Minnesota State Community and Technical College Institutional Policies

Policy Title: Failure for Non-Attendance (FN)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to comply with federal regulations regarding Title IV Financial Aid disbursement ensuring student attendance. The FN grade serves to ensure appropriate adjustments to student financial aid award by verifying enrollment status and allowing recalculation prior to fund disbursement. The FN grade also serves as notification to Student Services that the student's academic success is at risk; intervention is warranted.

The College is required to return funds disbursed to students who fail to begin attendance as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the date that the school becomes aware that a student has not begun. If a payment is made to a student who is later found not to be in attendance, it is considered an overpayment and the college is liable for that payment and returning those funds.

Definitions:

FN/Failure for Non-Attendance: Is a grade designation used at the end of the drop/add period to designate whether a student is attending the course.

Attendance: The student is physically present in the land-based course or in an online environment, has completed at least one academically related task during the drop/add period. Federal Financial Aid Handbook explains is as "A student is considered not to have begun attendance if a school is unable to document the student's attendance in any class" (4-80).

Task: For the purposes of the FN policy an academically related task with respect to an online course is a single simple assignment, but more than logging into the course or Learning Management System (LMS). Examples of a simple assignment include but are not limited to: a discussion assignment (introduction, ice breaker), course orientation/syllabus quiz, or another form of active assignment participation in the course.

Academic Attendance and Academically Related Activities:

The Federal Financial Aid Handbook identifies the following parameters regarding academic attendance and academically related activities at it relates to Title IV funding (V.5 Ch.1).

Academically related activities include but are not limited to:

- Physically attending class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students
- Submitting an academic assignment
- Taking an exam, completing an interactive tutorial, or participating in a computer-assisted instruction
- Attending a study group that is assigned by the college

- Participating in an online discussion about academic matters
- Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Examples that are NOT considered evidence or proof of academic activities or academic engagement with the college:

- Living in institutional housing
- Participating in the school's meal plan
- Logging in to an online class without active participation
- Participating in counseling or advising

The Federal Student Aid Handbook specifically identifies that documenting that a student logged into an online class is not sufficient to demonstrate academic attendance. The college must demonstrate student participation in class or via other academic activities.

Examples of online academically related activities may include:

- Participation in an academically relevant online discussion
- Contact (to include email) w/ the faculty member to ask a course-related question
- Student submission of an academic assignment
- Student submission of an exam
- Documented student interaction in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction (third-party software)
- Posting in an online study group assigned by the instructor/institution

Policy:

A grade of FN is posted for any student that has not attended class during the add or drop period. In an online course, the student must have demonstrated participation by completing an academically relevant task. A full week of assignments may not to be required as proof of participating.

The student is responsible to attend and actively participate in each course for which the student is enrolled by the end of the add or drop period. Attendance or participation in one course does not qualify as proof of attendance or participation in any other course.

A grade of FN may prevent financial aid from applying for the course or will force a recalculation of financial aid that applied prior to the grade posting of the FN.

The FN grade is a final grade. The FN designation does not affect grade point average. Posting a grade of FN restricts student access to any course content including electronic access including the Learning Management System (LMS).

The removal of a FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. Faculty have the authority and right to uphold a grade of FN and are under no obligation to reinstate a student if the student has met the conditions for a grade of FN. If a student does not agree with issued grade, the student may appeal the FN grade using the criteria outlined in the College Grade Appeal Policy.

Associated Policies:

Minnesota State Community and Technical College Grade Appeal Policy

Federal Student Aid Handbook 2016

Associated Procedures:
Failure for Non-Attendance (FN) Procedure

Policy History:

Policy Owner: *Chief Academic Officer*
Policy Author: *M. J. Borcherding*
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Policy Group Assignment: Educational

Procedure Written: Revised/Update