

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Student Complaints and Appeals

Complaints - In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

Student complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or religion. [See FFDA and FFDB]
2. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See FFDA and FFDB]
3. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the College District. [See CHA]
4. Complaints concerning the withdrawal of consent to remain on campus. [See GDA]

Guiding Principles

Informal Process - The College District requires students to discuss their concerns with the appropriate instructor or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be required but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process - A student may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written Student Complaint/Appeal form located in *The Pathfinder*:

- All formal conferences shall be audio recorded.
- All complaint forms and appeal notices shall be filed electronically.
- All responses at Level One, Level Two, Level Three, and Level Four shall be sent electronically to the student's email address of record.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

Freedom from Retaliation - Neither the Board nor any College District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student for bringing a concern or complaint.

Notice to Students - The College District shall inform students of this policy through appropriate College District publications.

General Provisions - Complaint forms and appeal notices shall be filed electronically.

Filing - Filings submitted electronically shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication.

Scheduling Conferences - If a student fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the College District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's absence.

Days - "Days" shall mean College District business days. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following day is "day one."

Representative - "Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student to represent the student in the complaint process. The student may designate a representative through written notice to the College District at any level of this process. If the student designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the College District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the College District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the College District's counsel. The College District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating Complaints - Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

Untimely Filings - All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student, at any point during the complaint process. The student may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within five days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs incurred - Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Grades Appeal Process - This appeal process shall not include appeals for forced withdrawal from developmental courses in accordance with state law.

- The student may remain in class until the appeal process is completed. If there is a question of patient or student safety, the student shall only observe.

Final course grade complaints shall apply to any grade or course related issue including cheating and plagiarism. The College District requires students to discuss their concerns and appeals through informal conferences with the appropriate instructor.

Suspended Student - No former student who has been suspended for disciplinary reasons from the College District shall be permitted on the campus or other facilities of the College District during the period of suspension without the prior written approval of the College President or a designated representative.

Complaint/Appeal Process

Complaint and Appeal Forms - A Student Complaint/Appeal form, provided by the College District and located in *The Pathfinder*, must be filed. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the Student Complaint/Appeal form. If the student does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student unless the student did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.

Level One - A Student Complaint/Appeal form, provided by the College District and located in *The Pathfinder*, must be filed within five business days of official grade posting. [see academic calendar]

A conference hearing the appeal will be held within three business days with the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. This administrator may uphold or deny the complaint.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the student within three days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Level Two - A student not satisfied at Level One may appeal to Level Two. Within three business days of the Level One disposition, the student shall sign and progress his or her Level One complaint/appeal by submitting his or her current Student Complaint/Appeal form to the Vice President of Student Services, director and/or dean of the department involved in the complaint/appeal issue.

After receiving progression of a Student Complaint/Appeal form, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One appeal to the Level Two administrator. The student may request a copy of the Level One record. The Level Two Administrator must hold a conference within three business days of receiving a signed appeal form.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Level Two Administrator shall provide a written response within three business days of holding the conference. The Level Two Administrator may uphold or deny the complaint.

Level Three - A student not satisfied at Level Two may appeal to Level Three. Within three business days of the Level Two disposition, the student shall sign and progress his or her Level One complaint/appeal by submitting his or her current Student Complaint/Appeal form to the Vice President of Instruction.

After receiving progression of a Student Complaint/Appeal form, the Level Two administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level Two appeal to the Level Three administrator. The student may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One, Level Two, and attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level Two administrator in reaching the Level Two decision.

Within three business days, the Vice President of Instruction shall then call together the academic appeals and student complaint committee.

Academic Appeals and Student Complaint Committee - The chairperson of the academic appeals and student complaint committee shall be given the written Student Complaint/Appeal form used at Levels One and Two and shall set the time for the committee to hear the appeal. The hearing shall be conducted on the College District campus.

The committee shall decide whether an error was made in calculating the grade or whether the student is guilty or innocent of a charge, after hearing the information presented by the student and the Level Two Administrator. The decision shall be determined by a majority vote of the committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee shall inform the student and the Vice President of Instruction in writing as to the decision of the committee within three business days of Level Three disposition.

