



# GREEN COUNTRY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

## 2022-2023 FINANCIAL AID POLICY & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

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*"We are the leader in securing Oklahoma's future"*

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# FINANCIAL AID POLICY & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Statement of Purpose

Federal regulations mandate that institutions have written policies and procedures. The purpose of this document, the Federal Student Financial Aid Policy and Procedures Handbook, is to record policies and procedures surrounding the delivery of financial aid at Green Country Technology Center. If no policy or procedure addresses a given issue, the Financial Aid Coordinator is expected to use professional judgment based upon the intent of all financial aid programs and practices.

This Handbook:

- Sets forth the institution's policies in regard to student aid and describes the procedures which must be taken to implement these policies.
- Provides general procedures in order that a systematic and consistent approach may be taken in the operation of all programs; ensuring that similar operations will be handled in a uniform manner.
- Provides quick reference to various practices.
- Facilitates the orientation and training of personnel when changes occur.
- Is reviewed annually to determine if any revisions are applicable.

### Financial Aid Reference Documents

In addition to the Federal Student Financial Aid Policy and Procedures Handbook, other regulations which affect student aid will be adhered to. These regulations and guides are located at [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov) and are as follows:

- Student Handbook and Consumer Information
- Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook
- Federal Registers (Financial Aid Legislation)
- U.S. Department of Education Audit Guide
- OASFAA Newsletters
- FSA Electronic Announcements
- EDConnect User's Guide and Technical Reference
- EDExpress User's Guide and Technical Reference
- Higher Education Act as amended
- EFC Formula Guide
- Dear Colleague Letters from the Department of Education
- NSLDS Reference Materials
- SFA Policy Bulletins
- SAR and ISIR Reference Materials
- SCO Handbook for use with VA Education Benefits
- GCTC Board of Education Policies

## 2. PHILOSOPHY AND POLICIES OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

### Mission of Green Country Technology Center

The mission of Green Country Technology Center is, **“Developing a world-class workforce by preparing YOU for success.”**

### Philosophy of Financial Aid at Green Country Technology Center

Green Country Technology Center believes that everyone who desires training should have the opportunity of attending school regardless of their financial situation. We continue to promote financial assistance opportunities to eligible students who might otherwise be depriving themselves of the benefit of technology training. The primary purpose of the financial program at Green Country Technology Center is to provide financial assistance to students

who, without aid, would be unable to attend school. Financial assistance is offered in the form of grants, scholarships, and federally funded programs. Financial assistance is viewed only as supplementary. The student and the family of a student, when applicable, are expected to make a maximum effort to assist with educational expenses. It is the policy of Green Country Technology Center to award federal financial aid in accordance with federal regulations and guidelines pertaining to the type of assistance requested.

#### History of Financial Aid at Green Country Technology Center

Green Country Technology Center began participating in the Federal Title IV student financial assistance program in the fall of 1996. Neesha Herring is the current Financial Aid Coordinator.

#### Financial Aid Policy Development

The Financial Aid Coordinator is responsible for initiating the development of financial aid policies and procedures at Green Country Technology Center.

### **3. ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL AID ORGANIZATION & OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

#### Purpose of the Financial Aid Office

The purpose of the Financial Aid Office is:

- to provide professional financial counseling to students and parents concerning meeting the costs of education;
- to administer Title IV Aid programs competently according to the institution's philosophy and policies as stated in Section 2 and federal regulations; and
- to maintain institutional records of assistance programs and students assisted.

#### Responsibilities of the Financial Aid Coordinator

##### Primary Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the Financial Aid Coordinator are to assemble and maintain student aid records, assess eligibility of applicants for aid, authorize aid, and complete federally mandated reports and design and implement systems to accomplish these tasks. The Coordinator works closely with the US Department of Education and other agencies to ensure compliance with all regulations and submit required documents to obtain and maintain appropriate approvals. This position requires knowledge of federal regulations, institutional policies and procedures, ability to deal with clients about sensitive issues and the ability to deal with continually changing program regulations.

##### Specific Responsibilities

- Interviewing students & providing information on financial aid programs
- Analyzing student need and assessing eligibility
- Maintaining student financial aid records/files
- Authorizing and processing Pell awards and payments
- Verifying application data on selected applicants
- Calculating student Pell Grant awards
- Collecting progress reports for satisfactory academic progress
- Calculating return of funds or overpayments when student withdraws
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of relevant federal regulations
- Coordinating fiscal matters with the Business Manager, including cash requests, cash accountability and cash disbursements
- Revising Student Consumer Information, Financial Aid Policy & Procedures, and Student Handbook
- Preparing Federal Title IV Reports
- Other general office duties

## Financial Aid Records Management

### Location of Records

Financial aid records are located in the Financial Aid Office in the student services center at Green Country Technology Center in Okmulgee. The Financial Aid Coordinator has the responsibility for maintaining these files and records. Green Country Technology Center retains all financial aid records and files as required by law for 3 years from the end of the award year for which the aid was awarded.

### Confidentiality and Inspection of Student Records

All information (written or oral) that a student and/or family reveals in the process of seeking assistance is confidential. Access to this information is restricted to the Financial Aid Coordinator. Application materials become the property of Green Country Technology Center upon submission and are maintained in the student's file. No information shall be released that falls under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) without a signed request of the student or as allowed by FERPA.

### Persons Designated to Provide Student Consumer Information & Distribution of Forms

The central office staff and counselor are designated as having the responsibility for distributing disclosure requirements, applications, student forms and general information to current and prospective students at Green Country Technology Center. Student Consumer Information is also located on the website at [www.gctc.ok.edu](http://www.gctc.ok.edu), in the Student Services offices, and in the Central Office. The U.S. Department of Education provides comprehensive student aid information to students and their families through the Student Aid on the Web site at <https://studentaid.ed.gov>. This streamlined website includes comprehensive information on the student aid life cycle and includes tips and guides for students like the FAFSA4caster, things to consider when selecting a school, and comparing colleges brochure.

### Electronic Statement of Account

The Financial Aid Coordinator maintains Electronic Statements of Account by fiscal year in financial aid files. This document transmits information about the school's Pell Grant authorization. As the authorization amount increases, a new Statement of Account will be sent to the school. Electronic Statements of Account summarize current and future payment data submitted via Origination Records and Disbursement Records. The Financial Aid Coordinator reconciles the statement.

### Pell Processed Disbursement List/Financial Aid Excel Spreadsheet

The Financial Aid Coordinator uses the Pell Processed Disbursement list and a financial aid office developed Excel spreadsheet recording disbursements to students to reconcile total disbursements made. These two reports should equal. The total disbursed is then reconciled with G5 and the Electronic Statement of Account.

### Business Office/G5

The Business Manager at GCTC maintains the records of the money ordered through G5. She uses computer entry to track the receipt and disbursements of federal money from the Pell Activity Account.

### Office Hours and Services

Financial Aid Office:  
(August – May)

Monday through Thursday, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
Friday, 7:30 AM to 3:45 PM

\*(June/July)

\*By Appointment

Student Services available:  
(Year-Round)

Monday through Thursday 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
Friday: 7:30 AM to 3:45 PM

#### Calendar of Financial Aid Activities

The Financial Aid Coordinator attends Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education Financial Aid meetings, OASFA Conferences, FSA Conference, OVESA Conferences and U.S. Dept. of Education Delivery System Workshops, and other meetings as needed.

#### Voter Registration

Voter registration forms are available at all times in the central office and on the GCTC website (www.gctcok.edu) under About Us/Consumer Information.

### **4. PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM**

#### Institutional and Program Eligibility

Documentation regarding Green Country Technology Center's eligibility for all aid assistance programs is located in the Financial Aid Office or the Superintendent's office. The Financial Aid Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of the Program Participation Agreements (PPA), the Eligibility & Certification Approval Report (ECAR), and the 5-year federal re-certification.

### **Title IV Financial Assistance at GCTC**

#### Federal Pell Grant

Financial Aid is available at GCTC to students who qualify for Federal PELL Grants. GCTC does not participate in federal loans.

#### Purpose of the Federal Pell Grant Program

The Pell Grant Program is a federally funded grant program, which, for the 2021-22 academic year provides up to \$6,495 to full time postsecondary students. The purpose of the program is to provide a foundation of aid to needy students. GCTC awards federal financial aid according to federal regulations and guidelines.

#### Federal Pell Grant Eligibility

To be eligible for a Federal PELL Grant, a student must have an eligible EFC (Expected Family Contribution). This number is an index of the student's ability to contribute to the cost of education. Grant amounts are based upon cost of attendance, the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the hours a student will attend during an award year. The government provides a Payment Schedule annually to be used to determine the amount of a Pell Grant.

The neediest students will have an EFC of 0 and may be eligible for the maximum award. As the EFC increases, the amount of the award decreases and, after a certain point, the award becomes 0. The EFC cutoff index number for receiving a Pell Grant for the 2021-22 academic year is 5847. The EFC is printed on the Student Aid Report (SAR/ISIR) which is the official notice of the student's eligibility (or ineligibility) for a Federal PELL Grant. The EFC is computed by the Central Processing System and is based on the information reported by the student on the financial aid application. Eligibility is also based upon meeting the general criteria which is listed in this handbook. All students that complete a FAFSA and are deemed eligible by the US Department of Education and the Financial Aid Coordinator will receive the Federal Pell grant amount that they are entitled to. Students may not receive a Pell Grant from more than one institution concurrently.

#### Eligibility Requirements U.S. Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen

An applicant must be a citizen or eligible non-citizen. Unless the SAR/ISIR demands it, U.S. citizens who answered yes on the FAFSA to the citizenship question do not have to verify citizenship. Permanent residents must submit proof of their status to the aid office. This proof becomes a permanent part of their file. All eligible non-citizens must submit proof of status for the file. Proof includes a U.S. passport stamped "non-citizen national" or "Form-I-151" (green cards.) Other forms of documentation are rare and the Financial Aid Coordinator will consult the Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook if necessary. A document verification request will be made on all aliens seeking aid.

#### Registered with Selective Service

A male applicant at least 18 years of age and born after December 31, 1959 must be registered with Selective Service.

### Undergraduate Status

An applicant states on the FAFSA application that she/he does not have a Bachelor's degree. Students who have undergraduate bachelor degrees are not eligible for the Pell grant.

