Carnegie Mellon University Federal Title IV Academic Progress Policy and Procedural Statement

Policy Reason


Student Financial Aid Handbook:
Chapter One: School-Determined Requirements
HEA SEC. 484 (c)
34 CFR 668.16 (e)
34 CFR 668.32 (f)
34 CFR 668.34

Policy and Procedural Statement

Federal academic progress standards must include two elements: cumulative QPA and cumulative units. At Carnegie Mellon, we define this as follows: first-year freshman students must pass 80 percent of all cumulative units attempted at Carnegie Mellon and have a 1.75 cumulative QPA after the first year; all other students (excluding graduate students in Tepper and Heinz) must pass 80 percent of all cumulative units attempted at Carnegie Mellon and have a 2.00 cumulative QPA.

A review of the student’s academic records takes place shortly after submission of the spring grades each year. If the minimum requirements are not achieved, a financial aid package will not be completed unless an appeal is received, approved and processed accordingly. Once the appeal is approved the student will be placed on probation for one semester. The student must meet satisfactory academic requirement during the probationary period to continue to be eligible for Federal Title IV Aid.

If by chance a financial aid package is processed and released to the student, it is conditional and subjected to financial aid removal until an appeal is received, approved and processed accordingly. A student that applies for aid but was not enrolled during the spring term will also be reviewed for Federal Title IV academic progression at the time of the financial aid application.
**Study Abroad and Tuition Exchange**

Federal Title IV academic progress failure will also be identified internally for students that participate in Study Abroad and Tuition Exchange programs after the spring submission of grades. However, we will re-review and send initial failure notification to Study Abroad and Tuition Exchange students not meeting the Federal Title IV academic progress requirements at the end of November. This allows time for transcript submission, receipt of materials departmental approval and updating of the student record. When failure notification occurs, the financial aid package is subjected to financial aid removal.

**Transfer Credits**

Federal guidelines require that transfer credits be included in SAP guidelines. Carnegie Mellon will count transfer credit hours that are accepted toward a student’s educational program as both attempted hours and completed hours. Advanced Placement Non-Degree and Non-Credit courses are not counted as units passed or attempted. Once a transfer student is accepted at Carnegie Mellon, he/she must continue to meet the defined satisfactory academic progress requirements to continue eligibility for Federal Title IV aid.

**Enrollment Status**

Federal regulations specify a minimum standard for full time enrollment for undergraduate students. For undergraduates, full time status must be at least 12 semester hours or equivalent (36 units at CMU) per academic term in an approved educational program using a semester system. A student’s workload may include any combination of course work, research, or special studies that are considered sufficient to classify the student as enrolled. If a student is enrolled in courses that do not count toward his/her degree they cannot be used to determine enrollment status for federal aid purposes.

**Course Repeat**

When a course is repeated, all grades will be recorded on the official academic transcript and will be calculated in the student’s QPA. This is the case regardless if the first grade for the course is a passing or failing grade. Undergraduate and Graduate students who wish to repeat a course already passed must obtain approval from the student’s Dean or Department Head. When a student takes a course she/he has already passed, only one set of units will count towards enrollment and graduation requirements. For federal aid eligibility only one repeat per course is permitted in the determination of enrollment status for courses previously passed.

**Withdrawal and Incomplete Courses**

Federal guidelines also require Carnegie Mellon to address withdrawal and incomplete courses in our Federal Title IV Academic Progress Policy. At Carnegie Mellon, there are two types of withdrawals. The first type is a withdrawal that occurs after the 100% add/drop deadline and before the W grade assignment period. The second type occurs when the student withdraws during the W grade assignment period.

- If the student withdraws and is not assigned a W grade, then it will not be counted in the number of units attempted or completed. However, if the W grade is assigned, the units will be counted in the number of units attempted and will be counted as zero in the number of units completed.
- If the student has incomplete units, the units will be counted as attempted and will be counted as zero in the number of units completed.

**Maximum Time Frame**

In addition to the Federal Title IV Academic Progress standards, there must be a maximum time frame for students to be eligible for aid. The maximum time frame cannot exceed 150 percent of the time published as needed for completion of the program.

