**Policy & Procedures**

**Student Policy - Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Federal Financial Aid Eligibility**

**Policy:**

Bismarck State College, in compliance with federal regulations, established these policies and procedures to ensure that students who receive federal financial aid are making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree, diploma, or certificate. This policy applies to all periods of enrollment whether the student received federal aid during those periods or not. Students who fail to meet these standards of satisfactory academic progress will not be eligible to receive federal financial assistance until eligibility has been re-established.

Note: Financial Aid Status is NOT the same as Academic Standing.

**Measures of Satisfactory Progress:**

Two measures of satisfactory progress are used:

a) qualitative academic standard (GPA) and

b) quantitative rate of progress (Pace).

**Qualitative Academic Standard (Grade Point Average):**

Students who receive Federal financial aid (i.e. Pell Grant, Supplemental Grant, Perkins Loan, Work Study, ND State Grant and Federal Direct Loan) are required to maintain a grade point average of 2.00.

At the conclusion of each semester the cumulative grade point average will be evaluated for all students at Bismarck State College. All students must have earned a minimum of a 2.00 grade point average for each semester of attendance. Students not meeting the 2.00 minimum GPA standard will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester the student enrolls in. Students on Financial Aid Warning have access to all financial aid programs for which he or she is eligible for during that semester. If the student does not improve his or her cumulative GPA to at least a 2.00 by the end of the warning semester, the student will then be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification, which terminates financial aid eligibility.

**Quantitative Rate of Progress (Pace of Progress):**

1. **Maximum Time Frame:** All students are expected to complete his or her degree requirements within 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if a program requires 60 credits to complete, the student would be allowed 90 attempted credits ($60 \times 150\% = 90$ attempted credits)
Rate of Progress Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program of Study</th>
<th>Credits Required</th>
<th>Max Credits Allowable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate in Arts or Associate in Science</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90 = (60*150%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate in Applied Science Power or Process Plant</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.5 = (67*150%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate in Applied Science Surgical Technology</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>97.5 = (65*150%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Completion of Attempted Credits:** Students must successfully complete two-thirds (66.667%) of the credits he or she attempts each semester and cumulatively complete two-thirds of attempted credits throughout his or her academic career. This percentage is determined by dividing the total number of successfully completed credits by the total number of credits the student was registered for on the Bismarck State College financial aid census date. The financial aid census date is the first day after the last day to drop/add classes at 100% refund, typically 9 or 10 days after the first day of class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Attempted Credits</th>
<th>Credits Withdrawn From</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
<th>SAP Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>12 Credits</td>
<td>6 Credits</td>
<td>50% = (6/12)</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>12 Credits</td>
<td>0 Credits</td>
<td>100% = (12/12)</td>
<td>Meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td>24 Credits</td>
<td>6 Credits</td>
<td>75% = (18/24)</td>
<td>Meets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who officially withdraw from all classes during any given semester will be placed on a Financial Aid Warning for the next semester the student enrolls in.

***Exceptions for Immediate Financial Aid Disqualification:

**Unofficial Withdrawal:** Students who receive all failing grades or incomplete grades in any given semester are considered to have unofficially withdrawn from the college and are immediately placed on financial aid disqualification without a warning period. Federal Regulations require that a refund calculation be calculated for all students receiving federal funds, unless the financial aid office staff can document an official last date of attendance beyond the 60% point in any semester. The calculation and return of funds may result in the student owing a balance to Bismarck State College and/or U.S. Department of Education.

**Administrative Withdrawal:** Students whose enrollment is cancelled administratively due to non-attendance will automatically be placed on a financial aid disqualification.

**Review Procedures:**

1. Credit hours attempted per term will be measured after the last day to add a class at 100% refund (normally 9 to 10 days after the first day of class) for the quantitative rate of progress.
2. Upon the completion of each semester, the financial aid department will review the grade point average and earned credits of each financial aid recipient. Grades of F (failure), U (unsatisfactory), W (withdrawn), I (incomplete), and NR (not reported) count as attempted, but not completed credits and will apply toward the maximum number of credits attempted. Students who are not meeting the satisfactory guidelines as outlined above will be placed either on Financial Aid Warning or Disqualification.