Level Four - A student not satisfied at Level Three may appeal to Level Four. Within three business days of the Level Three disposition, the student shall sign and progress his or her Level One complaint/appeal by submitting his or her current Student Complaint/Appeal form to the College President.

After receiving progression of a Student Complaint/Appeal form, the Level Three administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level Three appeal to the Level Four administrator. The student may request a copy of the Level Three record.

The Level Three record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One, Level Two, Level Three, and attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level Three administrator in reaching the Level Three decision.

Within three business days, the College President shall hold a conference with the involved parties to discuss the appeal if a student is not satisfied at Level Three.

Within three business days of the conference, the College President may act to affirm, modify, remand, or reverse the decision. If no action is taken within three business days, the committee's decision shall thereby be affirmed and final.

Academic Year

The academic year consists of two long semesters, composed of sixteen weeks each. In addition, two summer sessions are offered of approximately five weeks in length. Semester starting and ending days are established by following the dates specified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Change of Name or Address

A student who changes his or her name, residence or mailing address should notify the Admissions/Records Office immediately. All name changes must be accompanied by official documents such as driver's license, marriage license, divorce decree or social security card. Any official communication from the College which is mailed to the name and permanent address on record is considered to have been properly delivered; therefore, the student is responsible for any lack of communication which results in record errors. The Panola student email account address will not be updated due to a name change.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When a student has been ill or absent from class for approved extracurricular activities, he or she should be allowed, as far as possible, to make up the work missed. When an instructor feels that a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Vice President of Instruction that the student be withdrawn from the course. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences. **Attendance in online courses is determined by submission of an assignment or participation in an activity. Logging in to the class is not sufficient evidence of participation.**

Fall or Spring semesters:

- 5 absences, MWF classes
- 3 absences, TR classes
- 2 absences, one-day-per-week class

Summer Sessions:

- 2 absences, four-days-a-week classes
- 2 absences, two-evenings-a-week classes

The student is responsible for seeing that he or she has been officially withdrawn from a class. A student who stops attendance in a class without officially withdrawing from that class will be given the grade he or she has earned; consequently, the student must follow official withdrawal procedures in the Admissions/Records Office.

Religious Holy Days. In accordance with Section 51.911, Texas Education Code, Panola College shall allow a student who is absent from class for observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within one week after the absence if, not later than the 15th day after the first day of the semester, the student notifies the instructor of each class the student had scheduled on that date that the student would be absent for a religious holy day. Notifications of planned absences must be in writing and must be delivered by the student either personally to the instructor of each class, with receipt of the notification acknowledged and dated by the instructor or by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the instructor of each class. Panola College may exclude from these policies and procedures any student absence for religious holy days which may interfere with patient care.

Class Load Information

A student enrolled in fewer than 12 semester hours will be classified as a part-time student. Individuals enrolled in 12 or more semester hours are classified as full-time students. A normal student load in a fall or spring semester for coursework is five academic or technical courses totaling from 14 to 17 hours of instruction. To this total, a student may add one-hour courses such as a physical education activity course. Students wishing to enroll in six academic courses and/or more hours in terms less than 16 weeks will need to secure the written permission of the Vice President of Instruction after providing documentation of past academic success. During a summer session, a normal load is 6 semester hours with the maximum load being 7 semester hours. During a 3-week mini-term, a load is 3 hours/1 course. During a Flex session, a normal load would be no more semester hours than the number of weeks of the flex session. Students enrolled in a full load of classes should not take more hours in a Flex session than the number of weeks in the flex session.

Class Schedule

Classes in the fall and spring semester are scheduled Monday through Friday with Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes meeting for 55 minutes and Tuesday-Thursday classes meeting for 80 minutes. Classes scheduled as exceptions to this policy are listed online in the Schedule of Classes published each semester. In summer terms, classes which meet during the day are normally scheduled for Monday through Thursday. Course offerings are available online at <http://www.panola.edu>. The College reserves the right to cancel any course section for any semester in which there is an inadequate number of registrants. The College may also change the instructor for a given course without prior notice.

