

Policies Relating To Your Financial Aid

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Student Rights and Responsibilities

As a student, you have the right to know:

- What **financial aid programs** are available and how to apply for them;
- Procedures and deadlines for submitting application(s) for financial aid;
- **Cost of attendance** and how financial need is determined;
- The type and amount of assistance you will receive, and how and when you will be paid;
- To request an explanation of the various awards in his/her student aid package;
- That you cannot receive financial aid for a class that you repeat more than one time;
- That all application information is treated with the highest level of confidentiality;
- The eligibility criteria for awarding aid;
- The conditions of any **loan** you accept;
- The job description and starting pay rate for any student job you accept;
- How the **Standard of Academic Progress** is determined;
- Requirements in the case of withdrawal, refunds, and repayment of financial aid;
- The contents of your financial aid file, in accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, and to request an appeal if you believe a mistake has been made;
- Your financial aid package will be reviewed upon your request if family and/or financial circumstances have changed;
- **Consumer Information** required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act

As a student, you have the responsibility to:

- Establish plans to meet your educational and living expenses;
- Submit all forms required to complete the application process in a timely and accurate manner;
- Read, understand, and retain copies of all information and/or forms that are sent to you and all other documents you sign;
- Comply with the provisions of any aid received, as well as any promissory note(s) and all other agreements you sign;
- Notify ACU of all resources (especially outside resources) you receive that are not listed on your award letter;
- Keep ACU informed of any change of address, name or marital status while you are a student, and until all loans have been repaid in full;
- Use aid only for educational expenses related to attending the University;
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress;
- Register and attend classes for the number of hours required for your aid disbursement;
- Perform satisfactorily in any work assignments accepted through student employment programs.
- Be aware of and comply with the deadlines for application or reapplication for aid.
- Complete your **FAFSA** or renewal application for aid each year.
- All First Time Student Loan borrowers must complete an Entrance Interview **and** Master Promissory Note on **Studentloans.gov**.
- A graduating or exiting student loan borrower must complete exit counseling.

Eligibility Criteria

Generally, to qualify for federal, state, and institutional financial assistance, students must meet the following requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- Have a valid Social Security number
- Have a high school or a recognized equivalent such as a GED, or a certificate of completion of a home-study program approved by the student's home state
- Make **satisfactory academic progress** toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program
- Be registered with the Selective Service if male

- Sign statements on the FAFSA stating that he or she
 1. is not in default on a federal student loan and does not owe money on a federal student grant
 2. is qualified to obtain a college or career school education by having a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent
 3. will use federal student aid only for educational purposes
- Not be in default on a federal student loan or owe a repayment on a federal or state student grant
- Not be convicted of an illegal drug offense while receiving federal student financial assistance
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student (i.e., all admissions requirements/documents have been satisfied) working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Each student is required to fill out the FERPA Release form listing names of people who can access their personal educational records. [Learn more](#) about this federal policy and print out the FERPA Release form. Students may also go to The Depot in the McGlothlin Campus Center to complete this form.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

The federal and state governments require each educational institution to define standards of progress for students seeking financial aid. All students who wish to qualify for financial aid while attending ACU must meet the following standards:

- **Minimum grade point average**
- **Minimum semester credit hour completion rate**
- **Completion of a degree within a maximum number of credit hours**

These standards are applied uniformly to all ACU financial aid applicants. If a student meets these standards, he/she is eligible to be considered for financial aid. If a student does not meet these standards, he/she is not eligible to receive financial aid. Procedures for re-establishing financial aid eligibility are described in this policy statement.

Financial aid is defined as all federally funded aid programs, all state-funded student assistance programs and institutional aid.

In this policy, "eligible for financial aid" means that a student meets the standards of the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Eligibility but must also meet all other financial aid requirements in order to receive financial aid.

Minimum Grade Point Average

Undergraduate students & must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0. Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below the minimum standard, you will become ineligible for financial aid during the next aid year. Financial aid may be adjusted immediately for any student who is suspended or dismissed.

Minimum Semester Credit Hour Completion Rate Requirement

Each semester (Fall, Spring and Summer) a student (undergraduate or graduate) must earn a minimum of 75 percent of the hours for which he or she has registered at the end of the schedule adjustment period, also known as Drop/Add (usually 5 days into a semester, check the Announcements on my.acu.edu for specific dates for specific semesters). For example: if an undergraduate student had 12 hours at the end of schedule adjustment then the student would have to earn at least 9 hours to remain eligible for further financial aid ($12 \times .75 = 9$).

