



2011-2012 Financial Aid Policies and Procedures

- 1. Read the Following Information Carefully.** It is the student's responsibility to read and comply with the policies and procedures detailed in this document, including the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards and the Return of Title IV Funds Policy. If you have any questions regarding this information, please make arrangements to meet with a Financial Aid counselor as soon as possible.
- 2. Contact the Student Records Office Immediately If You Have a Change in Address.** All financial aid refund checks will be sent to the address in your student admission's file.
- 3. Check Your WPCC Email Account on a Weekly Basis.** The Financial Aid Office will only use WPCC email accounts to communicate with students when necessary. It is the student's responsibility to access their email account and check messages on a weekly basis.

Students must be in a program leading to a degree, diploma, or eligible certificate (at least 16 semester hours in length) to be eligible for Federal financial aid. Only those classes required for the program of study will be counted towards eligibility for Federal aid.

The award amount listed on the Award Offer Letter is based on full-time enrollment (12 SHC). Your award will be reduced proportionately if you attend less than full-time.

<u>Enrollment:</u>	<u>Credit Hours:</u>	<u>Student Will Receive:</u>
Full-time	12 or more SHC	100% of Award Listed
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	9, 10, or 11 SHC	75% of Award Listed
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	6, 7, or 8 SHC	50% of Award Listed
Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time	1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 SHC	<i>Limited funding is available at this credit level</i>

Students who plan to attend less than half-time should contact the Financial Aid Office to determine their eligibility.

Your award letter may include aid from the following programs, each with their own required enrollment status:

<u>FA Program</u>	<u>Required Enrollment Status</u>
Federal Pell Grant	Varies, award reduced if less than full-time
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	At least 1 SHC
North Carolina Community College Grant (NCCCG)	At least $\frac{1}{2}$ time, award reduced if less than full-time
North Carolina Education Lottery Scholarship (NCELS)	At least $\frac{1}{2}$ time, award reduced if less than full-time

All of the above may be used to pay for tuition, fees, books and required supplies.

The balance of funds, if any, will be mailed to students on the following dates:

Fall Semester- September 23, 2011 Spring Semester- February 10, 2012 Summer Semester- June 18, 2012

Late applications will be processed and awarded on a weekly basis after the initial disbursement date of each term.

Students interested in a Federal Direct Loan should obtain an application packet from the Financial Aid Office. Students must be enrolled at least 6 semester hours, complete financial literacy counseling, entrance loan counseling, a Master Promissory Note (MPN), and a loan request form before a loan can be certified. Federal Direct Loan funds are to be used for education expenses only and will need to be repaid.

Students receiving WPCC scholarships (listed on the Award Offer Letter) must be enrolled at the College on at least a half-time (6 semester hours) basis. Scholarships that require full-time enrollment will be noted on the Award Letter. Most scholarships are available for students to use for the payment of tuition and fees or to purchase books during registration. Students who receive a scholarship will be notified later of the source of the funding. **WPCC scholarship recipients are required to attend the Annual Scholarship Luncheon to be held during the Fall Semester.**

Students who receive financial assistance from sources outside the College are required to notify the Financial Aid Office to prevent the over award of Federal funds.

Students who plan to concurrently enroll at another college should make arrangements with the Director of Enrollment Management and the Director of Financial Aid prior to the beginning of the semester. Federal regulations require that WPCC negotiate a Consortium Agreement with the institution that the student plans to concurrently attend.

Financial Aid is awarded for one academic year at a time. The academic year begins in the fall semester. A new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a renewal application, or applying at www.fafsa.gov using your Personal Identification Number (PIN) must be completed for each academic year. Students must also complete a new WPCC Scholarship Application each school year.

Students should be aware that scholarships and grants might be taxable according to the Tax Reform Act of 1986. Students are encouraged to keep all receipts and check stubs as official documentation. For additional information, students should contact the Internal Revenue Service.

Students must notify the Financial Aid Office of all changes: new addresses, new names, change of marital status, change of major, or other changes. The student is required to notify the Financial Aid Office immediately if he/she is withdrawing from classes, adding classes, or withdrawing from the College.

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to review, adjust or cancel an award any time there has been a change in enrollment status, financial status, or failure to meet satisfactory progress regulations.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards (SAP)

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) at Western Piedmont Community College (WPCC) is required by federal regulations to monitor the academic progress of students who apply for financial aid. Financial aid applicants must comply with the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards as a condition for eligibility for aid. These standards are used to determine eligibility for all Federal Title IV aid (including Federal Student Loans), state and institutional aid; and are applied to the student's entire academic history at WPCC.

The standards against which applicants for financial assistance are measured include completion of credit hours, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time limits to complete the program of study. SAP will be monitored at the time of application for aid and at the end of each semester. Students must meet all of the standards listed below. Failure to meet these standards will result in the loss of financial aid.