### Determination of Financial Need

GCTC employs the Federal Needs Analysis Methodology in assessing financial need and eligibility for Title IV Assistance. The Federal Needs Analysis Methodology is based on the following philosophy of financial aid

- to the extent that they are able, parents have the primary responsibility to pay for their children's education
- parents will, as they are able, contribute funds for their children's education
- students, as well as their parents, have a responsibility to help pay for their education
- the family should be accepted in its present financial condition

A needs analysis system must evaluate families in a consistent and equitable manner, while recognizing that special circumstances can and do alter a family's ability to contribute. Four broad categories of family resources are examined in need analysis. They are:

- parent's/student's income
- parent's/student's assets
- number in household
- number in college (post-secondary education)

### Regular Student/Enrollment Status/Eligible Program Status

An applicant must be regular student which is defined as a student who is enrolled in an eligible program (an eligible program for Pell purposes must be at least 600 clock hours and 23 weeks in length) is working toward a certificate and is attending at least part-time (15 clock hours per week).

### High School Diploma/GED®/Home School Equivalency

An applicant must have a high school diploma (this can be from a foreign school), GED®, or a home school equivalency in order to qualify for a Pell Grant.

### Default/Overpayment Status

An applicant signs a statement when completing the FAFSA stating that they are not in default on federal student loans or have made satisfactory arrangements to repay it, and that they do not owe money back on a federal student grant or have made satisfactory arrangements to repay it. A student who is defaulted on federal loans or who is in Pell overpayment status is not eligible for further Title IV assistance unless and until satisfactory arrangements for repayment are made. Students in default on loans must have a letter from the holder of the loan stating that the student has made satisfactory repayment arrangements and is eligible for Title IV funds or the Financial Aid Coordinator must receive a new Institutional Student Informational Record (ISIR) and National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) report showing that the default status has been resolved before any funds may be disbursed.

### Valid SSN

An applicant must have a valid Social Security Number. EXCEPTION: Students from the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia or the Republic of Palau.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

After a student's first (upon enrollment) eligibility, the student must thereafter maintain Title IV eligibility by meeting all criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as set forth in GCTC's SAP policy. Please see the Satisfactory Academic Progress section of this handbook for complete information on SAP or in the GCTC Student Handbook online at [www.gctcok.edu](http://www.gctcok.edu).

### Statement of Educational Purpose

All applicants must sign a statement on the FAFSA verifying their educational purpose (using Title IV funds only to pay the cost of attending an institution of higher education) and accuracy of information provided on the FAFSA.

### Educational History of Student

If the student has attended this school in the past three award years, the Financial Aid Coordinator reviews previous files and determines whether the student was making satisfactory progress in previous course work at GCTC. If the student has attended other schools in the past, the Financial Aid Coordinator can access the NSLDS information from

the SAR/ISIR concerning defaults and overpayments. If the student has attended another school and the Financial Aid Coordinator determines that it has been within the current award year, she will then access the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) on the web at <https://nslds.ed.gov>. If the student is a transfer student for Pell purposes, NSLDS will give the student's current year Pell disbursement and the current year scheduled award. This information will be used in award calculation.

#### Drug Conviction Affecting Title IV Eligibility

Drug conviction for any drug offense during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving Title IV, HEA program funds under any federal or state law involving the possession or sale of illegal drugs will result in the loss of eligibility for any Title IV, HEA grant, loan, or work-study assistance. An applicant who has been convicted of drug-related offenses that occurred while receiving Title IV aid may not be eligible to receive federal financial aid for a period of time. These are general eligibility requirements and can be discussed with the Financial Aid Coordinator. Eligibility requirements concerning felonies that are specific to programs discussed in the description of that program. A student that loses eligibility will be notified in writing by the Financial Aid Office with an explanation of the loss of eligibility, as well as, information on how to regain eligibility. Please see the Financial Aid Coordinator for further information on penalties for drug offenses as they relate to title IV, HEA (Pell) grants.

## **5. APPLYING FOR PELL GRANT**

### Student Application for Pell Grant

**\*GCTC's Federal Code is 031262.** Adult students are encouraged to apply for financial aid. Students can complete the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA) in print or online at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. Identify GCTC as your school choice on the FAFSA application. Application forms can also be obtained by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED AID. Students are directed to read the instructions carefully when completing the FAFSA. All records and other materials used in completing the application should be saved. This information may be needed later to prove the information submitted is correct.

The 2021-2022 FAFSA was available for students to apply beginning on October 1, 2020 and the 2022-2023 FAFSA will be available for students to apply beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Students and parents should report income and tax information from the prior, prior tax/calendar year. For the 2021-2022 FAFSA, students and families will use taxes and income information from the 2019 tax/calendar year and for the 2022-2023 FAFSA, students and families will use taxes and income information for the 2020 tax/calendar year.

Students can submit their FAFSA on the Web at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>, they can mail the paper FAFSA with the envelope provided in the paper form, or the FAFSA can be sent electronically through the Financial Aid Office. TTT users (for the hearing impaired) may call 1-800-730-8913.

After submitting the FAFSA, the student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) which includes a summary of application information and the determination of the expected family contribution (EFC). This EFC is the result of computations established by Congress involving the financial and non-financial data submitted on the application that indicates how much of your family's financial resources should be available to help pay for school. The method of computation is applied to all dependent and independent students uniformly. Students should review all the information on the SAR. If any changes are necessary, the student can make corrections online using his/her FSA ID, or the student can resubmit by mail part two of the SAR to the Pell Grant processor following the directions for making corrections on the form, or the Financial Aid Coordinator can submit the corrections electronically. After submission of any corrections, if necessary, and if the student meets all eligibility requirements, they will receive an award letter notifying them of the amount of their Pell Grant award, any required documents, and projected payment schedule.

Students who applied for financial aid the previous year may qualify to use a renewal FAFSA. The student may access the renewal application online by using their FSA ID. On the renewal the student should correct or update his/her information and submit it to the processing center. The school will receive an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). The student will receive a SAR Information Acknowledgement by mail in 3 to 5 working days for their inspection. The student must sign a copy of the ISIR certification, have a copy of the signed renewal notice, or have an electronically signed ISIR for their financial aid file. This ISIR will be used to determine the student's award.

### IRS Data Retrieval Tool

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows student and parents who are using FAFSA on the Web and who have already submitted their federal tax return to electronically transfer their tax data from the IRS database. While use of this is voluntary, students and parents are strongly encouraged to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool because it is accurate, efficient, and useful for verification and corrections.

## **6. PROCESSING STUDENT FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS**

### Preparation of Student Financial Aid Folder

The Financial Aid Coordinator prepares the student's folder by making a label for the file showing the student's name, program name, and start date.

### Requirements Prior to Awarding Pell Grant

- Citizenship status
- Regular student in an eligible program
- Enrollment status (at least half time)
- Need as determined by a valid SAR/ISIR
- No refund owed to the U.S. Department of Education
- Not in default on a student loan
- Statement of Educational Purpose
- Verification worksheet: if selected for verification or if conflicting information is found Verification of amount of income tax returns, if selected for verification or if conflicting information is found
- No Bachelor's degree
- Cost of attendance
- Enrollment period
- H.S. Diploma/GED

### File Documents Required for Students Selected for Verification

In addition to the documents listed above, students selected for verification [EFC on SAR/ISIR is followed by an asterisk (\*)], must also have the following in their file:

- Verification Worksheet indicated on the student's ISIR.

#### **IF IRS Retrieval Tool NOT USED:**

- A copy of the independent applicant's (and spouse's) IRS Tax Transcript for the base year (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ) identical to that filed with the IRS.
- A copy of applicant's parent's and student's IRS Tax Transcript for the base year (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ) identical to that filed with the IRS if applicant is dependent.
- Or, a signed statement attesting that no tax return was or will be filed for the base year and that all information on the application is correct. This statement must be signed by the applicant only if they are independent, or by the applicant and a parent if they are dependent. (see 20.2-1 for information on dependency status)

### Procedure to Follow Concerning Missing Information

If information is missing, the Financial Aid Coordinator requests the student to bring missing documents. Once documentation is submitted, it is filed in the student's financial aid file.

### Procedure to Follow Concerning Conflicting Information

The Financial Aid Coordinator reviews documents to make sure there is no conflicting information in file. If so, the student is contacted in an attempt to resolve any conflicts. If no conflicts exist, the Financial Aid Coordinator proceeds with processing.

### Procedure for Handling Void Applications

The Financial Aid Coordinator reviews comments on the letter explaining why the SAR/ISIR is void. If the applicant submits a void application, the Financial Aid Coordinator assists the applicant in the interpretation of

the letter and the corrective actions that may be required. The usual problem is failure of the student and/or others to sign the original application either with a “wet” signature, or by signing electronically with a user name and password.

#### Procedure for Handling Rejected Applications

Comments will appear on the Student Aid Report (SAR) explaining the application rejection and indicating action the applicant may take to correct his/her information so that eligibility may be determined. The Financial Aid Coordinator’s role is the same as with the void application stated above.

#### Procedure for Handling Ineligible SAR/ISIR

The eligibility letter states that the EFC (Expected Family Contribution) is too high for a Pell Grant. The Financial Aid Coordinator checks information on the information Review Form for accuracy. If correct, the applicant is probably ineligible. If the information is not correct, the applicant should resubmit a FAFSA correction, or have the Financial Aid Coordinator make corrections with the student’s (and parent’s if the student is a dependent) signature giving the Financial Aid Coordinator permission to make corrections, or the student may make corrections online using the student’s/parent’s FSA ID.

## **7. VERIFICATION**

Verification is the process of checking the accuracy of information submitted by applicants when they apply for financial aid. Selected students will be required to verify the accuracy of family financial and other data before any Title IV funds are disbursed.

#### Selection of Applications to be Verified

If a Pell Grant application is selected by CPS for verification, an asterisk will appear by the EFC, and comments will appear on part one of the SAR and page one of the ISIR addressing the verification requirements. Although the school has the option of processing one Pell payment without verifying the application, this school does not take that option due to the risk of financial liability. Even though schools have the authority to verify any applicant, Green Country Technology Center only verifies those applicants who are chosen by the federal processor or who have conflicting information comments. Students who are selected for verification by the processor or by the Financial Aid Office in cases of conflicting information must submit the signed and completed verification worksheet along with the documentation or information such as, but not limited to:

- Proof of all income reported on the FAFSA (IRS Tax Return Transcripts, signed 1040, W-2, etc.)
- Non-filers must provide a W-2 form for each source of employment income in addition to a signed statement giving the sources and amounts of all income earned from work not on W-2’s and certifying that the person has not filed and is not required to file a tax return (replacement W-2’s can be requested from the employer who issued the original)
- Non-filers must also provide verification of non-filing from the IRS or a signed statement
- Completed and appropriately signed Verification Worksheet
- High School Completion, Identity, and Statement of Educational Purpose
- Number of Household Members
- Number in College (GCTC is considered college for verification)
- Other documentation may be required to verify discrepancies

#### Financial Aid Disbursements Prior to Verification

GCTC withholds disbursement of any Title IV Federal Financial Aid until a student has completed the verification process. **Failure to comply with verification requirements may result in forfeiture of aid.**

#### Items to be Verified/Acceptable Documentation

The Financial Aid Coordinator collects appropriate documentation from the applicant based on the guidelines published in The Federal Student Aid Handbook. Items that generally must be verified by comparing the data items on the SAR/ISIR with identical data items on the IRS tax transcript and/or other primary documentation are listed below. The Financial Aid Coordinator uses the verification tracking flag code on the ISIR to determine what verification worksheet to use for each student chosen.

