



# FINANCIAL AID APPEAL POLICY

## Satisfactory Academic Progress & Additional Degree

Policy Revised: 3.1.17 | Policy Effective: Spring 2017

### WHAT IS SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS?

In adherence to federal financial aid regulatory requirements, Northwest College evaluates academic progress for each student who applies for and/or receives federal financial aid. The College also specifies academic progress requirements to maintain eligibility for its institutional scholarships. This review is called Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Students who meet the SAP requirements remain eligible to apply for federal financial aid and NWC scholarships. Students who do not meet SAP requirements lose their eligibility to receive federal financial aid and NWC scholarships.

The *Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress* policy for federal student aid is posted on the College's website under the Financial Aid Policies section of the financial aid page, is referenced in the College's published *Financial Aid Disclosures & Student Consumer Information* document (also recorded on the College's website ([www.nwc.edu/fapolicy](http://www.nwc.edu/fapolicy)), and is prominently emphasized on a student's federal aid annual award letter. The academic progress requirements for NWC scholarships are listed in the NWC scholarship notifications and in the *Financial Aid Disclosures & Consumer Information* document.

These academic progress requirements are to encourage students to earn at least the minimum grade point average (GPA) at specific enrollment intervals and to successfully complete their chosen program within the allowable timeframe (credit attempts).

### APPEAL POLICY

Students who are ineligible for federal financial aid or NWC scholarships after failing to achieve SAP requirements or because they earned a previous degree or certificate from an institution of higher education may be eligible to appeal for eligibility reinstatement or extension.

Eligibility reinstatement or extension approvals are not guaranteed and the student will be notified in writing of the appeal decision. Incomplete appeal petitions may be returned without review. A student only needs to file one appeal form to have both federal aid and institutional aid reinstatement or extension considered, although approvals to reinstate federal aid are separate from decisions to reinstate institutional aid eligibility. Students may also rehabilitate their future federal financial aid or NWC scholarship eligibility through defined and demonstrated academic performance at their expenses (excludes Maximum Timeframe extensions, which cannot be extended through academic performance).

#### Federal Aid

A student may be granted a maximum of three (3) lifetime approved appeals for all types of federal financial aid at NWC, including additional degree requests. Approvals to reinstate federal aid are separate from decisions to reinstate institutional aid eligibility.

- Grade Point Average/Completion Pace

Approved appeals reinstate federal aid eligibility for one (1) probationary semester whereby the student is expected to meet all requirements of the Standards of Satisfactory Academic progress policy and all requirements specified within an appeal approval notification letter.

If the student is able to achieve these requirements during the probationary semester, they will be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress, will be removed from probationary status, and will remain eligible for federal student aid as long as the standards of satisfactory academic progress are achieved. If the student is unable to achieve the requirements of the College's SAP policy and/or the requirements specified within the appeal approval notification letter the student is no longer able to participate in federal student aid programs but retains the opportunity to rehabilitate their eligibility for potential future (not to exceed their program's Maximum Timeframe limit).

To rehabilitate eligibility, a student must successfully completing a minimum of 12.0 credits, without using federal aid; while earning both semester and cumulative Grade Point Averages (GPA) of at least 2.0 and achieving required Completion Pace standards (successful completion of at least 67.0% of all semester credits attempted and successful completion of the minimum credits for enrollment status determined by the amount of credits in which the student was enrolled after the add/drop period concludes). Once completed, the student will be considered to have rehabilitated their eligibility/be considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and may submit a written request to the Financial Aid Office to have their federal student aid eligibility reinstated. Note: Students are unable to request reinstatement of aid if their rehabilitation effort has carried them past their programs Maximum Timeframe limit.

- Maximum Timeframe appeals

Approved appeals reinstate federal aid eligibility for a specified, finite period of enrollment. Successful completion of a mandatory financial aid academic plan is required to maintain federal eligibility for the remainder of the specified period of enrollment in addition to the GPA & Completion Pace requirements as outlined in the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. If the appeal is denied, or, the student does not complete the requirements of the academic plan and/or achieve the GPA & Completion Pace standards, the student cannot rehabilitate their eligibility by completing credits at their own expense. They will remain ineligible for federal aid for the duration of their NWC enrollment.