I. Completion Rate:

Each semester, the student's academic progress will be measured by comparing the number of attempted credit hours with the credit hours earned. The student must successfully complete 67% of the total attempted credit hours to maintain SAP. Hours attempted are calculated as all hours enrolled per semester, minus any hours withdrawn or dropped during the 75 percent refund period. Hours attempted also include transfer credit hours accepted toward a student's educational program at WPCC.

For example: a student who attempts 12 credit hours, and successfully completes 9 credit hours is making SAP ($9 \text{ credit hours} \div 12 \text{ credit hours} = 75\% \text{ completion rate}$).

II. Cumulative Grade Point Average:

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average at or above the minimum on the following chart:

- 1.25 for 1-15 credit hours attempted
- 1.50 for 16-23 credit hours attempted
- 1.75 for 24-31 credit hours attempted
- 2.00 for 32 or more credit hours attempted

III. Maximum Time Frame:

The student's maximum time frame to complete a program of study is 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if 64 semester hours are required to complete a degree, the student may attempt a maximum of 96 credit hours before exceeding their eligibility for financial aid ($64 \times 1.5 = 96$). The student's entire academic history, including transfer hours accepted from other institutions is considered when evaluating academic progress within the established time frame. Developmental classes are excluded from this calculation. Once the student reaches the maximum number of hours attempted limit for the program of study, they are no longer eligible to receive aid at WPCC.

Change of Majors – Students who change their major are still responsible for adhering to the 150% maximum time frame of the new program. Students who decide to change majors are advised to do so early in their academic program.

Double Major – Students who double major must also adhere to the 150% maximum time frame requirement. The maximum attempted credit hours allowable for financial aid will be based on the degree that requires the most credit hours.

Additional Degrees – Students returning to WPCC to pursue another degree will be given a new maximum time frame. Only the successfully completed credit hours that apply to the additional degree will be counted towards the net maximum time frame.

IV. Additional Elements of SAP:

- Letter grades of A, B, C, D, and SC are counted as completed credits.
- Letter grades of F, I (incomplete), NC (non-satisfactory completion), W (withdrawal), or IW (instructor initiated withdrawal) are counted as credit hours attempted but not successfully completed.
- Letter grade of NS (No Show) is not counted as attempted or earned credit hours. Audited (AU) credit hours are not funded by financial aid and are excluded from all calculations.
- Developmental credit hours (courses below the 100 level) are included in both the completion rate calculation and the GPA calculation. Students may receive financial aid for developmental credits up to a maximum of 30 credit hours.
- Consortium credits are included in both the completion rate and maximum time frame calculations.
- In the case of a class that has been repeated, only the grade points and credit hours earned for the attempt with the highest grade will be used in the GPA calculation. All attempts will be counted toward the completion rate and maximum time frame requirements.
- Students may receive financial aid for repeating a passed course one time, regardless if the credit is provided again.
- Students may attempt a failed course a maximum of three times. Developmental courses are exempt from this policy.
- Transfer credit hours are excluded from the GPA calculation, but are included in both the completion rate and maximum time frame calculations. Students transferring from another institution will be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress at the time of enrollment.

V. Eligibility Status:

Satisfactory: Satisfactory status is achieved when the completion rate, GPA and maximum time frame requirements are met.

Warning: Warning status is assigned to students who fail to meet the eligibility standards for the completion rate and/or the GPA requirement. Students with a “warning” status may receive financial aid for one semester, provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

Suspension: There are several conditions that may place a student of financial aid suspension. These conditions are listed below:

- A. A student, who fails to meet the cumulative completion rate and/or GPA requirements at the end of a “warning” period, will have their financial aid suspended.
- B. A student who reaches the maximum time frame limit (150%) for the program of study will have their financial aid suspended.
- C. Students with a “probation” status who fail to meet the requirements of their Academic Plan will be placed on suspension.
- D. If it is mathematically determined that a student cannot complete the program of study within the maximum time frame limit (150%), the student will immediately be placed on financial aid suspension.

Probation: This status is assigned to a student who fails to make SAP, and who has had their eligibility reinstated as the result of an appeal. While on “probation,” the student must successfully follow the conditions of the Academic Plan created during the appeal process. All Academic Plans will require a 2.0 minimum semester GPA, and a minimum 75% completion rate for subsequent periods of enrollment. The Director of Financial Aid or the Financial Aid Subcommittee may require a more rigorous Academic Plan for individual students based on the particular situation and content of the appeal on a case by case basis. The requirements of a more rigorous plan will be made in writing and signed by the student prior to the disbursing of financial aid. Academic Plans will be monitored by the Financial Aid Office.

Notification of SAP Status: Eligibility status will be updated at the end of each semester. All applicants will be notified via email regarding satisfactory, warning, suspension or probation statuses. However, failure to receive notification will not change the student’s status. Not enrolling for one or more terms does not change the student’s status.

VI. Re-establishing Eligibility

There are three avenues available for regaining eligibility for financial aid. These avenues consist of the following.