Degree Plans

Prior to registration each semester, the student has the opportunity to be assisted in selecting his or her courses by an advisor/mentor/counselor who is familiar with the requirements of the senior college from which the student expects to graduate. The catalog of the transfer school should be studied carefully, making certain that the student takes only courses which are equivalent to those required by the senior college of his or her

choice. Articulation agreements with universities which indicate the courses which are equivalent to the specific degree requirements are available in the Student Success Center. The student should be aware that a course may transfer to another college or university without being applicable to a specific field of study or degree within the school or university.

Grade Reports

Official grades are available online at the end of the semester. Grades may be received via mail by request. Official transcripts may be withheld if money is owed to any department of the College. Mid-semester deficiency grades of "D" or "F" will receive notification by mail, however, all grades are filed by the instructors in the fall and spring semesters. Mid-semester grades do not become a part of the student's permanent record. Students may obtain information about mid-semester grades from their instructors on an individual basis.

Grading System

A student's standing in his or her work is expressed by grades obtained from class work and examinations. College grades are important as they become a part of the student's permanent record and may be used as the basis for many decisions related to the student during his or her lifetime. The student's grade point average (GPA) is significant in determining eligibility for continued financial aid, for continuance in school, for acceptance at a transfer institution, for graduation and eventually for employment after completion of a formal education.

A system of point values exists to convert alphabetical grades received into a numerical system. The following grades have the indicated number of points assigned for each semester hour of credit earned:

A	Excellent work	4 grade points
B	Above average work	3 grade points
C	Average work	2 grade points
D	Passing	1 grade point
F	Failure	0 grade points
I	Incomplete	0 grade points
P	Pass	0 grade points
"Q"	Must repeat	0 grade points

The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted. Although a "D" is considered passing at Panola College for college credit courses, some colleges will not accept a "D" for transfer credit. In the developmental studies program a grade of "C" or better indicates satisfactory progress for advancement either to the next level within the developmental program or into academic studies. A grade of "D" means the student will be retained at the same level in the developmental program, repeating the class. Developmental courses are included in the GPA calculation for each semester. These courses are not included in the cumulative GPA nor do they count on the final GPA for graduation. However, they are included in determining eligibility for financial aid and scholarships.

Hazing

Hazing of any kind is prohibited. Hazing is a criminal offense in the State of Texas. "Hazing" means any intentional, knowing or reckless act occurring on or off school property directed against a student, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students. See <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/documents/pathfinder.pdf> for more details.

Incomplete Grade

Incomplete ("I") is a temporary grade indicating that a student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of a course with the exception of a final examination or other work delayed by an illness, emergency, or authorized absence. The grade of "I" is neutral and is not included in any grade point calculation. The student must provide documentation to the instructor when requesting consideration for additional time. Before awarding an "I," the instructor must secure the permission of the Dean or Vice President of Instruction. The student must complete work within six weeks after the end of the semester in which the grade was issued or receive an "F" for the course. Any exceptions must be approved by the Vice President of Instruction.

Repeating a Course to Improve a Grade

Grades cannot be changed. The only way a course grade may be raised is by the student repeating the course and making a higher grade. If a course is repeated, the grade of record will be the highest grade (effective Fall 2015). Taking a course at another college in an attempt to improve a grade will neither change a grade nor figure into the GPA at Panola College.

Repetition of Courses

If a student repeats a course, both grades will remain on the transcript but only the highest grade is counted in determining the total credit and overall GPA (effective Fall 2015). The student is cautioned, however, that other colleges may not follow this practice.

Review of Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, provide the student with the right to inspect and review the contents of his/her educational records (except as limited under the law). The student is entitled to obtain copies, at his/her expense, to receive explanations or interpretations of the records and to request a hearing to challenge the content. Access to records must be requested on a form available from the official in charge of the particular record. Informal Review: follow the procedure requesting examination of records. An official will date and sign a summary of action form which will be maintained in the student's file. Formal Review: If the question of accuracy is not resolved during the informal review, the student may request a formal review. The Academic Appeals Committee will hear challenges concerning these records. **Challenging a grade must occur before the end of the fall or spring semester immediately following awarding of the grade.**

