

## **Policy on Grading, Notations and Academic Engagement Spring 2022: FAQ's**

### **Q: What is the policy on Grading, Notations, and Academic Engagement?**

**A:** All students are expected to actively engage in learning. The “academic engagement” portion of the current Grading, Notations, and Academic Engagement policy requires that all twelve Connecticut State Community Colleges drop students from classes when there is no evidence of active participation.

There are deadlines for each class by which students must demonstrate they have begun their coursework. For semester-long (15-week) classes, students have two (2) weeks, or 14 calendar days to demonstrate active participation. Instructors shall determine which students have met the engagement requirement and report this information to the Registrar’s Office through use of our student information system (Banner Self-Service). The Registrar’s Office will be responsible for dropping students for whom there was no evidence of active participation by the designated deadline.

The policy can be found [here](#) in its entirety.

### **Q: Why do the CT community colleges have this policy?**

**A:** The purpose of this policy is to identify students who have enrolled in coursework but have not demonstrated academic engagement in their courses. This practice will help the colleges report official college enrollment and meet the regulatory standard of compliance. Additionally, this practice will provide for both graduation and retention rates to be more reflective of our true student population.

### **Q: What are the federal guidelines for this policy?**

**A:** To maintain eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs, Connecticut State Community Colleges must validate the academic engagement of each student in each registered course. This validation must be completed by the predetermined census date of each traditional semester, as well as during periods of enrollment shorter than the traditional 15-week semester (i.e. summer terms).

Institutions are required to document the academic engagement, otherwise known as “academic attendance” or an “academically-related activity,” of a student in order to determine their eligibility to receive financial aid under Title IV. A student’s certification of attendance that is not supported by institutional documentation is not acceptable under federal regulations. The procedures used to designate adequate attendance should be applied uniformly to all students across an institution, including non-financial aid students.

### **Q: What does “academic engagement” mean?**

**A:** Academic engagement is the active learning of the specific subject matter and/or skills integral to each class. CT Community College Faculty/Instructors will determine whether students’ academic activities meet the standard of academic engagement.

Examples of academic engagement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Attending asynchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students.
- Submitting an academic assignment.
- Taking an assessment or an exam.
- Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction.
- Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution.
- Interacting with an instructor about academic matters.

The determination of academic engagement must be made by the institution in accordance with any state and/or accrediting agency requirements. A student's self-certification alone is not sufficient documentation of academic engagement; it must be supported by institutional documentation of the student's attendance in the activity.

**Q: What doesn't meet the requirements of academic engagement?**

**A:** Not all student activities involve learning subject matter and fulfilling course requirements. The definition of academic engagement does not include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

- Living in institutional housing.
- Participating in the school's meal plan.
- Logging into an online class or tutorial without any further participation.
- Participating in academic counseling or advising; or
- Participating in a student-organized study group.

**Q: What happens if instructors do not have evidence of student engagement by the deadline?**

**A:** Instructors must report the engagement of each student on the class roster by the established deadlines. A notation of "H" indicates active engagement. A notation of "NP" indicates "Never Participated."

Students without evidence of active participation are then dropped from each class where instructors have indicated lack of engagement via the "NP" notation. All tuition and fees will be dropped from the applicable courses, but a \$50 late drop fee will be assessed for each course with the "NP" notation. These courses will not display on student transcripts.

Students who are dropped from class(es) are not permitted to attend those courses or access the learning management system for the applicable course(s).

**Q: What if some classes haven't begun by the deadline or begin just before the typical semester deadline for reporting academic engagement?**

**A:** Some courses begin significantly later than the first week of a semester. The evaluation of academic engagement must still occur for those classes. Late-start classes will have alternative deadlines, giving students ample time to demonstrate active participation in those courses.

**Q: What does this mean for financial aid?**

**A:** An institution may disburse Title IV funds to students only if they have demonstrated attendance in their coursework. If the student does not begin attendance (even in the case of a non-attendance taking institution), a school is required to return all funds for which the student may have been erroneously disbursed within 30 days.

For students who erroneously reported as engaged but are later determined to have not engaged, the Registrar at each college shall be responsible for communicating this change in enrollment status to the lead financial aid official at their institution. Failure to make this communication may result in the over-awarding of federal and/or state financial aid funds, which represents a significant compliance risk and threat to the continued participation in these financial aid programs.

**Q: How will being dropped from a course(s) affect a student's financial aid for the semester?**

**A:** Students that are dropped from course(s) due to the assignment of the NP are not eligible to receive financial aid of any kind for the affected course(s). Dropped classes also affect enrollment reporting and may impact the date at which students enter repayment on any previously borrowed student loans.

**Q: How will being dropped from a course(s) impact a student's Veterans educational benefits?**

**A:** Students that are dropped from course(s) cannot receive Veterans educational benefits for the dropped course(s). The Veterans Certifying Official can only sign off on courses that you are actively engaged and enrolled in. A previous certification will be adjusted to reflect active academic engagement.