

# FINANCIAL AID

## Financial Aid Programs

**Location:** Visalia Campus - Sequoia 105 | Hanford Campus - Hanford Hub, Vocational Building | Tulare Campus - Student Services, Building A

**Phone:** Visalia: (559) 730-3747 | Hanford: (559) 583-2511 | Tulare: (559) 688-3013

**Website:** <https://www.cos.edu/en-us/admissions/financial-aid> (<https://www.cos.edu/en-us/admissions/financial-aid/>)

College of the Sequoias recognizes that many students need financial assistance to pursue their educational goals and strives to provide this assistance to all eligible students. The College offers a coordinated program of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment opportunities to assist students in meeting their college expenses.

Financial aid awards are made on the basis of demonstrated financial need and academic eligibility. For the purpose of establishing financial need, students should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Complete the FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa/>) Application materials and detailed instruction booklets are available at California high school counseling offices and/or College of the Sequoias Financial Aid Office. For general financial aid information, visit [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) (<https://studentaid.gov/>).

The California Dream Act Assembly Bills 130 and 131 allow undocumented students who meet AB 540 eligibility criteria to be eligible for state-funded financial aid such as California College Promise Grant, Cal Grant, Chafee Grant, state categorical programs (e.g., CalWORKs, CARE, EOPS, etc.) and non-state funded scholarships for public colleges and universities. The Dream Application is available online at <https://dream.csac.ca.gov/>.

## California College Promise Grant and Appeals

In an effort to help students succeed in California community colleges, the Student Success Act of 2012 (California Senate Bill 1456) was signed into law by Governor Brown. Among other aspects, the Act included the creation of minimum academic and progress standards that must be met for continued eligibility for the California College Promise Grant. These are different and separate standards from those for student federal aid, Cal Grant, and enrollment priority.

The Academic and Progress Standards for the Promise Grant are:

Academic Standard	Progress Standards
Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher	Cumulative satisfactory completion of more than 50 percent of all coursework attempted

- These standards do not apply to foster youth (24 years and younger).
- Eligibility to receive support services is not affected.
- Exemption is extended to enrollment priority.
- The 100 total degree-applicable completed unit cap **does not** apply to the Promise Grant.

In order for students to maintain Promise Grant eligibility, they must meet both the Academic and Progress Standards listed above.

The College will send a communication to those students who failed to meet the standards for two consecutive primary terms and will include

instructions for how to appeal the loss of the Promise Grant. This appeal is separate from any appeal for federal student aid, and the approval of one appeal will not mean the automatic approval of the other.

## Appeals

Students will be able to appeal the loss of the California College Promise Grant based on the following verifiable circumstances:

- Extenuating circumstances - cases of accidents, illnesses, or other circumstances beyond a student's control.
- A change in a student's economic situation.
- Evidence that a student was unable to obtain essential support services.
- Special consideration of factors for CalWORKs, EOPS, DSPS, and veteran students.
- Students with disabilities who applied for but did not receive accommodation in a timely manner.
- Significant academic improvement.
- Successful appeal for enrollment priority extends to the Promise Grant.

To obtain additional information and the Promise Grant Appeal form see Admissions & Records or call (559) 730-3727.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

The U.S. Department of Education requires, as a condition of receiving Title IV federal student aid, that students be making satisfactory academic progress toward an associate degree, vocational certificate of at least sixteen units, or transfer to a four-year college or university. This policy is also applied to state student aid.

**At College of the Sequoias (COS), students are considered to be meeting satisfactory academic progress standards if the following four requirements are met:**

1. **2.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average:** A student must maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA). This includes all GPA units at COS and those from other regionally accredited colleges and universities that have been evaluated by the COS Admissions and Records Office and applied to the student's academic record. GPA units are those with grades of A, B, C, D, or F.
2. **67 Percent Cumulative Pace of Unit Completion:** A student must complete at least 67 percent of the total number of units they attempt (passed hours divided by attempted hours). All courses with grades of A, B, C, D, or F, as well as W, I, NC, NP, NG, and repeated courses will be counted towards the total attempted units. Units from regionally accredited colleges and universities that have been evaluated by the COS Admissions and Records Office and applied to the student's academic record will also be counted.
3. **Degree Earned:** The student has not earned an associate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university.
4. **Maximum Attempted Unit Time Frame:** A student has not exceeded the maximum attempted unit time frame allowed for the completion of his/her educational program. The units required to complete a vocational certificate vary. Completion of an associate degree normally requires 60 units. Based on federal regulations, a student is allowed a maximum attempted unit time frame not to exceed 150 percent of the length of an educational program. Example: 150 percent of a 60-unit program (60 x 1.5) equals 90 attempted units, at which time the student would be disqualified. All courses,

including remedial, ESL, repeated courses, and courses taken while pursuing other majors, with grades of A, B, C, D, or F, as well as W, I, NC, NP, NG, will be counted as attempted units applied to the maximum attempted unit time frame allowed. Courses from other regionally accredited colleges or universities that have been evaluated by the COS Admissions and Records Office and applied to the student's academic record will also be counted toward the maximum attempted unit time frame.

- Academic Renewal/Excused Withdrawals:** Federal Student Aid regulations do not allow academic renewal procedures through which a student can apply to have credits attempted and grades earned in previous semesters excluded from the grade point calculation of the student's grade point average. Therefore, COS Financial Aid must always include courses applicable to a student's major (whenever taken) in evaluating a student's satisfactory academic progress (both GPA and Pace components).