Scholastic Probation

Probation occurs when the quality of a student's work falls below the accepted standard of satisfactory progress. Scholastic probation is a conditional permission for a student to continue in college. A student must maintain a cumulative "C" (2.0 GPA) on all coursework completed and/or accepted in transfer at Panola College. A student who fails to achieve a 2.0 GPA after accumulating 12 semester hours will be notified of his/her probationary status. The student should visit with a counselor concerning recommendations for improvement. A student on probation may not register for more than four academic courses and two one-hour courses without the approval of the Vice President of Instruction. Students will have their status reviewed after the completion of each additional 12 semester hours. Should a student fail to achieve a cumulative 2.0 GPA at the end of the second consecutive evaluation, the student will receive notification that he/she must report for counseling before being allowed to register and continue on a probationary status. If a student fails to achieve a cumulative 2.0 GPA at the end of the third consecutive evaluation, he/she will be placed on academic suspension. Students on probation who achieve a "C" (2.0 GPA) for any given semester will be allowed to continue on probation for the next semester even though the cumulative average is below 2.0. Students on probation for the third consecutive semester who do not have a "C" average for the immediately preceding semester will not be allowed to attend Panola College for the next long semester.

Scholastic Suspension

A student on Scholastic Suspension is denied the privilege of registering for one spring or fall semester, as appropriate. Following the semester of suspension, the student may re-enroll on a probationary status. The student remains on probation until a cumulative 2.0 or better GPA is earned. Students who have been on suspension from Panola College or another college, who are allowed to register, must earn a "C" average on courses attempted that semester, or they will be suspended for one year. NOTE: Exceptions to this policy may be made through written appeal to the Vice President of Instruction. Students may enroll in the summer sessions without restriction. Students who are on scholastic suspension or probation may attend summer school for the purpose of raising their grade point averages.

Senate Bill 1231 (Six Drop Rule)

SB 1231 enacted by the Texas Legislature limits the number of classes a student may drop. Under section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, "an institution of higher education may not permit a student to drop more than six courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education." This statute was enacted by the State of Texas in spring 2007 and applies to students who enroll in a public institution of higher education as a first-time freshman in fall 2007 or later. Courses affected include courses which students are enrolled in after the official reporting date for the institution with the exception of the following which are not included in the six drop limit:

- Courses taken by students while still enrolled in high school-whether for dual credit or early college credit or college credit alone.
- Courses dropped at private or out-of-state institutions.
- Other courses exempted by Panola College which include developmental courses and workforce education courses which do not lead to a degree.
- Courses dropped by the student to withdraw from the institution.

Panola College has adopted a policy under which exceptions can be made under certain circumstances. If the student can show good cause (as outlined below) for dropping a course, that drop will not be used in the drop count against the student.

- A severe illness or other debilitating condition that affects the student's ability to satisfactorily complete the course;
- The student's responsibility for the care of a sick, injured or needy person if the provision of that care affects the student's ability to satisfactorily complete the course;
- The death of a person who is considered to be a member of the student's family or who is otherwise considered to have a sufficiently close relationship to the student that the person's death is considered to be a showing of good cause;
- The active duty service as a member of the Texas National Guard or the armed forces of the United States of either the student or a person who is considered to have a sufficiently close relationship to the student that the person's active military service is considered to be a showing of good cause;
- The change of a student's work schedule that is beyond the control of the student, and that effects the student's ability to satisfactorily complete the course;

Other good cause as determined by the institution of higher education.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an employee, student or group of employees or students because of his or her gender and that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or often offensive working or academic environment; or

2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance of duties or studies; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes (1) epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to gender and (2) written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of gender and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on district premises or is circulated in the workplace.

Students/employees shall not engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment. College officials or their agents shall investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and officials shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against employees or students found to engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment. An employee or student who believes he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall bring the matter to the attention of the Vice President of Student Services or immediate supervisor, in accordance with the procedures in the district's complaint policy. Bad faith allegations or use of this policy for purposes unrelated to its clear intent are expressly prohibited and could result in expulsion. See <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/documents/pathfinder.pdf> for more details.

Student Classification

A freshman in academic studies is a student who has credit for fewer than thirty semester hours. Students with thirty or more semester hours are classified as sophomores.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible citizens. Faculty, staff and administrators have the authority to establish and maintain standards of conduct for students. This authority not only extends to the classroom, residence halls and all on-campus activities, but also extends to all College-sponsored off-campus activities. Any student who fails to conduct himself/herself responsibly with respect to persons and property may be withdrawn from school. The College may drop a student from a class or from all classes for any breach of conduct. Students who are removed from class or classes can seek appeal by due process as outlined in the student handbook, *The Pathfinder*, located online at <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/documents/pathfinder.pdf>.

