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14 Section Fourteen: Awarding Financial Aid

The FAO staff has developed an institutional packaging philosophy to ensure consistent, equitable and fair distribution of financial aid funds.

14.1 Institutional Packaging Policy

The FAO awards grant and scholarship funds beginning with Pell Grant before any other funds are considered. Federal Work-Study funds are not automatically packaged. Students must indicate interest in the FWS program by attending a FWS informational session, have a complete financial aid file, have unmet need and attend one of the scheduled FWS orientations after receiving an emailed invitation from the FWS Coordinator. See Section 12.3.4 for additional information. Federal Direct Stafford Loans are not automatically packaged and require additional application procedures. See Sections 12.3.5, 12.3.6 and 16 for additional information. The LIFE scholarship is awarded to eligible students once all required documentation is submitted to the TCTC Admissions Center. See Section 12.4.2 for additional information. Lottery Tuition Assistance is awarded to eligible students once the financial aid file is complete and all eligibility criteria are met. See Section 12.4.3 for additional information.

14.2 Institutional Packaging Procedures

Federal Pell Grant, SEOG, SCNB and LTA are the only funds that are automatically packaged.

Pell Grant is an entitlement program and is awarded 50% fall and 50% spring depending on enrollment status and the student meeting all other eligibility criteria. See Section 12.3.1 for additional information.

SEOG is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until the year's allocation is exhausted. Each year the awarding policy is reviewed to determine the best method to award funds. If additional funds become available, enrolled students who meet eligibility criteria are prioritized based on the file complete date and awarded funds until the allocation is again exhausted. See Section 12.3.3 for additional information.

SCNB is awarded on a first-come, first served basis until the year's allocation is exhausted. Each year the awarding policy is reviewed to determine the best method to award funds. If additional funds

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become available, enrolled students are prioritized by file complete date and awarded the funds. Amounts are prorated for less than full-time enrollment and all other eligibility criteria must be met. See Section 12.4.1 for additional information.

14.3 Determination of Total Funds to be Awarded

The Director of Financial Aid determines the total aid to be awarded during an academic year. The Department of Education sends the FAO information detailing annual fund allocations through the Federal Authorization Letter with the Official Notice of Funding. The S.C. Commission on Higher Education notifies the FAO of the annual allocation for SCNB. The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education notifies the FAO of the award amount for LTA. Determining the total funds available includes an evaluation and projection of available funds, required matching and administrative expense. Careful projections are made to enable the FAO staff to offer fair and equitable packages to students. A determination is made based on prior year history and an increase of projected funds to account for attrition.

14.4 Outside Resources

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from outside resources. It is required that all outside assistance be reported to the FAO. Student aid including outside resources, may not exceed the student's unmet need. Therefore, if a student has been awarded by the aid office and receives an outside award, an adjustment to the original award notification may be necessary. If an adjustment is made, the outside aid will replace self-help aid if possible.

14.5 Award Notification and Acceptance of Awards

Students receive a copy of the financial aid award notice through postal mail. The award letter and all award letter inserts are available at www.TCTC.edu through the TCTC Portal in eTC under Financial Aid. Campus-based funds that were not paid are re-awarded to other needy students. A student may receive a reinstatement of a canceled offer only if aid funds are available. Funds are not reserved for reinstated awards.

14.6 Summer Aid

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There are only a few financial aid programs available for the summer. If a student has eligibility for a Pell Grant and has not used his/her entire allocation during the academic year, the appropriate remainder may be used during the summer enrollment period (i.e., for a 2011-12 Pell award, remaining funds may be used for summer 2012 only.) ACG was not funded by Congress for the 2011-12 or 2012-13 award years.

For the purposes of awarding summer aid, all sessions (full summer and summer flex start) are combined into one award period.

14.7 Consortium Agreements

A student may receive Title IV aid if he/she is taking courses at two or more schools, if the participating institutions enter into a consortium agreement. A consortium agreement specifies which institution will process and disburse student aid. The agreement also should stipulate which institution will consider the student enrolled. Whichever institution disburses aid funds is responsible for keeping records and returning Title IV funds in the case of an overaward.

14.8 International Students

International students are not eligible for federal or state financial aid because they do not meet the citizenship requirement. International students may receive scholarship aid and are encouraged to apply for such aid.

14.9 Ability to Benefit

The Ability to Benefit test will no longer be allowed as an equivalent to a High School Diploma effective for any student first enrolling in a program on or after 7/1/2012.*

<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN1201.html>

Upon acceptance into the college, the student will be coded by Admissions staff as having a High School Diploma or GED. If the student is classified as having no diploma (ND) or not applicable (NA), the student is not eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.

A student may earn the right to receive Federal Student Aid by enrolling in and successfully completing a minimum of 6 credit hours

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that count towards graduation requirements for an FSA-eligible program, without the use of Federal Student Aid.

A student may also take the Ability to Benefit Test and score appropriate scores as determined by the Department of Education. If either of these conditions is met, the student may receive Federal Aid in the next semester.

No aid may be paid retroactively if establishing FSA eligibility by passing 6 credit hours of coursework.

Procedure:

When a student is identified as a non high school graduate or GED recipient during the admission process, they will be sent to the assessment center. Upon checking in for testing, the assessment center will determine from admissions data the status of high school graduation or GED recipient. If the student has neither credential, the assessment center will schedule an appointment for the student to take the Ability to Benefit test. After testing is complete, the ATB administrator will provide a copy of the scores to ACT and deliver a duplicate copy to the Financial Aid Office. The FAO will review the scores to determine whether they meet Federal minimum requirements for ATB, and code the system appropriately.

14.10 Census Date

The Tri-County Technical College Financial Aid Office policy for a census date for financial aid enrollment status is set for the last day of the drop add period for the regular semester. This means that the enrollment status, as it applies to Federal and State Financial Aid, is frozen at the enrollment level at the end of that date. Any additions or reductions to enrollment beyond that date will not be added to or deleted from the enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

Reductions for non attendance in any class will result in a reduction of aid to an enrollment status which excludes the class(s) never attended.

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14.11 Repeated Coursework 11/1/11

School policy states that a grade of “D” is passing, although some academic departments require higher grades for their students.

Federal regulation allows a student to be paid once for a repetition of a course that he/she previously passed, and to be paid for unlimited repetitions of a class that he/she has not passed (within the limits of Satisfactory Academic Progress and Maximum Timeframe). Withdrawal from a class that is retaken after receiving a passing grade does not count as a subsequent attempt.

Example:

A student enrolls in CPT 170 and earns a D. The student is paid to retake the class in a later term. If the student fails from the second attempt, the student has exhausted their eligibility in aid for CPT 170 and will not be paid for any more attempts.