Financial Aid Office must monitor each student's progress toward the completion of a degree or certificate. Financial Aid staff members will review the following quantitative and qualitative measures **once annually, upon completion of each spring term.**

- Cumulative review of college credits completed
- Cumulative GPA
- Timeframe needed for program completion

Students who meet the guidelines established are considered to be in acceptable standing for financial aid and will be eligible to receive financial assistance for the upcoming academic year. All terms of enrollment, including those where a student did not receive financial aid, are included in this evaluation. Transfer credits that count toward degree requirements at Pitt-Johnstown are also included in this evaluation.

## Student Aid Programs Impacted

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work-Study
- Federal PLUS Loans
- some alternative loans (check with your lender)
- most University aid

To maintain PHEAA State Grant eligibility, PHEAA has developed its own progress guidelines, which are different than those found within. Visit [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org) or contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

## Credit Requirement

Students must successfully complete 67% of the cumulative total number of credits attempted. For example, a student who has attempted 57 credits must have successfully completed at least 39 credits to be in acceptable academic standing. All credits for which a student is enrolled after the add/drop period are included in this calculation as attempted credits.

- **Successfully Completed Credits**-Credits in which a student earns a grade of A, B, C, D, H, S, or P or those that have transferred toward the student's degree.
- **Course Drop/Semester Withdrawal**- Courses dropped or semester withdrawals occurring during the add/drop period will not count as attempted credits. However, after the add/drop period has ended, courses dropped or a semester withdrawals are counted as attempted credits. Students who have not earned the minimum number of required credits based upon enrollment as the result of the course drop or semester withdrawal will not be in acceptable academic progress.
- **Failing/Incomplete Grades**- Credits for a course in which students receive failing ("F") or incomplete ("G" or "I") grades are not considered successfully completed; therefore, students who have not earned the minimum number of required credits based upon enrollment as the result of failing or receiving an incomplete grade will not be in acceptable academic progress. Students who receive a letter grade for an incomplete grade must complete the Financial Aid Exception form to have their status re-evaluated.
- **Repeated Courses**- All completed and attempted credits will be counted toward the 67% completion rate. Please note, however, that federal regulations allow for financial aid to pay for only one retake of any previously passed course, so taking a course more than twice could affect your enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

## GPA Requirement

The minimum GPA requirements are determined by the total number credits attempted at any University of Pittsburgh campus, as well as any credits that have transferred into Pitt-Johnstown. Transfer credits are not included in the cumulative GPA calculation.

- Upon completion of the first academic year, students must achieve a minimum 1.50 cumulative GPA.
- Upon completion of the second academic year and thereafter, students must achieve a minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA.

## Timeframe for Program Completion

Students must complete their program of study within 150% rate of the published length of their program; therefore, to maintain financial aid eligibility, students may not exceed the following number of attempted credits based upon the program in which they are enrolled:

- Associate Degree-a maximum of 90 attempted credits
- Bachelor's Degree in Engineering-a maximum of 195 attempted credits
- Bachelor's Degree all other majors-a maximum of 180 attempted credits

**Please take note...**most Bachelor's Degree programs, with the exception of the engineering program, require 120 credits for completion. Some financial aid programs, such as the PHEAA State Grant program and some campus-based scholarships, impose a four year limit of receipt; therefore, students who enroll for less than an average of 15 credits per term may exhaust eligibility for certain financial aid programs before successfully completing their degrees.

### **Failure to Meet Established Requirements**

The Financial Aid Office will evaluate academic progress **upon the completion of each spring term**. Students who have not maintained the required cumulative GPA, and/or those who have not successfully completed 67% of their total attempted credits will lose financial aid eligibility until eligibility is re-established or an Appeal Form is approved by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee.

Students who have exceeded the established timeframe for program completion and have reached senior status or are pursuing a second degree may also complete an Appeal Form and provide an advisor-completed Maximum Timeframe Completion Plan Form for reconsideration of aid eligibility.

Students who are academically dismissed are automatically ineligible for further financial aid until eligibility is re-established.

### **Re-establishing Eligibility**

Students may re-establish financial aid eligibility by successfully completing 67% of their total attempted credits and meeting the cumulative GPA requirement. A reevaluation of eligibility will only occur upon receipt of the Financial Aid Exception Form.

Those who have grades posted for incomplete coursework, have grades changed, have grades posted upon completion of a study abroad program, or successfully complete future term coursework that resolves the deficiency or deficiencies of not meeting progress must complete the Financial Aid Exception Form. Please note that credits taken outside of the Pitt system must transfer in and apply toward your degree to be included in the calculation, and that GPAs earned outside of the Pitt system do not transfer.

The deadline to submit the Financial Aid Exception form is the 60% point of the fall term if you would like to have your financial aid eligibility re-evaluated for either the fall term or the entire academic year or by the 60% point of the spring term if you would like to have your financial aid eligibility re-evaluated for the spring term only.

### **Written Appeal for Academic Progress**

Students may appeal the loss of financial aid eligibility **only if an extreme circumstance due to events beyond the student's control contributed to not meeting the established requirements**. Examples of such circumstances include a serious illness or injury to the student that required an extended recovery time or the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, but do not include poor time management or class difficulty. If such mitigating circumstances can be documented for the specific term(s) when the deficiencies occurred, the student should submit an appeal that details the situation that caused the deficiency, along with all supporting documentation and an explanation of what has changed that will allow the student to meet the established requirements after the next term. Appropriate documentation will support the reason given for the basis of the appeal. **Incomplete forms and requests without proper documentation will be automatically denied.**

The completed Appeal Form and the required documentation must be returned to the Financial Aid Office by the 60% point of the term in which reconsideration is being requested. The appeal form and the required documentation will then be forwarded to the Financial Aid Appeal Committee for review. The committee must determine if the student will be able to make satisfactory progress during the next term. The committee's decision is final and may not be appealed. Students will receive written notification of the committee's decision.

If the committee grants an appeal and it is mathematically possible for the student to re-establish eligibility after one term, the student will be placed on "financial aid warning" status and financial aid eligibility will be reinstated for one term only. If the student does not make satisfactory progress upon completion of the semester for which the appeal was granted, then the student will lose eligibility for financial aid once again. A second appeal will not be considered. (Professional judgment may be exercised in certain situations).

If the committee grants an appeal and it is not mathematically possible for the student to re-establish eligibility after one term, the student may opt to accept the terms and conditions of an academic plan to regain financial aid eligibility. Students who continue to meet the terms and conditions of their academic plans will maintain financial aid eligibility. Those who fail to meet the terms and conditions of their academic plans will lose eligibility for financial aid until they re-establish eligibility on their own accord. (Professional judgment may be exercised in certain situations).

If an appeal is denied, the student may not receive financial aid from any of the programs impacted until eligibility is re-established.

### **Questions**

All questions regarding academic progress for financial aid should be directed to the Financial Aid Office's staff. Please call 814.269.7045 or toll free 800.881.5544.

Please note that some Alternative Loan lenders do not require academic progress as a requirement for securing funding through their institution. Visit [www.pitt-johnstown.pitt.edu/AltLoans](http://www.pitt-johnstown.pitt.edu/AltLoans) for more information about Alternative Loans.