**Additional Requirements**

- All financial aid students are required to meet with an academic counselor prior to registering for their courses to create a Student Educational Plan (SEP).
- Students must only register for courses that are required for their eligible educational program. To view the list of eligible programs go to the COS Financial Aid (<https://www.cos.edu/en-us/admissions/financial-aid/>) website.
- Repeated coursework: Federal regulations allow for students to receive federal student aid for one repeat of a previously passed course. A grade of D or better is considered passing. W's do not count as repeats.
- Transcripts from all regionally accredited colleges or universities attended must be submitted to COS.
- During any term of attendance, if it is determined by COS that the student is not actively attending classes and/or does not have a reasonable probability of receiving passing grades, eligibility for financial aid may be forfeited.

**Financial Aid Status**

College of the Sequoias' Financial Aid Office will evaluate students' academic progress at the end of each term (Fall, Spring, and Summer) following the official posting of grades in the COS Admissions and Records Office. The financial aid academic progress status will then be assigned from those listed below and posted to Banner Web.

**Good Progress** Students will be awarded and disbursed financial aid, if otherwise eligible.

**Warning** Students who fail to meet the 67 percent cumulative pace of unit completion and/or 2.0 cumulative GPA will be placed on financial aid warning status and continue to receive financial aid in the following term, if otherwise eligible.

**Disqualified-Poor Progress** Students who fail to meet the 67 percent cumulative pace of unit completion and/or 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement for two consecutive terms will be disqualified and not receive financial aid.

**Degree Earned** Students will not receive additional financial aid unless they are granted a financial aid appeal because of additional time needed to complete their educational goal.

**Degree Earned and Poor Progress** Students will not receive additional financial aid because of having earned an associate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university and having failed to meet the 67 percent cumulative pace of unit completion and/or 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement.

**Exceeded Maximum Attempted Unit Time Frame** Students will not receive additional financial aid unless they are granted a financial aid appeal because of additional time needed to complete their educational goal.

**Exceeded Maximum Attempted Unit Time Frame and Poor Progress** Students will not receive additional financial aid because of exceeding the 150 percent maximum attempted unit time frame allowed for the completion of their educational program and failing to meet the 67 percent cumulative pace of unit completion and/or 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement.

**Probation-Approved** Student has submitted an appeal which has been approved, and will therefore receive financial aid if otherwise eligible. At the end of the term for which s/he is placed on probation, the student must be back in GOOD PROGRESS status or have met all conditions of his/her appeal. Students may not be placed on PROBATION status for the subsequent term if the appeal conditions were not met.

**Probation Approved – Academic Plan** Student has submitted an appeal which has been approved, and will therefore receive financial aid if otherwise eligible. The student will be placed on an academic plan because more than one payment period is required to meet satisfactory academic progress standards. The student's progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan, the student is eligible to receive Title IV aid. Students may not be able to continue on probation status if they are not meeting the terms of the academic plan.

**Probation Approved – Academic Plan Contract**

Student has submitted an appeal which has been approved, and will therefore receive financial aid if otherwise eligible. The student will be placed on an academic plan contract because more than one payment period is required to meet progress standards, the student has changed major, and the student has excessive units. The student's progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan contract. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan contract, the student is eligible to receive Title IV aid. Students may not be able to continue on probation status if they are not meeting the terms of the academic plan contract.

**Appeal Denied**

Student has submitted an appeal that has been denied and therefore will not receive additional financial aid.

- Attach complete documentation of circumstances as specified on the appeal form instructions OR
- Have met the conditions of an appeal, if one was submitted and approved in the previous term.
- Have met the submission deadline as posted in the COS Financial Aid Office and on the COS Financial Aid (<https://www.cos.edu/en-us/admissions/financial-aid/>) website.

An appeal will NOT be approved for a student who has earned an Associate's Degree, except in limited circumstances such as retraining due to medical reasons.

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## Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility

- **Self-Reinstatement** – A student may have financial aid self-reinstated by earning a cumulative 2.0 GPA and by earning a cumulative 67 percent pace of unit completion but must not have exceeded the maximum attempted unit time frame of 150 percent allowed for the completion of his/her educational program.
- **Approval of SAP Appeal with Resulting Probation Status** – A student may submit an SAP Appeal Form accompanied by supporting documentation (if required) and have his/her appeal approved. In this scenario, students are placed on Probation status for that term only and must be in Good Progress status or have met the conditions of their approved appeal by the end of that term.

Students submitting an SAP Appeal will be notified of the appeal decision by email to their COS-issued email account ([giant.cos.edu](mailto:giant.cos.edu)) approximately four to six weeks after prior term grades are officially posted. The decision will also be posted on Banner Web.

### ALL FINANCIAL AID APPEAL DECISIONS ARE FINAL

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## Financial Aid Appeals

In certain documented circumstances, students placed on any financial aid status that results in their loss of financial aid eligibility may file an appeal for reinstatement of financial aid. The appeal form can be found in the forms section of the COS Financial Aid (<https://www.cos.edu/en-us/admissions/financial-aid/>) website.

### The following are the acceptable reasons for consideration of an appeal:

- Additional time needed to complete an educational goal beyond an associate degree or higher or has exceeded the maximum attempted unit time frame of 150 percent that is allowed for the completion of an educational program.
- Illness or accident of the student or immediate family member (documentation required)
- Death of an immediate family member (documentation required)
- Victim of a violent crime, natural disaster (documentation required)
- Disability, new or complications of existing, which affected academic performance (documentation required)
- Qualifying Semester: student made significant improvement during the semester even though cumulative criteria did not meet SAP standards (e.g. enrolled at least in 6 units, completed all units attempted with a "C" or better). (documentation required)
- U.S. military service orders (documentation required)

### When submitting an appeal, a student must:

- Attach a counselor-approved Student Educational Plan (SEP).
- Be currently registered for required courses in the term for which they are submitting the appeal.
- Have all transcripts from regionally accredited colleges or universities submitted to COS.