

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Informal Complaint Process

The College District encourages students to discuss their concerns through informal conferences with the appropriate instructor or other campus administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level. If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student, the student may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint.

This policy shall apply to all student complaints except as provided below.

Exceptions

This policy shall not apply to:

- Complaints for forced withdrawal from developmental courses in accordance with state law.
- Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability or religion. [See FDE of the *Board Policy Manual*]
- Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See FDE of the *Board Policy Manual*]
- Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the College District. [See CHA of the *Board Policy Manual*]

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including e-mail and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

At Levels One, Two, and Three "response" shall mean a written communication to the student from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the student's mailing address of record or sent electronically. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

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

"Representative" shall mean any person or organization designated by the student to represent the student in the complaint process.

The student may designate a representative through written notice to the College District at any level of this process. If the student designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the College District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the College District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the College District's counsel. The College District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

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

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student, at any point during the process. The student may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within three business days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

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

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the College District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the student does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the LEVEL ONE conference. After the LEVEL ONE conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student unless the student did not know the documents existed before the LEVEL ONE conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be re-filed with all the required information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

Formal Complaint/Appeals Process

Level 1: File a Formal Complaint or Appeal with the Employee/Instructor

A student wishing to file a formal academic or disciplinary complaint or appeal must use the form provided by the College District (Student Complaint/Appeal form; see the *Pathfinder*). The form shall be filed with the instructor or employee involved no later than five days after the complaint or receipt of the disputed grade or discipline.

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

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

The administrator shall provide the student a written response within three business days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the LEVEL ONE conference and any relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level 2: Appeal to Dean or Vice-President of Student Services

If the student did not receive the relief requested at LEVEL ONE or if the time for a response has expired, the student may request a conference with the appropriate Dean or Vice President to appeal the LEVEL ONE decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within three business days of the date of the written LEVEL ONE response or, if no response was received, within three business days of the LEVEL ONE response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the LEVEL ONE administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the LEVEL ONE appeal to the LEVEL TWO administrator. The student may request a copy of the LEVEL ONE record.

The LEVEL ONE record shall include:

- The original complaint form and any attachments.
- All other documents submitted by the student at LEVEL ONE.

- The written response issued at LEVEL ONE and any attachments.
- All other documents relied upon by the LEVEL ONE administrator in reaching the LEVEL ONE decision.

The Level Two administrator shall hold a conference within three business days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the student at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the student may provide information concerning any documents or information presented at Level One. The Level Two administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The LEVEL TWO administrator shall provide the student a written response within three business days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the LEVEL TWO administrator may consider the LEVEL ONE record, information provided at the LEVEL TWO conference, and any other relevant documents or information the LEVEL TWO administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the LEVEL ONE and LEVEL TWO conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the LEVEL ONE and LEVEL TWO records.

Level 3: Appeal to Appeals Committee

If the student did not receive the relief requested at LEVEL TWO or if the time for a response has expired, the student may request an appeal hearing from the appropriate vice president to appeal the LEVEL TWO decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the College District, within three business days of the date of the written LEVEL TWO response or, if no response was received, within three business days of the LEVEL TWO response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the LEVEL TWO administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the LEVEL TWO complaint to the LEVEL THREE administrator. The student may request a copy of the LEVEL TWO record.

The Level Two record shall include:

- The Level One record.
- The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
- All other documents presented at Level Two.

The LEVEL THREE administrator shall convene an appeals committee within three business days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the student at LEVEL ONE and identified in the LEVEL THREE appeal notice. At the conference, the student may provide information concerning any documents or information relied on by the administration for the LEVEL TWO decision. The LEVEL THREE administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Recordings of the LEVEL ONE, LEVEL TWO and LEVEL THREE conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the LEVEL ONE, LEVEL TWO and LEVEL THREE records.

The Appeals Committee shall consist of three instructors, one from each division (Academic, Technical and Health Science) appointed biennially by the Vice President of Instruction, one administrator appointed by the College President and one student appointed by the Vice President of Student Services. The chair will be designated by the Vice President of Instruction. The chairperson of the appeals committee shall be given the written appeal from LEVEL ONE/LEVEL TWO and shall set the time for the committee to hear the appeal. The hearing shall be conducted on the College District campus and attended only by those persons authorized by the chair of the appeals committee.

