

# Minimum Standards of Academic Progress

The U.S. Department of Education Student Financial Aid regulations require that NEIU establish and maintain a policy to measure whether students applying for financial aid are making satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion. NEIU has implemented the following Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress standards necessary to evaluate a financial aid recipient's continued eligibility for funds.

## Types of Aid Covered by the Policy

Grants	Loans	Other
Federal Pell Grant	Federal Subsidized Direct Loan	Federal College Work-Study
Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	Federal Unsubsidized Direct Loan	ISAC Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant
Federal TEACH	Federal PLUS Direct Loan	ISAC Minority Teachers
ISAC National Guard Grant(ING)*	Federal GRAD PLUS Direct Loan	ISAC Special Education Teacher
ISAC Veteran's Grant (IVG)*		ISAC AIM HIGH/Golden Opportunity Scholarship
		ISAC Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship

## Policy Statement

At the completion of each academic term, 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 time frame of 180 semester credit hours (undergraduate) or 54 semester credit hours (graduate/ masters). The maximum time frame for graduate counseling and social work majors is 60 semester credit hours.

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 toward degree requirements, they do count for academic progress purposes – academic grade point average, completion rate and maximum time frame.

\*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 and time frame 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

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, NP, 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.

1. **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**.
2. **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), not passing (NP), and missing (X). A semester of unofficial withdrawals results in financial aid **suspension**.

3. 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 Time frame 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 prorated 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 prorated to a maximum of 54 attempted semesters with the exception of those pursuing Counselor Education and Social Work where the maximum time frame 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 time frame 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 by Financial Aid. 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 Financial Aid, 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 NEIU Financial Aid explaining why the requirements were not met. The petition is available in downloadable form on the Financial Aid website (<http://www.neiu.edu/financial-aid/>).
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 Financial Aid. The Committee meets every six to eight weeks during the semester unless an emergency situation occurs and the meeting is rescheduled. Financial Aid 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.*