




Date: February 7, 2017

To: Dr. Harold Whitis
District Director, Student Financial Aid
Alamo Colleges District
7990 Pat Booker Rd. Ste 115
Live Oak, TX 78233

From: Ms. Kim Peeler 
Compliance Manager, Region VI
U. S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan Street, Ste 1410
Dallas, TX 75201-6817

Re: Confirmation of Acceptable Practices for Alamo Colleges District Colleges

Thank you for contacting our office regarding the Alamo College District Colleges.

In response to your request, the satisfactory academic progress policy submitted and the current funding mechanism for campus-based programs are acceptable practices under regulations governing the Title IV financial aid programs.

In addition, the Department acknowledges that the four Alamo Colleges, San Antonio College, St. Philip's College, Palo Alto College, and Northwest Vista College, are separately accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

I trust that this information is helpful.



Date: January 30, 2017

To: Ms. Kim Peeler
Compliance Manager, Region VI
U. S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan Street
Dallas, TX 75201-6817

From: Dr. Harold Whitis
District Director, Student Financial Aid
Alamo Colleges District
7990 Pat Booker Rd, Ste 115
Live Oak, TX 78233

Re: Confirmation of Acceptable Practices for Alamo Colleges District Colleges

Good Afternoon Ms. Peeler,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Alamo Colleges District, which consists of San Antonio College (009163), St. Philip's College (003608), Northwest Vista College (033723), Palo Alto College (023413) and Northeast Lakeview College (042636). Each of these colleges, except Northeast Lakeview College, have a current Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with the Department of Education that makes them eligible to participate in Title IV financial aid programs. The initial approval to participate is pending for Northeast Lakeview College. I am requesting that you respond to this email to confirm that our policies described below are acceptable policies and in compliance with Federal Title IV regulations.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Because we operate under a Financial Aid Consortium Agreement between the colleges, our policy states that "Students must maintain a cumulative Alamo Community College District GPA of 2.0 on all course work taken at the Alamo Colleges". For financial aid purposes, we define the "Home" school as the college at which a student is admitted into an eligible program of study. The "Host" school is the school where the student is taking part of his or her program requirements through the consortium agreement. Courses taken at any of the Alamo Colleges must be considered "as if" they are taken at the student's "Home" institution.

Allocation of Funds

Currently, San Antonio College receives an annual allocation of campus-based funds (Federal College Work-study and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant) based on a single

Fiscal Application that consists of student information from all of the Alamo College District colleges. We then allocate funds between the colleges based on their percentage of Pell volume. This funding mechanism was agreed upon by the Department of Education and the Alamo College District and has been in place for some time. Moving forward, in consultation with the Department of Education's Campus-Based Programs Division, we intend to submit separate FISAPs in October of 2017 for each of the colleges so they will receive separate allocations.

Can you confirm that our Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and the current funding mechanism for campus-based programs are acceptable practices under regulations governing the Title IV financial aid programs?

Your review and response would be greatly appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold G. Whitis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold G. Whitis, Ed.D.

District Director of Student Financial Aid
7990 Pat Booker Rd.
Live Oak, TX 78233-2603
Phone: (210)485-0605
hwhitis2@alamo.edu

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Federal Regulations require the establishment and application of reasonable standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for the purpose of maintaining eligibility for Title IV of the Higher Education Act financial aid programs. The SAP requirements explained below apply to all Title IV financial aid as well as to state and institutional financial aid programs, need-based and non-need-based aid, unless otherwise noted by an individual scholarship program. **The Student Financial Aid department evaluates student compliance with SAP annually at the end of spring semester. Students on probation or following an academic plan will have their SAP reviewed at the end of each payment period enrolled to determine if student is making progress in accordance with their academic plan. The three standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress are:**

I. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement

Students must maintain a cumulative Alamo College District GPA of 2.00 on all course work taken at the Alamo Colleges District. Grades for repeated courses are counted towards cumulative GPA, unless the student successfully petitions Admissions and Records.