- Household Size-Verification Worksheet completed and signed by student and/or parent is acceptable documentation.
- Number Enrolled in College-Verification Worksheet completed and signed by student and/or parent is acceptable documentation. If there is reason to doubt the information, the schools listed may be contacted to confirm enrollment. The student should always be included in this number. Others can be included only if they are counted in the household size and will be attending a postsecondary educational institution at least half-time (6 credit hours per semester for at least one term or 15 clock hours per week) in the current award year. These individuals must also be working toward a degree or certificate leading to a recognized educational credential at an eligible school. **Dependent students must exclude parents as number enrolled in college.**
- Adjusted Gross Income (tax filers)  
Acceptable documentation for independent students (and spouse) includes a copy of the student's federal income tax return transcript or signed 1040 IRS tax return, along with W2's for the base year; for dependent students, a copy of parents and student's federal income tax return transcript or signed 1040 IRS tax return, along with W2's for the base year is acceptable documentation. Students and student's parents who successfully use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA are considered verified from their IRS information that has been transferred from the IRS into the FAFSA.
- Income Earned from Work (non-filers)  
Acceptable documentation for non-filers includes a signed Verification Worksheet certifying their non-filer status listing all the sources and amounts of income earned from work. In addition, the person should provide W-2 forms for all their income for the base year. Non-filers are also required to provide IRS documents that clearly indicate that the IRS does not have a tax return on file for the tax year. Acceptable documents include a "Verification of Non-Filing Letter" from the IRS or an IRS Tax Return Transcript that indicates "no record of return filed" or "no transcript on file". If they are unable to provide the IRS documents, they may provide a signed statement verifying their non-filer status and stating that they are unable to provide IRS documents.
- U.S. Income Tax Paid (tax filers)  
Acceptable documentation for independent students is a copy of the student's federal income tax return transcript or signed 1040 IRS Tax Return, along with W2's for the base year; for dependent students, a copy of parents and student's federal income tax return transcript or signed 1040 IRS Tax Return, along with W2's for the base year is needed. Students and student's parents who have successfully used the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA are considered verified from their IRS information that has been transferred from the IRS into the FAFSA.
- Education Tax Credits (tax filers) Acceptable documentation is the federal tax transcript.
- IRA/Keogh Deductions (tax filers) Acceptable documentation is the federal tax transcript.
- Foreign Income Exclusion (tax filers) Acceptable documentation is the federal tax transcript.
- Interest on Tax-Free Bonds (tax filers) Acceptable documentation is the federal tax transcript.
- Untaxed Income (tax filers) Acceptable documentation is the federal tax transcript.

### Location of Information on IRS Forms

Information needed for verification can be found in the tax return on the lines listed in the following table:

| 22-23 FAFSA Info                      | 22-23 FAFSAQ# | 22-23 ISIR Field # | 2020 IRS Tax Transcript Item                                   | 2020 1040 Line# |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| AGI                                   | 36 & 85       | 43 & 108           | AGI per computer                                               | 37              |
| Income Tax Paid                       | 37 & 86       | 44 & 109           |                                                                | 56 - 46         |
| Education credits                     | 44a & 93a     | 51 & 116           | Education Credit Per Computer                                  | 50              |
| IRS Deductions/Payments               | 45b & 94b     | 58 & 123           | KEOGH/SEP Contribution Deduction + IRA Deduction Per Computer  | 28 + 32         |
| Tax Exempt Interest Income            | 45d & 94d     | 60 & 125           | Tax-Exempt Interest                                            | 8b              |
| Untaxed Portions of IRA Distributions | 45e & 94e     | 61 & 126           | Total IRA Distributions minus Taxable IRA Distributions        | 15a – 15b       |
| Untaxed Portions of Pensions          | 45f & 94f     | 62 & 127           | Total Pensions/Annuities minus Taxable Pensions/Annuity Amount | 16a – 16b       |

- High School Completion Status  
Acceptable documentation is a copy of a high school diploma, GED® or recognized equivalent of a high school diploma, homeschool equivalency, or a copy of the applicant’s final high school transcript.
- Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose  
Acceptable documentation is the appropriate Verification Worksheet completed and signed in person by the student presenting an original government issued ID (i.e. driver’s license).
- Exemptions from Verification  
A selected application may be exempt from some or all of the verification requirements due to unusual circumstances. Except in the case of the student’s death, however, none of these exemptions excuse the school from the requirement to resolve conflicting information.

### Verification Checklist Procedures

When the Financial Aid Coordinator has received all necessary verification documents, she then completes the Verification Checklist, comparing verification documents to information originally reported on the application and the student’s SAR/ISIR. If no corrections need to be made or there are no outstanding issues, aid may be awarded. If any adjustments need to be made the student or Financial Aid Coordinator makes the corrections or updates information. The Financial Aid Coordinator files the checklist and all related documents in the student’s financial aid file folder.

### Tolerance Option & Net Difference/Error

If the verification process shows minor errors that won’t significantly affect the student’s eligibility, the Financial Aid Coordinator may disregard these minor errors according to the Department of Education’s tolerance option for verification.

### Verification Status Codes

A Verification Status Code of “V” – Verified indicates the Financial Aid Coordinator has completed verification and all information is correct or within the tolerance limit.

A Verification Code of “W” – Without Documentation indicates that verification is required, but the verification process is not completed and a first disbursement has been made.

A Verification Status Code of “Blank” – A blank space indicates that the SAR/ISIR was not

selected for verification by CPS or Green Country Technology Center.

Verification Status Codes must also be reported on Origination Records even if a student's application was not selected for verification.

#### Completion of Verification

For the Federal Pell grant program, a student has completed verification when he or she has corrected the data or has shown, as required, that the application data are correct.

#### Verification Deadline

If a student does not complete verification by June 30 of the current award year, the student forfeits the Pell for the award year.

#### Verification of Other Information

The SAR/ISIR will often have comments requiring the Financial Aid Coordinator to verify specific items. For example: Citizenship status must sometimes be verified, selective service registration must sometimes be verified, marital status must sometimes be verified, and ect...

#### Unusual Enrollment History (UEH) Flag

The UEH flag with a "C" Code on the ISIR indicates that the student has had an unusual enrollment history with regards to the receipt of Title IV funds. The school is required to review the student's academic records to determine if the student received academic credit at the schools that the student attended during the previous four award years using information from the National Student Loan Database System (NSLDS) as well as academic transcripts that the student provides from previously attended schools. Written documentation from the student, counselor, and third parties will be required to explain any discrepancies.

## **8. DETERMINING AWARDS**

#### Steps in Computing the Pell Grant Award

There are steps in computing a Pell Grant

- Determination of Cost of Attendance
- Determination of Scheduled Award
- Determination of Payment Periods
- Determination of Payment for each Payment Period
- Determination of Total Expected Disbursement

#### Living Costs

GCTC does not offer institutional housing or board to its students. All students live off campus and commute. For purposes of awarding Title IV need-based assistance, the school estimates reasonable expenses over a number of months depending on the length of the program and student's classification.

#### Cost of Attendance/Budget Allocations

The student's Cost of Attendance includes institutional charges such as tuition, books, supplies, and fees, in addition to student expenses that are not payable to GCTC. Additional student expenses are estimated using documentation provided by and based on the Oklahoma Department of Commerce Consumer Price Index as of December 2019 from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Student's may request a breakdown of the cost of attendance from the Financial Aid Office.

#### Student Additional Expense Budget per the Consumer Price Index

| STUDENT CLASSIFICATION | 1 MONTH | 9 MONTHS | 10 MONTHS | 12 MONTHS |
|------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dependent              | \$ 977  | \$ 8,812 | \$ 9,790  | \$11,749  |
| Independent            | \$2,074 | \$18,677 | \$20,753  | \$24,904  |

#### Budget Allocations

The standard allowance breaks down the expense categories as follows:

14% - Food, 13% - Energy/Transportation, 21% - Commodities (goods, products), 32% - Housing, 7% - Medical Care, 13% Miscellaneous (services)

#### Coding on Pell Payment Document Using Common Origination and Disbursement (COD)

GCTC uses EdExpress in submitting Pell Origination and Pell Disbursement Records. This system also conducts edit checks to make sure necessary information is submitted. This information is exported to the Department of Education. The Department processes it and returns it back to GCTC to import from EdConnect, the federal electronic mailbox.

#### Determination of Cost of Attendance Pell Grant

Cost of Attendance (COA) is used to determine Pell Grant payments to students. Cost of attendance for purposes of the Pell Grant is the cost of tuition and fees for a full time student for a full academic year plus an allowance for room and board, books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses incurred by the student for a full academic year.

#### Determination of Scheduled Award and Annual Award

The 'Scheduled Award' is the maximum amount a student can receive during an award year, if he/she attends full-time for a full academic year. The 'Annual Award' is the maximum amount a student can receive during a full academic year for a given enrollment status, number of clock hours, EFC, and COA. Once the Pell Cost of Attendance is determined, the Financial Aid Coordinator determines the scheduled award based on the full-time regular payment schedule for Pell Grants for the award year issued by the U.S. Department of Education. The full time chart is always used regardless of the student's actual enrollment status. The Financial Aid Coordinator then determines the student's annual award based on enrollment status and clock hours.

#### Tuition/Fees

Tuition cost is \$2.50 per clock- hour for in-district adults and is \$5.00 per clock-hour for out-of-district adults. Tuition and fees for each program are given on program sheets located in the Central Office, Counselor's Office, and may be viewed online at [www.gctcok.edu](http://www.gctcok.edu).

