

## MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

### What is the Purpose of monitoring academic progress?

Federal regulations and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) require that the University establish and implement a policy to measure whether students applying for financial aid are making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree. NEIU has implemented the following Satisfactory Academic Progress standards necessary to evaluate a financial aid recipient's continued eligibility for funds.

### **Types of Aid Covered by the Policy**

<i>Grants</i>	<i>Loans (must be paid back)</i>	<i>Other Assistance</i>
Federal Pell	Federal Perkins	Federal College Work-Study
Federal SEOG	Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford	ISAC Monetary Award
Federal TEACH	Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford	ISAC Minority Teachers
ISAC National Guard Grant (ING)*	Federal Direct PLUS	ISAC Special Education Teacher
ISAC Veteran Grant (IVG)*	Federal Direct GRAD PLUS	

### Financial Aid Office Policy Statement

Students are expected to:

- Complete successfully sixty-seven percent (67%) of attempted credit hours in which they enroll. The cumulative completion rate is reviewed each term AND
- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or "C" as an undergraduate by the end of each term. Graduate students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or "B" by the end of each term AND
- Complete the program of study within a maximum timeframe of 180 semester credit hours (undergraduate) or 54 semester credit hours (graduate masters).

Academic progress requirements apply to all semesters of enrollment, including those semesters for which no financial aid was disbursed. Although credit hours attempted in developmental coursework do not count against degree requirements, they do count for academic progress purposes – academic grade point average, completion rate and maximum timeframe. \*Pursuant to 23 IL Adm Code 2730 and 2733 students receiving ONLY Illinois National Guard Grant Program OR Illinois Veteran Grant Program awards are exempt from pace & timeframe criteria.

### **Academic Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement**

1. The student's cumulative academic grade point average will be evaluated at the end of each term based on grades received from all attempted coursework including those taken prior to a major change and repeats.
2. If the GPA falls below the requirement, the student's aid will be **suspended**.
3. GPA for developmental coursework is factored into enrollment status and total attempted coursework for financial aid purposes only. Developmental coursework is not factored into a student's official academic standing or degree requirements however; they are factored in for academic progress purposes.
4. Financial aid eligibility will be reinstated once the student has achieved the minimum requirement or successfully reinstated through the appeal process.

### **Course Work Completion Rate (PACE) Requirement**

1. A student must successfully complete at least 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted. **Hours attempted** is defined as semester hours a student is registered after the add/drop period or census date. **Successfully completed** is defined as the total earned number of hours toward graduation in which a student receives a grade of A, B, C, D or P. This includes attempted courses prior to a change in major or academic program, repeat courses as well as developmental coursework and accepted transfer coursework.
2. **Official Withdrawals** are defined as courses dropped after the census date either in person or by way of NEIUport and will be included in hours attempted. A semester of complete withdrawals results in financial aid **suspension**.
3. **Unofficial Withdrawals** are defined as a term of unearned grade points. Examples of unearned grade points include: incomplete (I), failing (F), unofficial withdrawal failing (UWF), never attended failing (NAF) and missing (X). A semester of unofficial withdrawals results in financial aid **suspension**.
4. The standard of 67% will be monitored cumulatively at the end of each term. If, at the end of the term, a

student is below the cumulative 67% standard, the student's aid will be **suspended**. This includes terms in which the student is not receiving aid. Aid will be reinstated once the student has achieved the 67% cumulative completion rate or successfully reinstated through the appeal process.

### **Maximum Timeframe Requirements**

1. Full-time undergraduate students are expected to complete their program of study within a maximum time frame not to exceed six years. The time frame for part-time undergraduate students is pro-rated beyond six years. As 120 credit hours are required for undergraduate programs, students may take up to a maximum 150% or 180 attempted semester hours. **This also includes a limit of 30 semester hours of ESL and/or developmental course work.**
2. Students attempting to earn a second Undergraduate Degree may take up to a maximum 150% of the hours required (as determined by their department) to complete their second Bachelor's degree. This includes the Teacher Certification Program.
3. Full-time graduate (masters) students are expected to complete their program of study within two and one half years. The time frame for part-time graduate students is pro-rated to a maximum of 54 attempted semesters with the exception of those pursuing Counselor Education where the maximum timeframe is 60 attempted semester hours.
4. **Attempted semester hours** include successfully completed coursework, accepted transfer credit hours, incompletes, withdrawals – official and unofficial - as well as credit hours resulting from change in major declaration. An NEIU student may repeat coursework once in order to receive a higher grade. Each attempt counts within maximum timeframe requirements. Withdrawals do not count as repeat coursework.

### **Financial Aid Warning, Probation & Suspension**

Students will be notified at the end of each semester if they are in a warning, suspension status or approaching maximum time frame from the Financial Aid Office. New students who fail to meet the minimum grade point average and/or pace requirements for their first term will be placed on warning status for the following term. Continuing students approaching maximum time frame will be placed on a warning status when they fall within 20 semester hours of the requirement. Students maintain eligibility while on warning status. Once a student's eligibility is suspended, all future financial aid disbursements stop. Students can request to be reinstated through the appeal process. In the instance students are reinstated on a term-by-term basis, the student will remain in a probationary status until the cumulative requirements are achieved. When conditions of reinstatement are not met, students will be suspended.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Guidelines**

If a student is unable to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements due to extenuating circumstances, they may submit an appeal requesting the reinstatement of their financial aid eligibility. Grade changes (e.g. incomplete to an earned grade) submitted after the determination of suspension should be communicated to the Financial Aid Office, as an appeal may no longer be required. Students who wish to appeal after being placed on suspension status must complete the following steps:

1. Submit a signed typewritten statement to the NEIU Financial Aid Office explaining why the requirements were not met. The petition is available in downloadable form at the financial aid office website (<http://www.neiu.edu/financial-aid/>). Letters of appeal sent by e-mail will not be accepted.
2. Include supporting documentation verifying the situation (letter from physician, copy of memorial service, police or accident report, etc.) with the appeal petition.
3. Include an academic plan of action that will enable the student to meet the minimum Standards of Academic Progress requirements in the future.
4. Students suspended for exceeding the maximum hours requirement should also include a degree audit from their department academic advisor listing the courses still needed to complete their degree AND the anticipated date of graduation.
5. **Deadlines for appeals:** Fall semester – October 15, Spring semester – March 15 and Summer semester – June 15.

Appeals will be considered by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Committee, which will render a decision. There is no defined limit on how many appeals a student can submit for review. This committee consists of members from various NEIU faculty and advisors, including the financial aid office. The Committee meets every six to eight weeks during the semester unless an emergency situation occurs and the meeting is rescheduled. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student in writing of the committee's decision.

*Students in suspension status may enroll in classes. However, if their appeal is denied the student is responsible for any charges incurred at NEIU. Financial Aid cannot be retroactively reinstated if an appeal is approved AFTER a semester has ended.*