II. 67% Completion Rate of Enrollment Requirement

Students must maintain a cumulative 67% completion rate on all coursework attempted at the Alamo Colleges District. The chart below shows how the completion rate is calculated:

TOTAL EARNED HOURS	TOTAL ATTEMPTED HOURS	(EARNED HOURS ÷ ATTEMPTED HOURS) X 100	COMPLETION RATE	
9	12	$(9 \div 12) \times 100$	75%	In compliance
18	52	$(18 \div 52) \times 100$	34%	Not in compliance
44	64	$(44 \div 64) \times 100$	68%	In compliance

III. Maximum Time Frame to Complete a Program

The maximum time frame for students to complete a certificate or associate's degree may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program. Students have up to 99 attempted hours of coursework, including transferred credits, to complete an associate's degree.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION:

- Attempted credit hours include all courses for which a student is enrolled in after census day.
- Grades of "W", "WP", "WF", "F", "I", "IP", "IF" and any other non-letter grade (besides grades of A, B, C, or D) is counted as attempted but not completed when calculating the completion rate.
- The academic amnesty policy "Fresh Start" does not apply to Satisfactory Academic Progress. The attempted hours in question count as hours attempted and grades earned at the Alamo Colleges District are including in the student's GPA.
- Students are allowed up to 30 hours of remedial/developmental coursework that will not count towards the maximum number of hours attempted towards the student's academic program.
- Transferred hours count towards maximum attempted hours.
- Repeated courses count in the completion rate calculation and maximum attempted hours.
- Incoming dual credit students will be placed on SAP probation until Satisfactory Academic Progress is evaluated annually, at the end of the spring semester.

Compliance with the SAP policy must be met in order for a student to retain their financial aid eligibility. Students are advised to check their status through the ACES Account. The information below describes each SAP status in detail:

Good Standing: Students are considered to be in Good Standing with Financial Aid if they meet all three (3) standards of progress outlined above. These students may participate in any financial aid programs provided they meet all other eligibility criteria, subject to availability of funds.

Financial Aid Suspension: Students are suspended from financial aid if they do not meet all of the Satisfactory Academic Progress criteria listed above. Students who are suspended will receive a financial aid suspension notice. Students on suspension may continue to enroll but must pay for all their expenses without Financial Aid assistance.

Probation: Students who appeal their financial aid suspension and are approved, are put on "probation" for one semester, and an "end term" listing the term when the student is expected to be in compliance with SAP is established. In order to continue to be eligible for financial aid for future semesters the student must meet SAP standards for the probationary semester. Students who fail to meet SAP standards for the semester will be placed on permanent financial aid Suspension.

Academic Plan: Students who successfully complete the probationary semester (met SAP criteria for the semester), but who are not able to come up to full compliance with the SAP policy are placed on an academic plan. In order to continue to be eligible for financial aid for future semesters the student must meet SAP standards for every semester enrolled under the Academic Plan. Students who fail to meet SAP standards for any semester enrolled while under the Academic Plan are placed on permanent financial aid Suspension.

APPEAL PROCESS

Students may appeal their suspension status. The appeal process is initiated with the Academic Advisor at the student's primary institution. After meeting with the Academic Advisor, the student can access and complete the Appeal for Financial Aid Reinstatement via the ACES portal. The student will complete this online form by detailing the reason for not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, plan for making academic progress and educational goals. Additional documentation to substantiate the reason(s) for not meeting SAP should be submitted to the Student Financial Aid office at the student's primary institution within 7 days of submitting the online appeal. Students should be prepared to cover tuition and fees until the appeal has been reviewed. Processing time could take up to 7 weeks.

Approval:

The appeal approval is applicable only at the College where it was originally submitted and approved, and students cannot submit an appeal or apply for aid at any of the other Alamo Colleges District. Once the appeal is approved, the student is placed on probation and eligibility is reinstated subject to continued compliance with SAP requirements. Progress is reviewed at the end of the semester to verify the student is meeting the standards and following the degree plan. Students who meet SAP for the semester approved, but who are not yet in full compliance with the SAP policy will have their status updated to "Academic Plan" and will continue to qualify for financial aid. Failure to meet SAP while on Probation or Academic Plan will result in a permanent financial aid eligibility suspension. Status for students who do not enroll in classes during the semester for which they received an approved appeal will return back to "Suspension" and the student will be required to submit a new appeal for any future semester reinstatement requests. Based on the agreement with the academic advisor, continuous enrollment is required each year. Lack of consistent enrollment will result in the inability to complete the approved program during the length of time agreed upon. As a result, eligibility will not be extended to account for any semesters of non-enrollment. Students who fail to meet SAP for any semester enrolled will have their financial aid eligibility immediately suspended. In addition, students whose eligibility is re-suspended are not allowed to re-appeal their Financial Aid suspension.

Denial: No federal or state financial aid (including student loans) may be awarded. The student may continue to enroll but at their own expense and can re-appeal after completing at least one (1) semester, and meet the SAP requirements for the semester(s) completed. The Committee decision is final and may not be appealed further.