Student Records

PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICIES: FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACTS (FERPA), TEXAS OPEN RECORDS. PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICIES: FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACTS (FERPA), TEXAS OPEN RECORDS

Access to records by persons or agencies other than the student is limited by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and the Texas Open Records Act. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the college receives a request for access.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
- The right to provide written consent before the college discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

In compliance with FERPA, the college may release to the general public the following types of directory information without the written consent of the student:

- Name, address, telephone number
- Major field of study

- Dates of attendance
- Previous educational institution attended
- Classification
- Degrees, certificates and awards received (President's/Dean's List)
- Date of graduation
- Panola College e-mail address, personal e-mail address
- Participation in official recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Enrollment status (full-time or part-time)

This directory information is disclosed unless a request to withhold the release of the information was made in writing and received in the Admissions/Records Office prior to or at the time of a student's initial registration. Any change in the release information status must be made in writing. Requests for directory information must be made in writing and each request will be considered individually. Each student may request that information be withheld from the public by making a written request to the Admissions/Records Office. Forms are available. Release of information to a parent requires a student's written consent.

Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints should be addressed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520

The Dean's List

Only full-time students (minimum of 12 semester credit hours) with a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.79 will be included on the Dean's List. Only courses which apply toward an associate degree or a certificate are included in this computation. This calculation is made during the fall and spring semesters.

The President's List

Only full-time students (minimum of 12 semester credit hours) with a grade point average between 3.8 and 4.0 will be included on the President's List. Only courses which apply toward an associate degree or a certificate are included in this computation. This calculation is made during the fall and spring semesters.

Transcript Requests

A student can readily transfer to another college by having a transcript of his or her credits sent to the registrar of a junior/community college, senior college or university. The Admissions/Records Office will not honor a request for a transcript without the student's signature or verification through the student's Panola College email account. Transcript request forms are available in the Admission/Records Office and online at <http://www.panola.edu>.

The request will be honored as quickly as possible. During peak service periods, such as registration or final examinations, the student can expect delay. At other times, students can expect immediate response to transcript requests. The same procedure applies to requests for transcripts of continuing education units (CEU).

A transcript will not be released if a "hold" has been placed on a student's records. If the "hold" involves a financial obligation, a transcript may be released after the Business Office has received payment in cash, money order or a check that has cleared the bank.

Unit of Credit

The standard unit of credit at Panola College is the semester hour. One credit hour is awarded for each hour of lecture scheduled in a week of instruction in a semester. Generally, three hours of lab instruction in a week earns one hour of semester credit.

Withdrawal from a Course

If it becomes necessary for a student to “drop” a course, the student must contact the Admissions/Records Office in the Charles C. Matthews Foundation Student Center. The grade of “W” (withdrawn) is given during the first 12 weeks of the semester. The grade of “W” has no negative effect on the student’s GPA. If the student does not contact the Admissions/Records Office and exits a class unofficially, a grade of “F” will be awarded by the instructor.

Withdrawal from College

When a student finds it necessary to leave college before the end of a semester, the student must notify the Admissions/Records Office in the Charles C. Matthews Foundation Student Center. Instructions for clearing with the library and other departments will be given at the time of withdrawal. Students who fail to officially withdraw will receive the grade of “F.” Ceasing to attend class does not constitute official withdrawal. Refer to the College calendar for the last day for withdrawal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Application for Graduation

To be considered as a candidate for a degree or certificate, the student must submit a formal application for graduation. It is the responsibility of the student to make certain that all requirements for graduation are completed.

Graduation exercises are held twice a year at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Application for graduation is made in the Admissions/Records Office in the semester prior to anticipated graduation.

Disclaimer

It is the responsibility of each student to keep apprised of current graduation requirements for a certificate or degree program in which he or she is enrolled.

Catalog Time Restriction

A student must meet the degree or certificate of completion requirements of the catalog under which he/she first entered the College provided the courses are currently being offered. Alternatively, a student may choose to complete under the course requirements in effect during any subsequent year in which he/she is registered, provided the courses are offered.