#### Pell Grant Disbursement Calendar

To facilitate Pell Grant calculations, a Program Pell Grant Calendar along with a student award letter has been developed and used at GCTC. The procedures for using this calendar as follows:

- The Financial Aid Coordinator determines the hours and weeks for each pay period by using an instructors program calendar and develops a Pell Grant Calendar for the student's financial aid file.
- The Financial Aid Coordinator completes the top portion of the Program Pell Grant calendar with the student's name, program name, payment periods, hours and weeks for each pay period, and classifies payment periods by award year.
- The Financial Aid Coordinator then uses the information from the Program Pell Grant Calendar to create a Pell Award Letter for the student to sign.

These sheets become a permanent part of the student's financial aid file and serves to document exactly how and why a student received a particular award. It is also useful when completing the origination and disbursement record.

#### Determination of Pell Payment Periods, Including Crossover Periods and Year Round Pell

The Financial Aid Coordinator determines if the disbursement is an initial (first received) Pell disbursement. Students are paid the first time based on their enrollment and good standing if an ISIR is received prior to the end of student's first pay period. Disbursements thereafter are based on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and upon completion of the hours in the student's previous pay period. The Financial Aid Coordinator consults a calendar sheet and ascertains the beginning and ending dates of each payment period. She then determines in which award year each payment period belongs. An award year is defined as July 1st of one year to June 30th of the next year. For students who are not attending classes over the summer in crossover periods where the payment period occurs within two award years, if the majority (more than 50%) of a payment period occurs entirely within an award year, it is part of that award year. Beginning with the 2017-18 award year, students in the Practical Nursing program

(which meets during the summer) became eligible for Year Round Pell for their 3rd pay period which crosses over award years and contains both June 30th of the previous award year and July 1st of the next award year. Eligible students may receive up to 150% of their scheduled Pell award with the implementation of Year Round Pell. The crossover 3rd pay period will be paid as a “trailer” from the previous award year.

#### Award Year/Academic Year

Funding for Pell Grant programs is provided based on an award year basis. The **award year** begins on July 1st of one year and extends to June 30th of the next year. An **academic year** at GCTC is one in which a student completes a minimum # of weeks and hours of instruction. For Pell Grant payments to students, academic years are defined as 900 clock hours and 26 weeks for all full-time programs except Cosmetologist. The Cosmetologist program academic year is defined as 1000 clock hours and 28 weeks.

#### Determination of Payment Per Payment Period

For each payment period classified as being part of the current award year, the formula for determining payments are clock hours in the payment period multiplied by the scheduled award from full time payment chart and divided by hours in the academic year.

#### Determination of Total Expected Disbursement for Regular Students

The total expected disbursement is the sum of expected disbursements for all payment periods classified as belonging to the current award year.

#### Transfer Students and Determination of Award Disbursement

A student who has received a Pell Grant from another school in the current award year is a Transfer Student. The Financial Aid Coordinator will consult NSLDS and determine the scheduled award and disbursement. A student may receive only one federal Pell Grant award during a single award year if the eligible student is enrolled at least half-time and is in a program in which the program leads to a certificate. The expected disbursement at the second school may have to be adjusted to avoid over awarding a transfer student. To determine the percentage of the Scheduled Pell Award received at previous school: Divide the amount the student received at the previous school by the student's Scheduled Award at that school. Subtract this percentage from 100 percent and multiply by the Scheduled Award at GCTC. The result is the maximum amount of Pell Grant Award that the student generally may receive at GCTC.

If a student transfers from one program to another at GCTC, in order for that student to be considered in the same payment period, the program hours that the student is transferring must be accepted toward the new program.

#### Advanced Standing Credit/Prior Credit and Determination of Award Disbursement

Students enrolling at GCTC who have previous educational experiences will be asked to provide a transcript indicating both courses taken and grades received at previous institutions. Students with previous military service will also be asked to provide all military transcripts.

The instructor will meet with the student either prior to enrollment or at the beginning of his program to determine what, if any, credit will be applicable to the program at GCTC. For evaluation purposes the instructor will keep in mind the timeliness of the training, the pertinence to the courses in the program, and the changes that may have taken place in business and industry since the training was received.

After a thorough discussion between the student and instructor, the instructor may choose to make contact with the previous institution, may issue a performance test, or may determine that credit is applicable with no further investigation. The student will be informed of the instructor's decision after reviewing the student's prior educational training or experience. If the instructor decides to grant credit for the previous training or experience, the student will receive Advanced Standing Credit (ASC) in the program.

Advanced Standing Credit can also be issued to GCTC students who complete one program at GCTC and then enroll in another, or those who may change from one program to another. In order for credit from one program to be transferred to another program at GCTC, the new program to which credit is being transferred should have courses that are applicable to the new program and are in the same scope and sequence.

The financial aid recipient's hours for their program and their financial aid award will be adjusted accordingly by the Financial Aid Coordinator for the Advanced Standing Credit. If prior or advanced standing credit is granted to a student for previous educational or training experiences, such credit will be documented in the student's file, and the student will not be charged tuition or fees for the advanced standing credit hours, nor will he/she receive any additional financial aid for those hours.

#### VA Educational Assistance Beneficiaries Policies

Students receiving U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) educational benefits while attending GCTC are charged the same tuition and fees as all other students and are expected to follow the same policies and procedures as all other students. VA educational benefits will be terminated if the student does not meet the minimum academic progress standards and is placed on Academic Suspension. During an approved leave of absence, VA benefits will be temporarily suspended.

As noted in the 'Financial Assistance Programs Available' section of this handbook, students utilizing VA educational benefits must provide all military transcripts and records of previous training, a VA Certificate of Eligibility or VA eBenefits printout, and a DD214. Please see the 'Prior Credit/Advanced Standing Credit' and 'Post Military Education and Advanced Standing Credit' sections of this handbook for detailed information on the evaluation and determination of prior credit process. Documentation of all records will be maintained by the school and kept in the student's file in the Financial Aid Office and may be provided to the student as requested.

#### College Financing Plan (formerly the Financial Shopping Sheet)

In carrying out Executive Order 13607, Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Family Members, GCTC commits to voluntarily provide a College Financing Plan (Shopping Sheet) to veterans and service members who are considering enrollment at GCTC to provide a personalized financial aid offer to help them as prospective students better understand the cost of attending school, the type and amount of aid they have qualified for, and an easy comparison of aid packages offered by different educational institutions before making a final decision to enroll.

#### Course Repetitions and Determination of Award Disbursement

Students wanting to repeat a specific program must have permission of the instructor and Assistant Superintendent to do so. NOTE: A repeated class is NOT eligible for a federal financial aid award.

#### Award Letter

If a student meets all eligibility requirements and the Financial Aid Coordinator has received all application materials required, verified the SAR/ISIR, completed Pell Grant Calendar, the FA Coordinator develops an award letter/contract for the student to sign. The award letter notifies the student of the payment schedule and disbursement amounts.

#### Student Right-to-Know and Responsibilities of Financial Aid Recipients

The following information can be found on the Student Consumer Information Page online at [www.gctcok.edu](http://www.gctcok.edu). Paper copies of all information are available upon request from the Financial Aid Office.

##### Student Right-to-Know

- The institution's accrediting and licensing organizations
- All programs offered and detailed information regarding each program of interest
- Information about the school
- Information on the school's admissions policy
- Cost of Attendance
- Information on financial aid, including eligibility, application, and methods of disbursement
- Information on a consistent needs analysis system to evaluate families in an equitable manner
- Information on students' rights under FERPA
- How Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is determined, including eligibility and appeals
- The institution's refund policy and Return to Title IV policy
- The institution's annual Campus Security Report
- Completion/Graduation, Retention, and Placement Rates

- Drug and alcohol policies
- Gainful Employment
- Net Price Calculator
- Grievance Procedures, Non-Discrimination Policy
- Copyright Infringement, Constitution Day, Voter Registration, & Vaccination Policies

#### Student Responsibilities

- Complete the required paperwork requested by the Financial Aid Office
- Use financial aid funds for school related expenses
- Be aware that grant or scholarship amounts received in excess of qualified educational expenses could be subject to taxation
- Report all outside aid to the Financial Aid Office
- Recognize that students, as well as parents, have a responsibility to help pay for their education
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Report changes in enrollment to the Central Office and the Financial Aid Office
- Notify the Financial Aid Office before withdrawing
- Return to Title IV any received funds the student is determined ineligible for
- Read directions thoroughly, complete all applications accurately, & comply with all deadlines
- Ask questions if you don't understand the financial aid process

#### Determination of Leave of Absence

A student may request one leave of absence up to 60 days in length for medical and/or emergency situations that will affect a student's attendance for an extended period of time. (Days should be consecutive unless otherwise approved by the Attendance Committee, (made up of an instructor, the student, financial aid coordinator, counselor, and the asst. superintendent). The request must be in writing to the counselor or asst. superintendent, and must include the reason for the request and the number of days requested. The financial aid period will be extended the number of days equal to the number of days of the leave of absence; therefore, no additional tuition or fees will be charged to the student. Additional subsequent leaves (not to exceed 30 days) may be granted for unforeseen circumstances.

## **9. DISBURSEMENTS**

Disbursement of Pell Grants Payment is disbursed by check from Green Country Technology Center. Pell Grants are disbursed several times a year depending on a student's successfully completed pay period. Students will be paid the first time based upon the fact that they are enrolled and in attendance in an approved program. Due to different clock hours for each program, the disbursement dates vary with each student. Pell Grant funds will be applied directly to the student's account for the current school year. All financial aid funds will be disbursed by check through the Central Office. All charges, including tuition and fees for the current school year, must be paid in full before any refund will be issued to the student. If there is a credit balance after the funds have been applied, the student will receive a refund check. Students will also be notified by the Central Office when checks are ready to be disbursed. The student must show a photo ID to receive his/her disbursement. NOTE: Failure to provide the necessary documents requested by the Financial Aid Office will necessitate the withholding of payment.

Please keep in mind that in order to be eligible for your Pell Grant disbursements, students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress - SAP and successfully complete all the clock hours and curriculum associated with the hours in each corresponding payment period.

