

**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL AID**  
**SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY**

Federal and state law requires that a recipient of state or federal financial aid make satisfactory academic progress towards a degree or certificate to remain eligible for aid. These laws also require that the standards used must be based on cumulative measures and must include all periods of a student's enrollment, regardless of whether or not the student received financial aid. Therefore, in compliance with federal and state laws, Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) has established the following standards of academic progress which will apply when determining a student's eligibility for Financial Aid. RCTC has designated the Financial Aid Office as the department responsible for ensuring implementation and monitoring of this policy.

**Students bear primary responsibility for their own academic progress and for seeking assistance when experiencing academic difficulty. Students are encouraged to keep a file of their grades and transcripts.**

**Requirements:**

I. Qualitative Measure

Students are required to carry a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 to be considered for and/or maintain eligibility for Financial Aid funding. Refer to Section VIII for more information regarding the treatment of specific courses and grades when determining the student's GPA for purposes of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress.

II. Quantitative Measures

- A. Required completion percentage. Students must successfully earn 67% of cumulative registered credits. Refer to Section VIII for more information regarding what courses will be included when determining the student's completion rate percentage.
- B. Maximum Timeframe. Students may continue to receive financial aid through the number of credits required for the completion of the degree/diploma/certificate multiplied by 150%, provided they meet required GPA and completion rate. Credits transferred from other institutions toward a certificate or degree will be counted in this manner. Refer to Section VIII for more information regarding which courses will be included when determining if the student has exceeded the Maximum Timeframe requirement.

III. Evaluation Period

All students will be evaluated at the end of each term of his/her attendance. Summer Sessions I & II will be combined and progress evaluated as one term. Students enrolled in a program which can be completed within one term shall be reviewed at mid-term. Faculty are responsible to submit grades according to published deadlines as set by the Admissions Office. Deadlines will be set in such a way so as to allow the Financial Aid Office sufficient time to evaluate and notify students on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the subsequent term.

#### IV. Failure to Meet Standards

##### A. Financial Aid Probation and Suspension

###### 1. Maximum Timeframe Standard

Following each term of attendance, a student's progress in terms of the Maximum Timeframe requirement will be evaluated. Students who exceed the maximum number of attempted credits will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension immediately. There will be no probationary period prior to this type of suspension.

###### 2. Qualitative and Quantitative Standards

**A. Evaluation:** Following each term of attendance, a student's academic progress in terms of cumulative GPA and completion rate will be evaluated. Students not meeting the minimum requirements will be placed on Financial Aid Probation after the first occurrence. The probationary period shall be equal to the student's next term of attendance.

**B. Reinstatement of students on probationary status.** If, at the end of the probation period, the student has met the cumulative GPA and completion rate standards, RCTC will reinstate the student's eligibility for aid.

**C. Suspension of students on probationary status.** At the end of the probationary period, if a student's cumulative GPA and/or completion rate does not meet the required standards, RCTC will suspend the student immediately. One exception follows.

If, at the time of review, the student does not meet the cumulative GPA and/or completion rate requirements, but the student does meet these requirements for the term being reviewed, the student will be permitted to remain on a "continued probationary status". This status will be continued until:

1. The student has met the cumulative GPA and completion rate standards,
- at which time the student's aid eligibility will be reinstated.
2. The student fails to meet the GPA and completion rate standard for his/her next term of attendance, in which case the student will be immediately suspended.
- OR-
3. RCTC determines that it is not possible for the student to raise his or her GPA or completion rate to meet the College's standards prior to the end of the program for which the student is receiving aid.

###### 3. Continuation of Students who Successfully Appeal a Financial Aid Suspension

Students who are placed on Financial Aid Suspension have the right to appeal based on unusual or extenuating circumstances. Appeals will be approved on a case by case basis by the Financial Aid Director. If an appeal is approved, the Financial Aid Director will communicate this decision to the student, along with pertinent information regarding the conditions of the appeal and the length of the appeal period.

At the end of the appeal period, as determined by the Financial Aid Director, a student who has met the conditions of their appeal approval shall have his/her appeal status extended for an additional period. A student who fails to meet the conditions of his/her appeal shall be removed from appeal status and his/her eligibility for Financial Aid shall be resuspended immediately.

##### B. Extraordinary Circumstances

Rochester Community and Technical College reserves the right to withhold aid from any student, at any time, who demonstrates an attendance pattern that abuses the receipt of financial assistance. These situations may include, but are not limited to a student who withdraws from all classes two consecutive semesters, a student who has previously attended two or more institutions and has not progressed satisfactorily, a student who does not appear to be pursuing a degree/certificate, etc.

