

GASTON COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS AND POLICIES

All students who apply for and receive financial aid must be working toward a Diploma or Associate degree from Gaston College. Financial aid is *not awarded* for certificate programs. In order to assure that the student makes progress toward that degree in terms of number of hours completed each semester and achieving a 2.0 GPA, Gaston College will utilize the following satisfactory academic progress policy.

I. PROGRESS STANDARDS

***SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS will be EVALUATED each SEMESTER
and at the END OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR.
GASTON COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS WILL BE AUDITED EACH SEMESTER.***

- A. In order to be in good standing with the Financial Aid Office, students must maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester. The student must also complete a minimum of 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted each semester to remain in good standing (i.e., if the student has attempted 50 credit hours, the student must earn credit for at least 33 hours).
- B. **Financial Aid Probation** – Students with a GPA below 2.0 for any semester will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for the next semester enrolled. These students may be required to meet with a Counselor in the Gaston College Counseling Center to receive Financial Aid Probation Advisement depending on the status of their cumulative GPA. During this advisement period, students will discuss reasons why their GPA fell below 2.0, as well as develop a plan to remove themselves from this status. If advisement is required, students must submit to the Financial Aid Office a copy of their Financial Aid Probation Advisement form signed by a Counselor. Students may or *may not* receive aid during the probationary period.
- C. Students who demonstrate academic progress by earning a 2.0 GPA during the Financial Aid Probationary semester will be removed from Financial Aid Probation for the next semester enrolled.
- D. **Financial Aid Termination** - Students who do not earn a 2.0 GPA during the Financial Aid Probationary semester (i.e., earn GPA below 2.0 for two consecutive semesters) will be considered not to have made Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress and financial aid will be terminated. Financial Aid Termination will continue until the student, at his/her expense, enrolls for a subsequent semester or semesters and earns a GPA of 2.0 or better.
- E. Academic course work taken at another institution will not be used to determine eligibility for financial aid at Gaston College.
- F. Students receiving financial aid who withdraw from or audit classes more than one semester will be considered not to be making Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress and may have their financial aid terminated. (To avoid termination for this reason, students are urged to choose their course work carefully.)
- G. Students receiving financial aid who completely withdraw from all courses *before the midpoint of a semester* may be in repayment and owe a balance back. This will be calculated based on actual expense incurred from date of enrollment to last date of attendance.
- H. Students receiving financial aid who Audit a course or are a “No Show” in a course will be placed in repayment for each of the courses in which they received aid and owe a balance back. In addition, financial aid cannot be awarded for courses that students received Credit-by-Examination.
- I. No student may receive financial aid beyond five academic years, including students attempting a second degree.
- J. Students must be formally admitted to an eligible program of study at Gaston College and will have all required documents submitted to the Financial Aid Office (without error and on time) as deemed necessary by the Financial Aid Office.
- K. There may be some special awards/scholarships that may require a higher GPA than a 2.0 in order to maintain the financial aid award.

II. FINANCIAL AID TERMINATION and APPEAL

Financial Aid students who earn less than a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive semesters will automatically be placed on Financial Aid Termination. (Aid will not be available for these students.) As stated in item ID, Financial Aid Termination will continue until the student, at his/her expense, enrolls for a subsequent semester or semesters and earns a GPA of 2.0 or better. Should a student successfully complete a subsequent semester or semesters and earns a GPA of 2.0 or better, the student may appeal to the Financial Aid Office to have financial aid reinstated for future semesters. It is important to note that **any financial aid previously awarded before the termination was effective will not be re-instated or reimbursed. One appeal allowed per academic year.**

III. GRADING/COURSE LEVEL STIPULATIONS/REPEATS

- A. For a complete list of the letter grade system used at Gaston College, please refer to the current Gaston College Academic Catalog.
- B. Grades of "AU", "F", "I", "IP", "NS", "X" and "WA" will not be considered as credits successfully completed, and thus may not be funded by financial aid. Credit-by-Examination (CE), Incomplete grades (I), complete Withdrawals (WA), Audits (AU), and No Show (NS) **are not** calculated in the grade-point average and are not funded by financial aid.
- C. Students who receive an "I" grade will be ineligible to receive future financial aid (even if they have been awarded) until this grade has been removed from their transcript.
- D. Financial aid recipients may take a maximum of 30 credit hours in development coursework. Developmental courses (courses numbered below 100) are calculated in the grade-point average once they have been successfully completed with a letter grade assignment although they are *not* counted as courses towards completing degree requirements. Financial aid students may receive an "IP" grade the *first attempt* in a developmental course and remain eligible for financial aid. However, if a financial aid student proceeds to the next developmental level (i.e., MAT 060 to MAT 070) without having received an official letter grade (other than an "IP") in the previous level, that student will be considered not to be making Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. Therefore, the next level developmental course **will not** be paid for by financial aid until the current/prior level is complete.
- E. Financial Aid will pay for repeated courses as long as it falls within the college's repeat policy guidelines. However, Financial Aid will not pay for excessive repeats beyond this policy nor will it pay for repeated courses that are not necessary to complete the student's major (i.e., Elective Courses).
- F. Financial aid will only pay for courses that are required toward the completion of the student's major/program of study as it is listed on file in the Office of the Registrar.

IV. REFUNDS

Gaston College reserves the right to apply your financial aid award(s) to your account to pay tuition, fees, and books first or other balances that may be due for the term in which aid was awarded. Refund checks, if applicable, will be mailed to you. Therefore, your correct address should be on file in the Office of the Registrar. Students that are not attending or have never attended their classes are not entitled to a refund check and should return the check to the Business Office immediately. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed in repayment and owing money back to the college. In the event that the student fails to return the monies, Gaston College has the right to take reasonable measures to recover the funds, including withholding any and all college services and also submitting this information to a collection agency and/or the Attorney General.

V. ELIGIBILITY TIME FRAME REQUIREMENTS

Gaston College Financial Aid students must complete their program of study in a timeframe not to exceed 150% of the published length of their program of study. For instance, if the published length of an academic program is 64 credit hours, the maximum eligibility timeframe cannot exceed 96 (64 x 150%) **attempted** credit hours. On average, most Gaston College Financial Aid students are in danger of losing their eligibility when they approach approximately 100 attempted credit hours for associate degree programs.

Transcripts will be evaluated before a student is awarded aid for the next academic school year. In determining a student's time frame eligibility, **ALL attempted courses and all periods of attendance at Gaston College are considered regardless of whether financial aid was received for these periods.** All developmental courses, repeated courses and transfer credits are also included in the time frame requirements. **Once a student reaches the 150% maximum time frame, they must be considered ineligible for aid.**

YOUR COURSEWORK MUST BE RESTRICTED TO THE MAJOR THAT IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR. STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE BEFORE CHANGING PROGRAMS,

AUDITING AND/OR WITHDRAWING FROM ANY COURSES.