Panola College expects that a student will normally graduate under the catalog in effect at the time of the most recent admission. For nursing and other specialized programs, the semester of acceptance into the program determines the catalog year. When the elapsed time from initial enrollment to degree/certificate completion is long, individual courses may have been replaced or canceled. Students may consult the new catalog each year to confirm whether their chosen program has been revised or will be replaced or if a new program has been introduced which may be more appropriate for meeting their educational objectives. Students should be aware that the decision to graduate under a more recent catalog may require that additional courses be completed and lengthen the time required for degree completion.

These provisions are subject to the restriction that all requirements must be completed within five years from the date of the catalog chosen and that the courses are currently being offered. A student may choose to complete requirements under the current catalog.

General Requirements for Degrees and Certificates

Graduation requirements change periodically to meet the various needs of transfer universities, business and industry and/or cancellation of courses and programs.

1. Satisfactory completion of all financial and other obligations to the College.
2. Fulfillment of Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements.
3. A minimum grade point average of 2.0. Only courses that apply toward an Associate Degree or Certificate of Completion are included in this computation.
4. Formal application for graduation must be submitted to the Admissions/Records Office during the semester immediately preceding graduation.
5. If a student changes from a career/technical to an academic program of study while at Panola College, failing grades associated with the earlier course of study will not be computed in the grade point average required for graduation. Passing grades for courses in the previous course of study may be used, if the courses are acceptable as electives.
6. All candidates for graduation are encouraged to participate in commencement exercises. However, after completion of required coursework, the student's degree will be reflected on the diploma and official transcript, regardless of participation.

Certificate of Completion

A student who completes a prescribed career/technical education certificate program and satisfies the grade requirements of the particular program will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. In addition, 25 percent of the hours must be taken at Panola College. Requirements must have been completed within five years of the catalog under which a student first entered the College provided the courses are currently being offered.

Associate Degrees

- A. To complete the 60 hours necessary for the degrees of **Associate of Arts** and **Associate of Science**, students should follow the Core Curriculum, making additional choices from the suggested programs of study. The student seeking an Associate of Arts degree must elect six to eight hours of foreign language study.
- B. Prescribed requirements for the **Associate of Applied Science** degree in a specific Career/Technical Education program for which a student is enrolled are set forth in this catalog in the section which lists the courses that the student takes. Adjustments in course requirements for the Associate of Applied Science Degree may be approved by the Vice President of Instruction.
- C. Additional Requirements:
 - 1) For degree completion, at least 25 percent of the credit semester hours must be earned through instruction completed at Panola College.
 - 2) A grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 must be earned.
 - 3) Substitutions may be allowed on application to the Vice President of Instruction.
 - 4) The student has the ultimate responsibility for selecting and registering for courses meeting the graduation requirements.
- D. A second degree may be conferred. The student must successfully complete all courses required in the second degree plan and submit a formal application for graduation. A minimum of 18 semester credit hours of resident credit beyond the hours for the first degree is required.

Physical Education Requirement

Three semester hours of physical activity are required of all degree-seeking students, unless specifically exempt. Each student should enroll for physical education activity classes until this requirement is met. Those specifically exempt are veterans of the armed forces of the United States, students certified by their physicians as being physically limited, and certain students in Career/Technical programs. Veterans will be awarded two hours of physical education credit with proper documentation. Students who are not specifically exempt may petition the Vice President of Instruction for a waiver of the physical education requirement. When an exemption is granted, approved courses must be substituted to equal or exceed the total number of semester hours which would have been earned in a program by completing the physical activity requirement. Two or more physical activity courses may be scheduled per semester. Each course must be a different activity. A maximum of four physical education activity hours may be counted as credit toward graduation for majors other than kinesiology.

Graduation Honors

Students who complete an Associate degree at Panola College and demonstrate academic excellence will be recognized during commencement exercises. Honors will be noted on the commencement program based on the previous semester's cumulative GPA. However, the final honors status and designation, which will appear on the college transcript and diploma, will be based on the cumulative GPA at the time of completion of coursework required for the degree.

- Summa cum laude (with highest praise) 3.90-4.00
- Magna cum laude (with high praise) 3.75-3.89
- Cum laude (with praise) 3.50-3.74