## V. Notification

RCTC will notify a student in writing any time the student is placed in a probationary or suspension status. For students placed on suspension, the notice will also indicate the process by which the student may appeal for reinstatement.

## VI. Appeals

Students who have been placed on Financial Aid Probation or Suspension have the right to appeal. A student who has been placed on Financial Aid Suspension has the right to appeal based on unusual or extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, death of relative, illness, hospitalization or injury of the student. All appeals must be submitted to the RCTC Financial Aid Director, who will review the information submitted and make a determination. If the student is dissatisfied with this decision, the student may appeal to the RCTC Financial Aid Appeals Board. Students wishing to appeal to the Appeals Board should submit his/her request to the Associate Director of Financial Aid, who will serve as the Chairperson for the Appeals Board.

Results of all appeals will be communicated to the student in writing. All appeal approvals will include information regarding the conditions of the appeal and the length of time for which the appeal has been approved.

## VII. Reinstatement

Students may be reinstated when they are again meeting the institution's financial aid satisfactory academic progress qualitative and quantitative standards. In the case of unusual or extenuating circumstances, a student may also be reinstated after having successfully appealed.

## VIII. Additional Elements

### A. Treatment of Grades

Credit: The unit by which academic work is measured.

Registered Credits: The total number of credits for which a student is officially enrolled at the end of the drop/add period each term. Registered credits include repeat coursework, developmental coursework and consortium credits. Registered credits do not include transfer credits or audits.

Completed vs. Non-completed Credits: (*Used to calculate percent of completion*) Completed credits include those with only the grades of A, B, C, D, S and P. Non-completed credits include those with grades of F, FN, FW, I, N, NC, W or Z. Non-completed credits will be treated in the calculation as attempted, but not completed.

Grade Points: Calculated using courses for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F, FN, FW. Does not include I, NC, P, S, W or Z. (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F, FN or FW=0.) Grade point total is the sum of grade points earned as determined by multiplying the grade point value of the grade by the number of course credits. See academic transcript for explanation of historical grading annotations not addressed in this policy.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The quotient of the student's grade point total divided by the grade point credits. Each grade report shows the student's GPA for the term, and cumulative GPA since admission. "P" does not carry a grade point value, and as such, is not calculated in the GPA. A "P" will not improve the student's GPA. However, "P" credits count toward total registered credits.

Incompletes: An "I" is assigned only in exceptional circumstances, and is a temporary grade. An "I" grade will automatically become an "F" (if course is offered Pass/No Credit, the "I" will automatically become an N/C) at the end of the next term if requirements to complete coursework have not been satisfactorily met.

Non-Reported Grades: If an instructor does not report a letter grade, a "Z" is assigned to the course. "Z" does not carry a grade point value, and as such, is not calculated in the GPA. However, "Z" credits count toward total registered credits.

B. Academic Amnesty (Fresh Start)

When reviewing a student's Financial Aid standing under this policy, all credits for which the student has been granted academic amnesty ("fresh start") shall be included in the qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (Completion Rate/Maximum Timeframe) measurements.

C. Audited Courses.

Audited courses are not funded with Financial Aid and are not included in any Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress measurement(s).

D. Consortium Credits.

Credits for which Financial Aid is received under a consortium agreement will be recorded on the student's record. These consortium credits will be included when determining the student's cumulative GPA, completion percentage and maximum time frame calculations.

E. Remedial Credits.

Developmental coursework (below 1000 level) will be included when determining the student's cumulative GPA and completion percentage. Up to 30 remedial/developmental credits shall be excluded when calculating the student's maximum timeframe.

F. Repeated Courses.

Students are allowed to repeat courses for the purpose of passing or improving their grade. All repeated courses are initially included in the GPA and completion rate calculations. All credits are included when determining if the student has exceeded the maximum timeframe criteria.

If they so choose, it is the student's responsibility to petition to the Admissions and Records Office to have their GPA adjusted after repeating a course. If a petition is approved, only the repeated course is included in the student's cumulative GPA. See RCTC policy regarding course repetition, the number of times a course may be repeated and the total number of course repetitions allowed.

G. Transfer Credits.

Accepted transfer credits shall not be counted as credits attempted for calculation of cumulative completion percentage, and grades associated with these credits shall not be used in calculating the student's cumulative GPA. However, accepted transfer credits will be counted when determining the student's maximum timeframe.

H. Withdrawals.

Credits for which a grade of "W" is received are considered attempted, but not successfully completed credits. The "W" grade does not impact GPA but DOES negatively impact the student's cumulative completion percentage.

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