*Carnegie Mellon University Full-time Undergraduate Students* may receive aid at Carnegie Mellon University for a maximum of six years. The one exception is that Architecture students may receive aid for a maximum of seven and a half years. Each full-time semester equals half a year. Each part-time semester equals one-fourth of a year.

*Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Students (except Heinz and Tepper)* period of study is usually one to two years in length. The maximum time frame is based upon 150% of the published length of each program.

**Appeal Process**

Carnegie Mellon realizes that extenuating circumstances may contribute to the student’s inability to achieve satisfactory academic progress, and thus *we strongly urge students* to appeal the determination that she/he is not making SAP. The student will be mailed a letter of notification and a subsequent email that will address the requirements for satisfactory academic progress and define the student’s specific academic progress to date. This letter will also address the appeal process and provide direction on filing the appeal.

A student appeals by writing a letter explaining the extenuating circumstances, defining information that prevented the student from making academic progress and what has changed in the student’s situation that would allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation. The next period of evaluation will be defined in the appeal notification and may be the next semester or combination of enrollment periods depending on the requirements of the student’s specific academic plan.

The student is required to attach this information to the Federal Title IV Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form. This information is to be returned to Enrollment Services, ATTN: Financial Aid Academic Progress. *We will notify the student, in writing, the decision of the appeal within two weeks of the receipt of the appeal.*

*Examples of Appeals:*

- Extended illness
- Changes in major
- Difficult transition to first-year in college (academically and socially)
- Recent diagnosis of learning disability
- Recent death of a close family member
If summer courses at Carnegie Mellon will enable the student to meet the minimum academic progress requirements, the student will regain Federal Title IV aid eligibility. Enrollment Services will automatically review summer coursework taken at Carnegie Mellon University. The student may also submit an appeal or send an email to thehub@andrew.cmu.edu indicating that he/she has now achieved satisfactory progress due to summer course completion. If the student takes courses at another institution during the summer that will increase the number of units completed, he/she will need to forward a copy of the official transcript to Enrollment Services with the copy clearly marked ATTN: Financial Aid Academic Progress.

If there are missing grades for the spring semester, the student will need to have his/her instructor update the missing grades. Grades can be checked via Student Information On-line (SIO) at www.cmu.edu/hub. When all missing grades have been updated, the student should send an e-mail to thehub@andrew.cmu.edu indicating that satisfactory academic progress is now achieved due to the updating of missing grades.

If an appeal is approved for the Fall only, the fall semester is considered a probationary semester for federal aid eligibility. To be eligible for Federal Title IV aid funds for the spring semester the student is required to achieve a cumulative 2.0 QPA and successfully pass a minimum of 80% of the accumulated units attempted/carried. Fall only Federal Title IV evaluation and reinstatement occurs shortly after the fall grade submission deadline.

Depending on the nature of the appeal the appeals committee may require the student to develop an academic plan in consultation with his/her academic advisor to put the student on track to successful program completion. This will be determined on an individual student basis and depend on the length of student’s enrollment, class completion rate and earned grade point average. All subsequent or second appeals will require an academic plan.

If the student is required to develop an academic plan, the student’s progress is reviewed at the end of each payment period according to the requirements specified in the plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan, the student is eligible to receive Title IV aid as long as the student continues to meet those requirements.

If an appeal is denied, Carnegie Mellon will replace the federal grants (PELL and SEOG) 100% with a commensurate amount of Carnegie Mellon University Undergraduate Grant Funds. If an appeal is never turned in, we will not replace the federal grants (PELL and SEOG) with a commensurate amount of Carnegie Mellon University Undergraduate Grant Funds. We cannot compensate for the loss of federal loans due to a lack of satisfactory academic progress. In these cases we will advise the student about non-federal loan programs.

Contact

Accountable Department: Enrollment Services, Student Financial Aid Office. Questions regarding this policy or its intent should be directed to the Student Financial Aid Office, ext. 8-1946.