- A. Paying on your own – To regain eligibility, the student must attend WPCC (without financial aid) until they meet the GPA and completion rate requirements.
- B. Notification of a Grade Change – The student's financial aid may be reinstated as result of a grade change, provided that as a result of the change, the student is meeting both the completion rate and GPA requirements.
- C. The Appeal Process - Students who have faced mitigating circumstances may appeal the suspension of their financial aid. Mitigating circumstances are generally beyond the student's control and may include a death in the family, injury or illness of student, or other special circumstances.

To appeal the suspension of financial aid, the student must submit to the FAO the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form, explaining their failure to make SAP, and what has changed to allow them now to regain SAP. In addition the student must have their academic advisor complete the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Degree Evaluation form. These forms are available on the WPCC FAO website and in the FAO. All appeals must be accompanied by documentation supporting the appeal. Appeals submitted without supporting documentation will not be reviewed.

The Director of Financial Aid will review the appeal and notify the student via the student's WPCC email account within 20 business days from the receipt date of the completed appeal. If the student finds the Director's decision unsatisfactory, the student may appeal to the Financial Aid Subcommittee for further review. The appeal to the subcommittee must be in writing and submitted to the Financial Aid Office. The student will have the opportunity to present their case in person to the subcommittee. The decision of the Financial Aid Office Subcommittee is final.

Students may submit one appeal per academic year. Students appealing the loss of financial aid as a result of exceeding the maximum time frame are limited to one appeal.

Students seeking to regain eligibility for financial aid remain ineligible for assistance until the appeal process is completed and an affirmative decision has been made by either the Director of Financial Aid or the Financial Aid Subcommittee. Students should be prepared to pay tuition, fees and other education expenses until notified that their aid has been reinstated.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL and RETURN OF TITLE IV POLICY

The following governs the Return of Title IV funds disbursed to students enrolled at Western Piedmont Community College (WPCC). This policy applies to all students receiving Title IV funds who officially or unofficially withdraw from the College. Title IV funds include the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG), and Federal Stafford Loans.

- I. During the first 60% of the semester, a student earns Title IV funds based on the length of time he or she remains enrolled. A student who remains enrolled beyond the 60% point of the semester earns 100% of their aid for the semester. If a student withdraws on or prior to the 60% point of the semester, the unearned portion of the Title IV aid must be returned to the Federal Student Aid program(s). Students who withdraw on or after the dates below will earn 100% of their aid and will not be required to repay Title IV funds:

Fall 2011 – **October 31, 2011**: Spring 2012 – **March 16, 2012**: Summer 2012 – **July 9, 2012**.

- II. If unearned aid exceeds the amount of aid disbursed, the student may be eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement. Post-withdrawal disbursements may:
 - a. Be credited to outstanding tuition and fees.
 - b. Be credited to other outstanding current year charges which the student authorized.

Late disbursements that are not credited to the student's account will be offered to the student in writing within 30 days of WPCC's determination of the student's withdrawal. If the student does not respond to the College within 14 days from the date of notification, no disbursement will be made. Funds will be disbursed within 60 days of the date of determination.

- III. Enrolled percentage is determined by the number of days in the semester (including weekends) divided by the number of days enrolled. Breaks that are a minimum of five days long (including weekends) are excluded from the calculation.
- IV. A student's withdrawal date is the student's last date of attendance at a documented academically-related activity.

- V. The return of Title IV formula assumes that Title IV funds are directly disbursed to the student only after all institutional charges have been covered, and that Title IV funds are the first to be applied to institutional charges. The institutional charges used in the calculation are the charges initially assessed the student for the entire semester. Initial charges are adjusted only for those changes made prior to the student's withdrawal (for example; a change in enrollment status unrelated to the withdrawal).
- VI. The responsibility to repay unearned aid is shared by WPCC and the student. The College's share is the lesser of :
- a. The institutional charges multiplied by the percentage of aid that was unearned; or,
 - b. The total amount of unearned aid.

The funds will be returned in the order below within 45 days of the date WPCC determined that the student withdrew: Federal Stafford Loan, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant.

- VII. The student's share of unearned aid is the difference between the total unearned amount and the institution's share. The student will be notified of the overpayment within 30 days of the date WPCC determined that the student withdrew. Funds are to be returned to the appropriate aid program in the following order: Federal Stafford Loan, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant.

Aid returned to the Federal Stafford Loan Program by the student is returned in accordance with the Promissory Note on file with the lender.

If the aid to be returned is to one of the grant programs, the amount owed to the grant program is reduced by 50%. The student will have 45 days from the date of notification of the Return to Title IV calculation to repay the funds. The funds are to be repaid to the WPCC Business Office. If payment is not made within 45 days of notification, WPCC will submit the overpayment to the U.S. Department of Education. Once the overpayment is submitted to the U. S. Department of Education, the student will lose eligibility for Title IV assistance until a satisfactory repayment agreement is established.

The student does not have to repay a grant overpayment of \$50.00 or less as the result of a total withdrawal.

- VIII. The unearned portion of loan and grant assistance repaid by WPCC is charged back to the student's account. These funds must be repaid to WPCC within 30 days of the date of notification. The student will not be allowed to register for classes or receive an official copy of his or her academic transcript until all funds are repaid.