## Institutional Aid

A student *may* be granted a maximum of one (1) lifetime approved appeal for NWC scholarships. Approvals to reinstate institutional scholarships are separate from decisions to reinstate federal aid eligibility. The NWC scholarship appeal policy excludes Athletic Scholarships and requests for additional degrees after graduating from an NWC degree program\*.

Condition	If Appeal is Approved
Fail to meet fall semester requirement (minimum fall semester GPA)	Reinstate for one semester (spring semester) <i>At the end of the spring semester for which the reinstatement is granted, to be considered for scholarships for the following academic year, the student must complete these requirements:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. have earned 12.0+ credits during the spring semester</li><li>2. have earned the minimum cumulative GPA requirement</li></ol>
Fail to meet spring semester requirements (minimum cumulative spring semester GPA & 24.0+ credits earned during fall/spring semesters)	Reinstate for one academic year (fall & spring semesters) <i>At the end of the academic year for which the reinstatement is granted, to be considered for scholarships for the following academic year, student must complete all regular academic accomplishment requirements by end of spring semester:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. have earned 24.0+ credits during the fall/spring semesters)</li><li>2. have earned the minimum required cumulative GPA</li></ol>
Exceed Maximum Timeframe	Extend for one semester (next semester of enrollment) <i>After reinstatement for one semester, student's eligibility terminates.</i>

\*Students who earn a degree from NWC are ineligible for NWC scholarships for all additional degrees and cannot appeal for eligibility reinstatement. Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) students who have graduated from a previous NWC program, or have reached their Maximum Timeframe requirement, may appeal for continued scholarship eligibility for the remainder of their ADN enrollment, providing they have not already exhausted their one (1) lifetime approval appeal for NWC scholarships. Students who graduate from an NWC certificate program and elect to enroll in a degree program are eligible for NWC scholarships without appeal.

## ELIGIBLE APPEAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There are two types of student financial aid appeals: SAP and Additional Degree. Circumstances that may warrant an approved appeal to reinstate or extend eligibility differ between the two types of appeals.

### SAP Requirements Not Met

An appeal may be granted to reinstate eligibility with limitations if the student did not meet one or more SAP requirements and therefore lost eligibility because of *valid and confirmed* extenuating circumstances.

Federal regulations define valid extenuating circumstances eligible for appeal as “[a student’s] injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances.” (2016-17 Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 1, Chapter 1, Page 16). Additionally, valid and confirmed extenuating circumstances are defined as those that were largely beyond their and are supported by sufficient external documentation. See Financial Aid Appeal form for examples of acceptable documentation. Extenuating circumstances that were caused by the student or that the student could have avoided or prevented, or that did not occur within the semester where eligibility was lost, are considered *invalid* and are not eligible for appeal consideration. For Maximum Time appeals only, changes of major/program, multiple degree pursuit, orphaned transfer credits, or excessive remedial credits may be considered valid extenuating circumstances.

Appeals will be automatically denied if the appeal is based solely on invalid extenuating circumstances as defined above.

### Additional Degree Request

Federal financial aid applicants who have earned a degree or certificate from NWC or another institution of higher education are ineligible for continued federal student aid without an approved appeal. Students who submit a completed *Financial Aid Appeal* form, along with requested documents, may have federal financial aid extended toward their additional program so long as they continue to meet NWC SAP requirements and otherwise meet federal financial aid Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) eligibility requirements.

NWC scholarship applicants who have earned a degree or certificate from another institutional of higher education do not need to appeal for scholarship eligibility. They may simply complete the scholarship application during the application cycle to be considered for NWC scholarships. Students who have graduated from a previous NWC degree program are ineligible for continued NWC scholarship and cannot apply for eligibility reinstatement or extension, with the exception of students accepted into Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs. Students who graduate from an NWC certificate program and elect to enroll in a degree program are eligible for NWC scholarships without appeal.

## HOW TO APPEAL

A student must submit a completed NWC *Financial Aid Appeal* form along with required documents to be considered for eligibility reinstatement or extension. For more information about the financial aid appeal procedure or requirements, download the *Financial Aid Appeal* form by visiting <http://nwc.edu/financialaid/forms.html>, or contact the Financial Aid Office.