#### Disbursement Procedures

The student Pell Award is signed by both the student and Financial Aid Coordinator and serves as a contract. The signed form is placed in the student's financial aid file. Financial Aid Coordinator sends the name of the student receiving funds, the amount of the Pell disbursements, the pay period dates, and the date of the payment to the Business Office. Financial Aid Coordinator initiates disbursements by requesting a draw down from the Superintendent. Once the Superintendent requests the draw down through G5, he sends a confirmation email along with giving a confirmation printout to the Financial Aid Coordinator and the Business Office. The funds are electronically deposited into the Pell Activity Account. The Financial Coordinator then completes Pell Requisition Forms for each student and submits to the Business Office. The Business Office credits the student's account for

tuition and fees. GCTC never holds funds past 3 business days. The remaining funds are given to the student by check to be used for non-institutional, educationally related expenses. The Business Office issues checks as directed by the signed forms received from the Financial Aid Coordinator. Checks are given to the Central Office Administrative Professional for disbursement to the student. Students sign the Pell Requisition Forms for confirmation of pickup. The Business Office disburses account balances and receipts to students following a Pell disbursement. Students can access their account balances and account activity through PowerSchool student portal.

#### Initial Disbursements

The Financial Aid Coordinator determines if disbursement is an initial (first ever received) Pell disbursement. Students are paid the first time based on their enrollment and good standing if an ISIR/SAR is received prior to the end of student's first pay period. Disbursements thereafter are based on Satisfactory Academic Progress and completion of hours and weeks in the first payment period.

#### Subsequent Disbursements

If this is a subsequent (not first ever received) Pell disbursement, the student must have maintained Satisfactory Academic Progress for the previous pay period, and must have completed all hours in the previous pay period.

#### Disbursement Periods

GCTC has three payment periods per award year, and Pell Grants will typically be disbursed three times a year, dependent upon when the student enrolled in the program.

#### Monitoring Satisfactory Progress

Satisfactory Progress is monitored upon completion of each pay period using progress reports obtained from the student's instructor. For example, a full-time student enrolled in a 1050-hour program will have a progress report upon completion of the first 450 hours. The second progress report will be made upon completion of the next 450 hours in that program. When an interval spans a period of non-enrollment, progress will be assessed at the point where attendance recommences.

#### Progress Reports

The Financial Aid Coordinator obtains progress reports from instructors to monitor satisfactory academic progress. If student is not making satisfactory academic progress after the first pay period, the student is notified in writing of the unsatisfactory status and is placed on financial aid warning. Student has an option to file for an appeal and present his/her case to Financial Aid Committee (made up of the student, an instructor, Financial Aid Coordinator, and the Assistant Superintendent). The Financial Aid committee can determine whether or not to allow the student to continue receiving financial aid. Students must complete all hours in the previous pay period before receiving additional disbursements.

## **10. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

#### Requirements for Satisfactory Progress

Satisfactory progress means a student must be proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling certificate requirements in a specific length of time. Students must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress according to the institutional standards before receiving Title IV assistance. Good standing means that the student is capable of enrollment or continued enrollment. Initially this means that the student is admissible to an educational program as demonstrated by a high school diploma, or GED.

The first disbursement of Title IV funds for first time entering students at Green Country Technology Center requires no progress check provided the first disbursement is issued during the pay period of training for a new student. At the end of their first payment period students must be making satisfactory progress according to the standards stated below. Other students, that is students with previous course work at Green Country Technology Center, must have maintained satisfactory progress for that previous course work in order to receive initial or further assistance.

Students may take up to 50% longer than the normal time of their program to complete that program and still be regarded as being in good standing. However, a student will not be eligible for Title IV

federal financial aid once he/she has received aid for the number of hours in the program.

Example: A student is enrolled in a 1050-hour program. The maximum time a student can attend Green Country Technology Center in that 1050-hour program is 1575 clock hours. An eligible student would receive Title IV aid for the 1050 clock hours, but the student could take an extra 525 clock hours to complete the program if the student was not able to complete it in 1050 clock hours (provided that space is available in the class); however, that student will not receive Federal Financial Aid for the additional 525 clock hours. The student would also be charged tuition and fees for the additional hours. In no instance can the student receive aid for more hours than those for which the program is accredited.

There are two components to satisfactory progress:

- **Qualitative:** Each student's cumulative grade will be reviewed at the completion of each payment period using a progress report provided to the Financial Aid Coordinator by the student's instructor. Students must maintain a cumulative grade of "C" or better for all past course work. If the student's grade is below a "C," then the student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning Period.
- **Quantitative:** The maximum time frame for completing a program is no more than 150% of the program in accordance with the student's enrollment status (i.e. full-time or part-time). The increment for measuring a student's progress will be each payment period. Each student must be proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling certificate requirements in a normal length of time. At GCTC this means the student must have completed a minimum of at least 75% of the scheduled learning objectives for the payment period. If a student is not progressing at a pace which will fall within the 150%-time frame, the student is not considered to be making satisfactory progress and will be placed on Financial Aid Probation.

#### Financial Aid Warning Period and Suspension

If a student receives an unfavorable progress report that is not in compliance with the SAP requirements as outlined above, the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress. The student will be informed in writing about his/her failure to maintain SAP. The student will then be placed on financial aid warning period for the next evaluation or pay period. During that time, the student is responsible for completing the required cumulative amount of curriculum with a letter grade of "C" or higher. The student must also have met the required cumulative clock hours for the pay period. During this warning period the student will continue to receive financial aid. Students who fail to meet the required grade and percentage of progress at the end of their warning pay period, will then be placed on financial aid suspension and will be suspended from further financial aid until completion of a pay period in which the student has met all SAP requirements. The student is responsible for tuition and fees charged during a period of suspension.

#### Course Repetitions

Students wanting to repeat a specific program must have permission of the instructor and Assistant Superintendent to do so. Repeated coursework within 180 days is not eligible for federal financial aid. If a student wishes to repeat an entire program, he/she may do so once two academic years have elapsed and the student has been reapproved for admission. Financial aid would once again be available if the student meets all eligibility criteria in accordance with federal regulations.

#### Re-Establishing Eligibility

A student who is denied aid due to unsatisfactory progress will be informed in writing of his/her warning status. Student may receive one financial aid disbursement during their warning period. If a student fails to come back into compliance with satisfactory progress requirements during the warning period, they will then be placed on suspension and financial aid will be terminated. A student whose financial aid has been terminated is responsible for paying tuition in full no later than the tenth day of the next pay period unless other arrangements have been made with the business office. The student must re-establish eligibility as defined below to receive further assistance:

- Denial of aid due to grade less than C: Student must achieve a grade of "C" or better for an enrollment period equal to the number of hours in a payment period. For example, a full time student achieves a grade of "D" for 525 hours and is denied further aid on the basis of unsatisfactory progress. Student attends for 525 additional hours and achieves a cumulative grade of "C." Student will

regain eligibility for aid.

➤ Denial of aid due to not progressing at a pace which will allow for timely completion of the program within 150% of the normal time frame for that program. If a student is not progressing at a pace which will fall within the 150% time frame the student is not considered to be making satisfactory progress, then financial aid will be terminated: Student completes enough work during the next pay period to be considered progressing at a pace that will fall within the 150%-time frame. Student will regain eligibility for aid.

#### Appeal Process

Students who are denied aid on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress have the right to appeal. To appeal, a student must file a written request within two calendar weeks of receiving written notification by the Financial Aid Coordinator of making unsatisfactory progress. The appeal should include a written statement of the student's timetable for completing the program in which he/she is enrolled and an explanation of any mitigating circumstance which contributed to the unsatisfactory progress status. Mitigating circumstances may include but are not limited to serious illness experienced by the student, accident resulting in severe injury to the student, or death in the student's immediate family. Other circumstances may be classified as mitigating if they are serious in nature, prevent the student from attending classes, and are deemed to be so by the Financial Aid Committee. (The FA Committee is made up of the student, an instructor, counselor, Financial Aid Coordinator, and Assistant Superintendent). The written appeal will be reviewed by the FA committee. If the committee believes it necessary, they may require the student to provide further documentation (such as a letter from a doctor) to substantiate or explain the mitigating circumstance. The student will be notified in writing of the appeal decision within 10 days of receipt of the student's written appeal. Failure of the student to meet appeal deadlines will result in denial of the student's appeal. All decisions made by the Financial Aid Committee are final. If the student is allowed to retain aid, he/she must still complete all hours in the previous pay period before receiving additional aid.

### **11. ATTENDANCE**

Students attending GCTC must attend a minimum of ninety percent (90%) of the class sessions each semester for successful program completion. Program attendance is recorded for the AM session and the PM session. Students may accumulate 18 absences for full-time adult students during a semester or 9 for a part-time adult student. Any part-time student with 10+ absences or full-time adult student with 19+ absences will not receive credit for the semester.

Each student in a full-time program, who exceeds the attendance limit, will be allowed one appeal per semester by a GCTC Appeals Committee to be held within ten (10) days student exceeding the allowable absences. Students will be required to submit their appeal paperwork within five (5) days of being notified and given the appeal paperwork. Once the appeal paperwork is received, appeals will be scheduled not to exceed ten (10) days of the student exceeding the allowable absences. If a student is granted an appeal, absences will be evaluated on an individual basis based on circumstances and documentation provided and adjusted accordingly.

Students are expected to attend school every day. Regular attendance is essential for good evaluations and success in schoolwork, as well as for future employment opportunities. Attendance will represent a part of the student's final grade. A grade of NG is given if absences are over the allowable limit. Students and parents can access a student's attendance from the PowerSchool student and parent portal.

There are no excused absences.

### **12. REVISION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARDS**

There may be instances that warrant a change to the original award letter. The Financial Aid Coordinator may review a student's circumstances, make an adjustment to an award and revise the award letter. The student is notified of the change and is given a copy of the revised award letter.

### **13. OVERPAYMENT**

#### Common Types of Overpayment

An overpayment occurs anytime a student receives a payment that is greater than the amount for which the student is eligible. Examples of the four most common types of overpayments are as follows:

- Student error, such as failing to report the spouse's income on the application.
- School error, for instance, when a student's award is taken incorrectly from the Payment Schedule, or when the school pays a student who is not making satisfactory progress.
- Required recalculations, when a student never begins attending class or withdraws from school after receiving a cash disbursement for living expenses. (See Repayment)
- Optional payments, for instance, when the school makes an interim disbursement to a student selected for verification, but the student never completes verification.

#### Overpayment Due to Institutional Error

If the Financial Aid Coordinator discovers an overpayment due to Financial Aid Office error, he will adjust the student's total award to compensate for the error, if possible. If not possible, GCTC will make repayment to the Pell Program and try to recover repayment from the student.