Notice

The chair of the appeals committee shall notify the student of the date, time and place for the hearing. The notification shall advise the student of his/her rights:

- To have an advisor present at the hearing (the person may not present the case, question witnesses or address the committee).
- To call witnesses and request copies of evidence.
- To have the hearing tape recorded.
- To ask questions of each witness.
- In the case of Disciplinary appeal:
 - a. to have the complaint described in sufficient detail to enable the student to prepare a defense.
 - b. to have the disciplinary sanction restated.

Procedure

The appeals hearing shall proceed as follows:

- The chair shall inform the student of his/her rights.
- The chair shall read the student's request for formal review, and the appeal from the form used at LEVEL 2.
- The designated official(s) shall present the College District's case.
- The student shall present his or her appeal. No additional documents may be presented other than those used at LEVEL 1 and LEVEL 2 unless the student did not know they existed.
- Either side may offer rebuttal and any member of the committee may ask questions.
- The appeals committee will take the matter under advisement in closed session (without student and officials present).
- The committee shall decide whether an error was made in calculating a grade or whether the student is guilty or innocent of a charge (such as cheating or possession of drugs). The decision shall be determined by a majority vote of the committee and they may take the matter under advisement for 24 hours before rendering a decision.
- The chair of the academic appeals committee shall inform the student and the appropriate Vice President in writing as to the decision of the committee. The Vice President will inform the involved employees of the decision.

Evidence

Evidence shall be handled according to the following:

- Legal rules of evidence do not apply; the committee chair may admit evidence that is commonly accepted by reasonable persons in the conduct of their affairs. The chair may exclude irrelevant, immaterial and unduly repetitious evidence.
- At the hearing, the College District shall be required to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the charges are true. This is known as the greater weight of the credible evidence, not reasonable doubt as in criminal cases.
- A student shall not be compelled to testify.
- The appeals committee shall decide the issue to uphold or deny the student request solely on the basis of the evidence presented at the hearing.
- A recording shall be made of the hearing. If needed for an appeal, transcripts will be made at the written request of the student or the College. The cost shall be borne by the one requesting the transcription.

Level 4: Appeal to the College President

Within three business days of receiving notice of the committee's decision, either or both parties may petition in writing the College President (LEVEL FOUR) to review the decision. The petition(s) shall state with particularity why the decision is believed to be incorrect or unfair. The College President will hold a conference with the involved parties to discuss the appeal.

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

Academic Year

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

Change of Name or Address

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

Class Attendance

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

Fall or Spring semesters:

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

Summer Sessions:

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

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

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

Class Load Information

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

Class Schedule

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

Degree Plans

Prior to registration each semester, the student has the opportunity to be assisted in selecting his or her courses by an advisor/mentor/counselor who is familiar with the requirements of the senior college from which the student expects to graduate. The catalog of the transfer school should be studied carefully, making certain that the student takes only courses which are equivalent to those required by the senior college of his or her choice. Articulation agreements with universities which indicate the courses which are equivalent to the specific degree requirements are available in the Student Success Center. The student should be aware that a course may transfer to another college or university without being applicable to a specific field of study or degree within the school or university.

Grade Reports

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

Grading System

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

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

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

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

Hazing

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

Incomplete Grade

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

Repeating a Course to Improve a Grade

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

Repetition of Courses

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

Review of Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, provide the student with the right to inspect and review the contents of his/her educational records (except as limited under the law). The

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

Scholastic Probation

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

Scholastic Suspension

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

Senate Bill 1231 (Six Drop Rule)

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

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

- Courses dropped by the student to withdraw from the institution.

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

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

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

Sexual Harassment

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

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or often offensive working or academic environment; or
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance of duties or studies; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

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

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

Student Classification

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

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible citizens. Faculty, staff and administrators have the authority to establish and maintain standards of conduct for students. This authority not only extends to the classroom, residence halls and all on-campus activities, but also extends to all College-sponsored off-

campus activities. Any student who fails to conduct himself/herself responsibly with respect to persons and property may be withdrawn from school. The College may drop a student from a class or from all classes for any breach of conduct. Students who are removed from class or classes can seek appeal by due process as outlined in the student handbook, The Pathfinder, located online at <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/documents/pathfinder.pdf>.

Student Records

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Dean's List

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

The President's List

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

Transcript Requests

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

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

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

Unit of Credit

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

Withdrawal from a Course

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

Withdrawal from College

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

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Application for Graduation

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

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

Disclaimer

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

Catalog Time Restriction

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

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

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

General Requirements for Degrees and Certificates

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

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

Certificate of Completion

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

Associate Degrees

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

Physical Education Requirement

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

Graduation Honors

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

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