Hours at the end of Schedule Adjustment	Minimum Hours Required for Financial Aid Eligibility
16	12
14	10.5 or 11
12	9
9	7
6	4.5 or 5
3	2.5 or 3

This chart is not meant to include all possibilities. Some classes offer credit in .5 increments and those will be taken into consideration. To find the minimum hours required, take the number of credit hours at the end of schedule adjustment and multiply it by .75.

General Information

Advanced Placement, CLEP courses and grades of F, WF, W or I are not acceptable for SAP. Math 100 is a remedial course and a student does not receive credit for the course; therefore, MAT 100 counts towards the Overall Attempted Credit Hours, but does not count toward the Overall Earned Credit Hours. If you are required by the Department of Mathematics to take Math 100, then you may submit an appeal to Student Financial Services. Repeated courses do not count toward the Overall Earned Credit Hours if no credit is awarded the semester it is repeated.

Each semester and summer session, graduate students receiving financial aid are required to earn a minimum of 3 credit hours at the 500 level or above.

Completion of a Degree Within a Maximum Number of Credit Hours

The average length of an undergraduate program at ACU is 128 credit hours. An undergraduate student is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150 percent of the hours required for the degree. A student pursuing a second undergraduate degree is eligible to receive Stafford loans at undergraduate levels up to aggregate limits for a maximum of 228 attempted credit hours at ACU. Graduate students may receive financial aid for a maximum of 150 percent of the hours required for the degree.

- Graduate students seeking a Master's degree must complete all degree requirements (including thesis) within five academic years from the date of first enrollment. Students pursuing a Doctoral degree must complete all requirements (including dissertation) within seven academic years from the date of first enrollment.
- Students enrolled in eligible licensure and certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the license or certificate program.

Example: Student's Overall Attempted Credit Hours is 136

Credit Hours required for degree is 127

$$127 \times 1.5 = 190.5$$

Since the student's Overall Attempted Credit Hours (136) is less than 150 percent or 190.5 of the student's credit hours required for degree, the student is meeting the Completion Rate Requirement.

You are meeting the Completion Rate Requirement if:

Overall Attempted Credit Hours \leq 150 percent of Credit Hours required for the degree

Disbursement of Aid and SAP

You may be required to repay funds to ACU if your financial aid is disbursed and you reduce your total credit hours before the last day of schedule adjustment.

Re-establishing Financial Aid Eligibility

Student Financial Services will notify students of their failure to meet the standards of this policy. Each student is responsible for knowing his/her own status, whether or not he/she receives this notification. Students may access their SAP status via the [Banner Web](#) or by contacting [The Depot](#). Students who fail to meet the standards of this policy may re-establish their financial aid eligibility at ACU in one of the following ways:

The student can earn the number of credit hours for which they are deficient or improve their GPA without financial aid. These hours may be earned at ACU, or they may be earned at another institution and transferred to ACU for any term after the deficiency occurs. Students should get prior approval from the Registrar's Office to ensure that courses taken at another institution will be accepted. After the deficiency is resolved, the student must submit a written appeal requesting Student Financial Services to review their eligibility to receive financial aid.

If there were circumstances beyond the student's control that prohibited the student from keeping the standards of this policy, and those circumstances are now resolved, the student may submit a written appeal to Student Financial Services, according to the following SAP appeal calendar:

Submit Your Appeal:	No Earlier Than / No Later Than
To receive aid for the Summer semester:	March 1 / April 25
To receive aid for the Fall semester:	May 20 / August 15

To receive aid for the Spring semester:	December 2 / January 15
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Appeal Requirements:

Appeals must include a detailed description of the extenuating circumstances that occurred during the semester in which the student failed to meet this policy. The appeal must also include all necessary documentation to support the existence of the circumstances described and evidence that the circumstances have been resolved. Students seeking to re-establish financial aid eligibility remain ineligible to receive financial aid assistance or deferment of payment until the appeal process is complete and a decision has been made by Student Financial Services. Students should be prepared to pay tuition, fees, and other educational expenses until he/she has been approved to receive financial aid.

Appeals may be denied, approved with conditions, or approved unconditionally. If an appeal is denied, the student may submit a second appeal.

Appeal forms may also be downloaded from the [Financial Aid Forms](#) Page.