#### Overpayment Due to Incorrect Data

If the overpayment is due to incorrect data on the SAR/ISIR, the Financial Aid Coordinator will assist the student in correcting the SAR/ISIR. The Financial Aid Coordinator will withhold subsequent payments until the corrected SAR/ISIR is received. If possible, the Financial Aid Coordinator adjusts total award. If this is not possible, then the Financial Aid Coordinator will attempt to collect overpayment from the student. If the overpayment cannot be collected in this manner, the Financial Aid Coordinator will consult the Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook to determine if referral to the U.S. Department of Education is appropriate. If so, the student's case will be referred to the U.S. Dept. of Education Debt Collection Service (DCS) for collection.

#### Repaying a Reported Overpayment

Per federal regulations, once the school has referred a Pell Grant Overpayment to the U.S. Department of Education for collection, the student must repay the overpayment directly to the U.S. Department of Education. It is not possible for the school to accept payment after the matter has been referred.

U.S. Department of Education National Payment Center  
P.O. Box 790336 St. Louis, MO 63179-0336  
Phone # 1-800-621-3115

#### Receipt of Additional Resources

Pell Grant is an entitlement program. Pell Grant is never to be adjusted downward because a student receives additional resources during the award year.

### **14. WITHDRAWAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFUND**

#### Withdrawal Requirements

A student wishing to withdraw from Green Country Technology Center must provide notice to the school either in writing or verbally. This is an official withdrawal. Students are given a letter grade at the time of withdrawal. Students making SAP at the time of their withdrawal who return to the same program within 180 days are considered to be in the same payment period. Written or verbal notice should be submitted to the Green Country Technology Center counselor and attendance officer/central office secretary. The notice should contain the date the student will cease attendance and the reason for the withdrawal. The official withdrawal date is the date the student has the withdrawal form signed by the administration, or the last date of attendance. After this process, the following will ensue:

- The notice will be forwarded to the student's instructor to obtain the student's grade at the time of the withdrawal.

- The notice will also be forwarded to the financial aid office if the student is on financial aid.
- The financial aid office will calculate any refunds due to the Title IV program and notify the student in writing.
- The student will be billed for any refunds due to the Federal Financial Aid Programs.
- If the student has not repaid the funds within 45 days, the repayment due will be posted to the National Student Loan Data Base showing the student is ineligible for further funding.
- If the student has not repaid the funds within 45 days, the Collection Department of the U.S. Department of Education will be notified.

#### Institutional Refund Policy

For the Green Country Technology Center District, if a student drops a program before completion, tuition refunds will apply as follows:

- If a student withdraws before classes begin a full refund will be given.
- If the student has begun classes but not yet completed and drops or withdraws, a partial tuition refund may be given depending upon how far the student has progressed in the program.
- Students withdrawing before completing 25% of the class (program) scheduled hours will receive a refund of one half of the amount paid.
- Students withdrawing after completing 25% of the class (program) scheduled hours will receive no refund.

Refunds are disbursed by the Business Office within ten days after notice of a student withdrawal has been received from the Financial Aid Office. Notification of a refund is done by mail through the Business Office.

If a student's tuition has been paid by an agency or through financial assistance, refunds will be processed in accordance with the rules and policies of the tuition source, in addition to GCTC's refund policy, students receiving Title IV Federal Financial Aid are subject to the Return of Title IV funds, GCTC will determine the amount of federal student aid to return based on a prorated portion of tuition, fees, and other institutional charges for a student who withdraws, drops, or is dropped by the school for any reason.

If a student does not return from an approved leave of absence, then the last date of attendance will be used as the withdrawal date. Also, if a student quits attending class, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of non-attendance the student will be unofficially withdrawn as of the last date attended. If a student has unofficially withdrawn and GCTC does not become aware of this until records are checked at the end of an academic period, the withdrawal date will be determined within 30 calendar days of:

- the end of the payment period,
- the end of the academic year, or
- the end of the student's educational program.

## **15. RETURN OF TITLE IV/REPAYMENTS**

GCTC has designed the following policies and procedures to ensure proper accountability when a student leaves school.

#### Calculating the Title IV Return of Unearned Funds

As a general rule, grants do not need to be repaid. However, a student may have to repay a certain amount if he/she withdraws or is dismissed prior to completing more than 60% of a payment period. When a student has exhausted all leave according to the attendance policy (see attendance policy in the Student Handbook) and a leave of absence has not been requested (or one has been requested but denied) on the 10<sup>th</sup> full-day of non-attendance the student will be unofficially withdrawn as of the last date attended. The portion of a federal grant that the student is entitled

to receive is calculated on a percentage basis by comparing the total number of hours in a payment period to the hours scheduled to complete in the payment period upon the student's last day of attendance. For example, if the student completes 30% of the payment period, he/she earns 30% of the assistance that he/she was originally scheduled to receive. This means that 70% of the scheduled award remains unearned and must be returned to the Department of Education. Once a student has completed more than 60% of the payment period, he/she has earned all of the grant money for that pay period.

Once the amount of Title IV aid is determined by the Financial Aid Office, the student will receive a letter stating how much Title IV aid was earned. The letter will also explain if the student has an outstanding balance that is owed to the school for tuition and fees. The student must realize that tuition and fees may be offset from the amount earned by the student. Upon withdrawal if the amount earned by the student is greater than the amount disbursed, then a post-withdrawal calculation is performed. If the amount earned by the student is less than the amount disbursed, then a Title IV Return of Fund calculation is performed. If the amounts earned and disbursed are equal, no further action is taken. When a return of Pell Grant funds is due, the school and the student both have a responsibility for returning the funds.

#### Post-Withdrawal Disbursements

If the student receives less Pell Grant monies than the amount earned, GCTC will make a disbursement of the earned aid that was not disbursed if student has met all eligibility requirements. Green Country Technology Center will credit a student's account with a post- withdrawal disbursement for current tuition and fees. Earned funds in excess of tuition/fees will be provided to the student. GCTC will send notification no later than 30 calendar days after the date the Financial Aid Office determines the student withdrew. The student will then be sent notification about the post-withdrawal disbursement. GCTC will disburse the funds to the student within 45 days of the date the school determines the student withdrew. If the student cannot be located, or refuses the funds as per a written and signed statement, the funds will then be returned to the Federal Pell Grant Program.

#### Aid to be Returned

If the student receives more Pell Grant monies than the amount earned, GCTC or the student, or both must return the unearned funds. When a return of Pell Grant funds is due, GCTC and the student both have a responsibility for returning funds. Whatever funds are not returned by the school must be returned by the student. The student's repayment obligation is determined after the school's share is calculated. GCTC will return all unearned funds within 30 days from the date Financial Aid Coordinator determines student withdrew. Necessary funds will be returned to the Federal Pell Grant Program by the business office by reducing the monies drawn from GAPS, by electronic transfer payment through the GAPS system, or by certified mail.

If a student owes a repayment to the Pell Grant Program, GCTC will notify the student within 30 days that he/she must repay the overpayment. In the notification Green Country Technology Center will inform the student that:

- The student owes an overpayment of Pell Grant funds
- The student's eligibility for additional Title IV funds will end if the student fails to take positive action (by the 45<sup>th</sup> day following the date the school sent or was required to send notification to the student.)
- There are two positive actions a student can take to extend eligibility for Title IV funds:
  - a. The student may repay the overpayment in full to the school within 45 days.
  - b. The student may sign a repayment agreement with the Department of Education.

If the student fails to take one of the positive actions during the 45-day period, the student's overpayment will be reported to NSLDS and referred to the Department of Education for collection:

Mailing address: STUDENT LOAN PROCESSING CENTER  
OVERPAYMENTS  
P.O. BOX 4157  
GREENVILLE, TX 75403

- The student should contact the school to discuss his/her options

### Treatment of Return of Title IV Funds

If a student withdraws, drops, or for some reason fails to complete a period for which they have paid the tuition, GCTC will calculate what, if any, return needs to be made. If the student is a Pell Grant recipient, it will, in many cases, require a return of a portion of the monies received by both the institution and the student to the Pell grant program. The calculation will be according to the Department of Education's "Return of Title IV Funds." The regulation requires a calculation based on the actual percentage of the period the student was scheduled to attend. GCTC may charge the student for any monies which the school must return to the Pell grant program. Refunds to students who are paying their own tuition or agencies that are sponsoring a student who withdraws or is dropped, may receive a refund according to the institutional refund policy as noted in student handbook. An appeals process exists for students who believe that individual circumstances warrant exception from the published policy.

## **16. PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT**

It is the philosophy of Green Country Technology Center that professional judgment is utilized at a minimum level. Student applications, whose financial and personal background truly reflects a unique circumstance which federal regulation does not address, will be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis.

### Definition of Professional Judgment

Professional judgment is defined as a discretionary decision or opinion reached on the basis of the experience of a Financial Aid Coordinator to address unusual circumstances that affect student eligibility.

### Areas in which Professional Judgment Can Be Exercised

Green Country Technology Center Financial Aid Coordinator authorizes case-by-case adjustments in the following areas:

- Data Items used to calculate EFC, which may include:
  - Unusual medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance
  - Extended family support
  - Elementary and secondary education tuition and childcare expenses
  - Unusual debt Income reduction
- Dependency Status
- Satisfactory Academic Progress

### Dependency/Status

Students are automatically considered to be independent if they meet the following criteria:

- They were born before January 1, 1997.
- The student will not be working on a master's or doctorate program during the school year.
- The student is married as of the date he or she applies.
- The student has children and provides more than half of their support.
- The student is an orphan or a ward of the court (or has been a ward of the court at any time since the age of 13).
- The student is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.
- The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- The student has certain dependents (other than a spouse or children) that live with the student and the student provides more than half of their support.
- The student is or was an emancipated minor as determined by a court in his state of legal residence.
- The student was determined to be homeless or to be an unaccompanied youth by his high school or school district homeless liaison at any time on or after July 1, 2019.
- The student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless by a director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at any time on or after July 1, 2019.
- The student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or was self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by a director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center of transitional living program at any time on or after July 1, 2019.

- The student is or was in a legal guardianship as determined by a court in his state of legal residence.

The Financial Aid Office has the authority to make students (who do not meet the above criteria) independent under special circumstances using Professional Judgment. Special circumstances must be documented and a copy of the documentation must be maintained in the student's file. Examples of special circumstances include, but not limited to:

- An abusive relationship with the family
- A student who has been abandoned by parents

Financial Aid Coordinator adjusts the student's dependency status by recording a Dependency Override code of "1" in EdExpress. The Financial Aid Coordinator may also cancel a dependency override that another school performed. To do this, the Financial Aid Coordinator records a code of "2" in EdExpress. Dependency overrides can also be recorded by marking the D/O oval on a paper FAFSA.