**Notification Process:**

Students will receive a notification of his or her satisfactory academic progress warning or disqualification status at the end of each semester after grades are posted. Notification will be via a letter or email sent to the student and posted on his or her campus connection to-do list.

**Financial Aid Warning** - means a student can receive federal financial aid while in this status.

Students placed on financial aid warning must improve his or her academic performance during the next semester of enrollment. During that semester, students who are on Financial Aid Warning must improve his or her cumulative GPA to at least a 2.00 and/or raise his or her completion of attempted credits to at least 66.667%. If the student does not meet those parameters he or she will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification.

***Exception: Students placed on a Financial Aid Warning due only to maximum credits. Students on warning for maximum attempted credits will be required to submit an academic plan to the financial aid office for review to determine if he or she will be eligible for funding beyond the warning semester.

**Financial Aid Disqualification** - means a student cannot receive federal financial aid while in this status. Financial aid refers to federal grants, loans, and work-study programs.

Students will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification at the end of any semester if he or she was placed on Financial Aid Warning during the previous regular semester and his or her cumulative grade point average is still below the required minimum of a 2.00 GPA and/or his or her percentage of completion is below the required 66.667%.

**Criteria for Re-Establishing Eligibility for Federal Financial Aid:**

A student placed on Financial Aid Disqualification must re-establish eligibility for aid before he or she can continue to receive federal financial aid. To do this a student may:

1. Complete one semester successfully without federal financial aid. Students must complete all attempted credits (Minimum of 6) with at least a 2.0 grade point average. Students would then need to file an appeal to request reinstatement of financial aid.

2. If "I" (incomplete) credits are a factor in failure to maintain satisfactory progress, subsequent completion of these credits may be used to re-establish eligibility for aid.

3. Students who are placed on Financial Aid Disqualification may complete an appeal form and submit all requested documents to the Financial Aid Office. Students are highly encouraged to file an appeal prior to the start of any given semester. Students who file an appeal after the start of any given semester may be required to meet or visit with a financial aid administrator to determine preparedness and to answer any questions regarding preparedness.

   A) Students will be notified in writing or via email of the appeal decision of the Financial Aid Office within 15 working days of reaching a decision.
B) All appeals of extenuating circumstances will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If an appeal is approved, the student eligibility for financial aid will be re-instated on a probationary status.

**Financial Aid Probation** – If the financial aid office approves a student’s appeal of his or her Financial Aid Disqualification status, he or she will be placed on a Financial Aid Probation status. A student can receive federal aid in this status. Once on a Financial Aid Probation status, a student will remain on probation as long as he or she continues to meet the requirements of the appeal approval or until he or she has improved his or her statistics to meet the standards of satisfactory academic progress as outlined above.

1. **Academic Plans** – Students who file an appeal are encouraged to supply an academic plan. This plan can include, but is not limited to: What classes a student needs to take to complete his or her program of study; how the student plans to improve his or her statistics to meet or exceed the minimum requirements for federal aid; and the time frame for the student to complete his or her program of study. This plan can be self-produced or with the assistance of an advisor.

   Academic plans for students who are on a warning for maximum credits attempted will need to include which specific classes are still needed to complete degree requirements and what his or her expected graduation/transfer date is. Students may use the Degree Audit feature available on Campus Connection. A copy of the audit, provided to the financial aid office, showing the classes required to complete a program of study, may serve as the students plan for program completion.

**Repeated Coursework:**

All repeated coursework, including those graded with a W, I, or F, count towards the maximum attempted credit limit and the most recent grade earned counts towards the calculation of GPA.

**Remedial Coursework:**

Remedial coursework is eligible for federal aid but does not apply towards a degree or GPA calculations. Enrollment in these courses will increase the number of attempted credits.

**Transfer Credits:**

All undergraduate courses, including those with grades of W, I, and F’s, are transferred in and count towards the maximum attempted credit limit.

**History of This Policy:**

First policy draft January 1, 1988.