#### Procedure to Follow for Professional Judgment

A student may request a review of special circumstances or Financial Aid Coordinator may determine after reviewing the student's application that the student may need special consideration. The Financial Aid Coordinator will request the student or parent file a written explanation describing situation or special circumstances. Official documents, such as court orders, or other evidence such as receipts, bills, tax forms and schedules will be required.

Financial Aid Coordinator will review the request and decide whether professional judgment should be exercised. Financial Aid Coordinator will document the decision, how the decision was reached and the action to be taken. The student's request or written explanation, along with supporting documentation, and the decision of the Financial Aid Coordinator will be filed in the student's financial aid file folder.

When Professional Judgment is used, the Financial Aid Coordinator completes the appropriate section(s) of the School Use box on the SAR/ISIR or the FAA adjustment box on EdExpress ISIR tab. This indicates to CPS that a data element or dependency status has been changed.

#### Appeal Procedure

Students who feel their request for review of special circumstances has not been processed properly have the right to appeal such decisions to Attendance/FA Appeals Committee.

## **17. MISREPRESENTATION REGULATIONS**

A school is deemed to have engaged in substantial misrepresentation when the school itself, one of its representatives, or other related parties (see below), makes a substantial misrepresentation regarding the school, including about the nature of its educational program, its financial charges, or the employability of its graduates.

#### Misrepresentation

Misrepresentation is defined as, "A false, erroneous or misleading statement made directly or indirectly to

- a student, prospective student, or any member of the public, or
- an accrediting agency, a state agency, or the Department.

A misleading statement includes any statement that has the likelihood or tendency to deceive or confuse. A statement is any communication made in writing, visually, orally, or through other means. This definition applies to statements made by

- an eligible school
- one of its representatives, or
- any ineligible institution, organization, or person with whom the eligible institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, or to provide marketing, advertising, recruiting or admissions services.

Misrepresentation includes the dissemination of a student endorsement or testimonial that a student gives either

under duress or because the school required the student to make such an endorsement or testimonial to participate in a program.

#### Substantial Misrepresentation

Substantial misrepresentation is defined as any misrepresentation on which the person to whom it was made could reasonably be expected to rely, or has reasonably relied, to that person's detriment. Substantial misrepresentations are prohibited in all forms, including those made in any advertising, promotional materials, or in the marketing or sale of courses or programs of instruction offered by the institution.

#### Misrepresentation Sanctions

If the Department of Education determines that an eligible institution has engaged in substantial misrepresentation, it may:

- revoke the eligible institution's Program Participation Agreement;
- impose limitations on the institution's participation in the FSA programs;
- deny participation applications made on behalf of the institution; or
- initiate a proceeding against the eligible institution under subpart G of 34 CFR 668.

Relationship with the Department of Education 34 CFR 668.75 An eligible institution, its representatives, or any ineligible institution, organization, or person with whom the eligible institution has an agreement may not describe the eligible institution's participation in the Title IV, HEA programs in a manner that suggests approval or endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of the quality of its educational programs.

## **18. FRAUD**

#### Explanation of Fraud

There are difficult situations where students and/or parents purposefully misrepresent information in hopes of obtaining additional assistance. The Financial Aid Coordinator is required to have a policy of referral when confronted with actual or suspected cases of fraud and abuse.

#### Policy for Fraud

Students and parents who willfully submit fraudulent information will be investigated to the furthest extent possible. All cases of fraud and abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

#### Procedures for Fraud

If, in the Financial Aid Coordinator's judgment, there has been intentional misrepresentation, false statements or alteration of documents which have resulted in the awarding or disbursement of funds for which the student is not eligible, the Financial Aid Coordinator will notify the student and schedule an appointment to discuss the situation with the student. If the student does not make an appointment, the Financial Aid Coordinator may

- Not process a financial aid application until the situation is resolved satisfactorily
- Not award financial aid
- Cancel financial aid
- Determine that financial aid will not be processed for future years

Fraudulent situations will be forwarded to the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Education, at 755-2270 or 1-800-MIS-USED.

Help Prevent Financial Aid and Scholarship Fraud On November 5, 2000, Congress passed the College Scholarship Fraud Prevention Act of 2000 (CSFPA). The CSFPA enhances protection against fraud in student financial assistance by establishing stricter sentencing guidelines for criminal financial aid fraud. It also charged the US Department of Education, working in conjunction with the Federal Trade Commission, with implementing national awareness activities, including a scholarship fraud awareness site on the US Department of Education website. To file a complaint, or for free information, students or parents should call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or visit [www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams](http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams).

## 19. STUDENT PRIVACY

### Information Security Policy and Procedure

GCTC is committed to maintaining reasonable and appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of federal student aid information, including the safeguards required by the Federal Trade Commission Standards for Safeguarding Customer Information (16 CFR Part 314) and by FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 CFR Part 99). All student financial aid records are collected, accessed, processed, used, transmitted, stored, and disposed of by the Financial Aid Coordinator. Access to this information is restricted to the Financial Aid Coordinator and other authorized personnel or as requested by independent auditors during annual reviews to ensure compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies. All student financial aid files are kept on-site in a locking cabinet within a locked room with access by authorized personnel only. All electronic records are kept on secure private servers in an on-site locked server room with access by authorized personnel only. Service providers for financial aid records are limited to the U.S. Department of Education's software programs of ED Connect, ED Express, NSLDS, and COD. The secure disposition of the shredding of paper records is handled by authorized personnel only. Additional information can be found in this handbook in the section titled "Confidentiality and Inspection of Financial Aid Records", as well as in the Student Consumer Information Handbook in the section titled "Length of Time to Maintain Student Records."

### Cybersecurity and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)

As a post-secondary educational institution entrusted with student financial aid information, GCTC continues to develop ways to address cybersecurity threats and to strengthen our cybersecurity infrastructure. Under the U.S. Department of Education's Program Participation Agreement and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) (15 U.S. Code § 6801), GCTC protects student financial aid information, with particular attention to information provided to GCTC by the U.S. Department of Education or otherwise obtained in support of the administration of the Title IV Federal student financial aid programs. This includes, but is not limited to, developing, implementing, and maintaining a security program, limiting access to authorized users, and conducting risk assessments. The Information Technology (IT) Manager oversees GCTC's Cybersecurity program with limited access by other authorized personnel as needed.

### Identity Theft Prevention

This policy is adopted to ensure compliance with the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act, 15 USC. §1601 et seq. and the Federal Trade Commission's rules regarding Identity Theft (the "Red Flag Rules"). The technology center is subject to the Red Flag rules if it is a "Creditor." The technology center is a Creditor if it provides any goods or services for a fee and as a matter of course extends credit to its customers by offering them the ability to pay for those goods and services after they are provided as opposed to requiring prepayment or contemporaneous payment. The technology center is a creditor with respect to limited areas involving a low risk of identity theft. Areas in which the technology center allows a debtor to defer payment owed the technology center include, but are not limited to, school meal charges, adult education tuition, facility use charges and similar accounts. The technology center must review all of its "Accounts" to determine whether any of those accounts are "Covered Accounts." As to "Covered Accounts," it must develop an Identity Theft Program (herein referred to as the "Program") designed to detect, prevent, and mitigate identity theft in connection with a Covered Account. This policy can be found in its entirety in the GCTC Policy Book Sec 3, pg.67.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Green Country Technology Center maintains an educational record for each student who is or has been enrolled at the technology center in the Central Office. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, the following student rights are covered by the Act and afforded to all eligible students at Green Country Technology Center.

All rights and protections given to parents under FERPA and this policy transfer to the student when he or she reaches age 18 or enrolls in a postsecondary school. The student then becomes an "eligible student."

Notification of Rights Under FERPA The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that affords parents of minor students and "eligible students" over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days from the day the technology center receives a request for access. Parents of minor students or eligible students must submit a written request to the assistant superintendent or appropriate technology center official that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. This administrator will make arrangements for access to the education records and will notify the parent of a minor student or eligible student of the time and place where these records may be inspected.

2. The right to request correction of the student's education records that the parent of a minor student or eligible student believes inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents of minor students or eligible students may ask the technology center to amend a record they believe is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. They must submit a written request to the Assistant Superintendent or appropriate technology center official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. If the technology center decides not make changes in the record as requested, the technology center must notify the minor student's parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for correction. Additional information about hearing procedures will be provided to the minor student's parent or eligible student at the time of this notification.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent (34 CFR § 99.31). Technology center officials with legitimate educational interests are permitted disclosure without consent. An official is a person employed by the technology center as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member, including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel; a person serving on the board of education; a person or company with whom the technology center has contracted to perform a special task, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist; or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another official in performing his or her tasks. An official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the technology center will disclose education records without consent to officials of another technology center in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Technology centers may disclose, without consent, "directory" information; however, the technology center must inform parents and eligible students about directory information, allowing them a reasonable amount of time to request that the technology center not disclose directory information about that student. Technology centers must notify parents of minor students and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA by means of a special letter, bulletin, student handbook and/or other means left to the discretion of each technology center.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the technology center to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

#### Directory Information Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, requires that the technology center, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your or your minor child's education records. However, the technology center may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the technology center to the contrary in accordance with technology center procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the technology center to include this type of information from education records in certain school publications.

Examples include:

- Recognition lists
- Graduation programs

➤ Press releases

Two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their minor child's information disclosed without their prior written consent. Directory information will not be released to outside organizations for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

If you do not want the technology center to disclose directory information from your or your minor child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the superintendent in writing. The technology center has designated the following information as "directory information," and it will disclose that information without prior written consent:

1. The student's name
2. The student's address
3. The student's telephone listing
4. The student's date and place of birth
5. The student's dates of attendance
6. The student's grade level (i.e., 11th grade, 12th grade, etc.)
7. The student's degrees, honors and awards received
8. The most recent educational agency or institution attended
9. The student's photograph
10. The student's electronic mail address

This information is presented as a summary and is intended to serve as a guideline for students and parents. Any questions concerning the student's rights and responsibilities under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act should be referred to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent. The FERPA policy in its entirety can be viewed in the GCTC Board of Education Policy Manual. Copies of the complete Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act policy are available upon request and can be obtained in the Central Office, Financial Aid Office, Counselor's Office and on our website at [www.gctcok.edu](http://www.gctcok.edu).

## **20. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS**

Independent auditors conduct an annual compliance audit of GCTC's administration of Title IV programs as well as an audit of the school's general purpose financial statements. Audits are conducted no later than six months after the last day of the fiscal year and are completed by the standards established by the U.S. General Accounting Office's Government Auditing Standards and include all Title IV, HEA program transactions that have occurred since the period covered by the institution's last compliance audit. The results of the audit are then submitted through E-Z Audit.

### Preparation for Audit

Financial aid records and student files are audited every year. The independent auditors ensure that GCTC and the Financial Aid Coordinator are in compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies. The Financial Aid Coordinator prepares for an audit by cooperating with the auditor's requests. Any additional assistance requested is responded to promptly. If any revisions need to be made they are resubmitted within 15 calendar days.

## **21. OTHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT GCTC**

### **Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grant (OTAG)**

#### Purpose of the Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grant Program

The Oklahoma Legislature enacted the Oklahoma Higher Education Tuition Aid Grant Act authorizing and directing the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to implement a program of Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grants. The purpose of these grants is to assist Oklahoma post-secondary students with demonstrated financial need to meet the cost of attendance at Oklahoma post-secondary institutions. Student State Incentive Grants (SSIG) are known as Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grants (OTAG) in this state. These grants pay up to 75% of the cost of tuition and fees for 9 months to eligible residents of Oklahoma.

### Application Procedures

Students desiring to apply for OTAG should follow the application procedures for Title IV funds by completing a

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. The student must complete the Oklahoma residency section in order to qualify. For best consideration, the student needs to have filed a FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st.

#### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a grant and to receive payments a student must:

- Meet Federal Pell Grant eligibility requirements
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as post-secondary (undergraduate) student.
- Have substantial financial need as determined annually in accordance with OTAG criteria.
- Be a legal resident of Oklahoma
- Maintain satisfactory progress and attendance in his/her course of study.
- Not be in default on a student loan for undergraduate students received for attending any institution.
- Not owe a refund on a Title IV grant received from any institution.
- Sign the statement on the FAFSA that money received will be used solely for expenses related to attendance or continued attendance at GCTC.

#### Criteria for Selecting Recipients from Group of Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are funded to the limit of available funds on a first come, first served basis. Deadlines for application are established yearly. All students who meet the eligibility requirements receive scholarships. Criteria for continued eligibility and re-establishing eligibility are based upon the same SAP requirements for Pell.

Criteria for Determining Amount of Student's Aid Grant amounts are based on:

- Financial need: awards run from 5 to 75% of tuition and fee costs for 9 months depending upon applicant's financial strength.
- Costs at the school applicant attends
- The Oklahoma Board of Regents makes final decisions.

#### Method and Frequency of Disbursement

Students are advised of awards by the Financial Aid Coordinator after receipt of a list from OSRHE of eligible recipients who are attending GCTC. Payment is by check, usually twice an academic year. Funds are sent to the school and disbursed by the Central Office Administrative Professional.

#### **Oklahoma's Promise**

##### Purpose of the Oklahoma's Promise

This is an Oklahoma Scholarship for students that take a required list of academic classes in high school and meet a GPA of 2.5. Student eligibility is determined by the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education (OSRHE).

##### Application Procedures

This scholarship is originally applied for by the student at their high school when they are in the 8th, 9th or 10th grade. Students will be required to file FAFSA for each year of attending a post-secondary education institution, which will provide the required income verifications.

#### Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility is dependent upon enrollment in a financial aid approved program. Criteria for continued eligibility and re-establishing eligibility are based upon the same satisfactory progress requirements for Pell. Students who believe they may qualify should contact the Financial Aid Office to ensure proper procedures are taken for the student to receive their benefit.

#### Criteria for Selecting Recipients from Group of Eligible Applicants

Student eligibility is determined by the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education (OSRHE). Students must maintain required standards set by the OSRHE for the scholarship. All students who meet the eligibility requirements receive scholarships.

#### Criteria for Determining Amount of Student's Aid

The amount of aid is determined annually by the OSRHE and is dependent upon enrollment in a financial aid approved program.

#### Method and Frequency of Disbursement

Oklahoma's Promise funds are credited to a student's account each semester and if there is a credit balance a check is made and disbursed to the student.

#### **Otha Grimes Memorial Scholarship**

##### Purpose of Otha Grimes Memorial Scholarship

The Oklahoma CareerTech Foundation administers the Otha Grimes Memorial Scholarships which are reserved for adult students who have initiated formal training to achieve technology career objectives.

##### Application Procedures

Applicants must use the authorized application form provided by the Financial Aid coordinator or online at [www.gctcok.edu](http://www.gctcok.edu) under Student Resources/Scholarships. Fill it out as directed and return it to the Central Office by the stated deadline.

##### Criteria for Selecting Recipients from Group of Eligible Applicants

Scholarships are reserved for adult students who may not qualify for other scholarships or student assistance programs. Scholarships are awarded more on the basis of need and commitment, rather than on grades. Scholarships are determined by the Oklahoma CareerTech Foundation. The scholarship stipulates that the award be used toward books, tuition, and other direct expenses incurred for technology training.

#### Method and Frequency of Disbursements

Scholarships are awarded once each semester (Fall and Spring). Funds are issued to the school and are applied first toward tuition and fees. If tuition and fees have been paid by other sources, a check is then issued by the Central Office Administrative Professional to the student for approved expenses.

#### **Veteran's Affairs (VA) Educational Assistance Programs**

VA assistance is available for veteran's, or in some cases family members, who meet eligibility requirements and attend programs approved by the ODVA State Approving Agency at GCTC. Benefits information for each educational program, method and frequency of benefits, a list of approved training options, along with application procedures can be found at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>. Individuals who attend GCTC and expect to receive monthly educational stipends must provide all military transcripts and records of previous training, a VA Certificate of Eligibility or VA eBenefits printout, and a copy of VA form DD214. Both half and full-time benefits are available. Contact the Financial Aid Coordinator or the U.S. Department Veteran's Affairs at 1888-GI-BILL-1 for more information.

#### **Practical Nursing Assistance**

Physician's Manpower is a nursing student scholarship/loan assistance program that is forgiven/repaid by a work obligation. Applications must be made by June 30th at <http://pmtc.ok.gov/nurses>.

#### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

WIOA is a federal program which provides employment information, job search support, financial aid, training, and educational programs to eligible persons. WIOA has programs that assist individuals who are economically disadvantaged, facing employment barriers, and/or qualify as a dislocated worker in need of training to obtain productive employment. Applicants must meet WIOA economic, employment, and geographical guidelines which are determined by a WIOA counselor. GCTC is on the approved list of training providers in the state of Oklahoma. WIOA assistance is available for students in high demand occupations. Contact the Financial Aid Coordinator for more information and for a list of eligible programs.

#### **Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS Voc-Rehab)**

Vocational Rehabilitation assists individuals who have barriers to employment. Services include testing,

psychological evaluation, medical examination, and counseling services. In some cases, DRS pays tuition, fees, books, and supply costs. Eligibility, application, and funding is determined by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Visit a local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at 1601 S. Wood Dr. Okmulgee, OK 7447 or call 918-304-3160 for more information.

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**

BIA grants may provide tuition, supplies, and living expenses to individuals who meet their eligibility requirements. Assistance could vary with each student upon his/her needs. Students who are listed on tribal rolls and believe they may qualify should contact their tribal agency educational office for application information. Criteria for continued eligibility, re-establishing eligibility, method and frequency of benefit. Contact your tribal agency educational office or the American Indian Education & Training Employment Center at 1-405-521-9047 for application information.

### **Oklahoma HB 3350 Career Technology**

Tuition Waiver HB 3350 waives tuition at career techs for children of peace officers, fire fighters, military personnel, and Oklahoma EMT's who died in the line of duty and children of members of Oklahoma Law Enforcement Retirement System who were catastrophically injured or killed in the line of duty. The law states "Such waiver of resident tuition and nonresident tuition shall be limited to a period of five (5) years."

### **Next Step Scholarship**

The Next Step Scholarship waives the last \$500.00 in tuition only on the student's account for the Practical Nursing program. The Next Step Scholarship is designed for individuals who have a high school diploma/GED, has successfully completed the Health Careers Certification (HCC) program at GCTC as a high school student, and has been accepted into the Practical Nursing program at GCTC. Recipients must be enrolled within 12 months of their high school graduation date. Nursing Transition students are EXCLUDED from the Next Step Scholarship.

### **Ida Marie Koerner Scholarship**

The Ida Marie Koerner scholarship is given annually only to Green Country Technology Center graduates. The scholarship amount varies each year, but generally is given in the amount of \$500.00 per student. The scholarship is awarded due to the generosity of an Okmulgee city employee and resident, Ida Marie Koerner.

### **One Year, One Career Scholarship**

The One Year, One Career Scholarship provides qualifying students with a tuition waiver for a full-time program at GCTC (EXCLUDES the Practical Nursing program). To qualify, students must NOT have attended GCTC as a high school student, must have a high school diploma from one of the GCTC partner high schools, must reside within the GCTC district, must agree to follow enrollment procedures including a program entrance exam, agree to pursue the program of choice beginning the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation. and provide a final high school transcript prior to August 1st of the enrolled fall semester.

### **Senior Scholarship**

The Senior Scholarship provides qualifying students with a tuition waiver to complete their GCTC program hours remaining from their Senior year of high school. (EXCLUDES the Nursing Transition program). To qualify, students must have attended GCTC their senior year ONLY, reside in the GCTC district, and agree to acquire the scholarship the year immediately following high school graduation. The maximum benefit of this scholarship is 525 hours at the in-district rate.

## **22. IN-SCHOOL LOAN DEFERMENT AND NSLDS**

### **In-School Loan Deferment**

GCTC does not offer loans or participate in any loan programs. Students may, however; defer payments on educational loans previously received at other institutions while attending school on at least a half-time basis at

GCTC. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information and in-school loan deferment forms.

National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)

The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) is a database of information about loans and grants awarded to students under Title IV aid. Students may view their personal student loan or grant information on the website <https://www.nslds.ed.gov> by logging in with their FSA ID. Students must never share their FSA ID with any other entity. For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office.

## **23. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

*Green Country Technology Center is an equal opportunity institution in accordance with civil rights legislation and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex/gender, age, marital or veteran status, or disability in the operation of its educational programs, activities, recruitment, and admission practices. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Title IX Coordinator: Ravonda Higgins, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, [rhiggins@gctcok.edu](mailto:rhiggins@gctcok.edu), 1100 OK-56 Loop, Okmulgee, OK 74447. Phone: 918-295-4623. Section 504/Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator: Jessie Spring, Academic Center Instructor, [jspring@gctcok.edu](mailto:jspring@gctcok.edu), 1100 OK-56 Loop, Okmulgee, OK 74447. Phone: 918-295-4675.*