



**GREEN COUNTRY
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

**2010-2011
FINANCIAL AID
POLICY & PROCEDURES
HANDBOOK**

FINANCIAL AID POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 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 Manual, 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 Director is expected to use professional judgment based upon the intent of all financial aid programs and practices.

This manual:

- 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.

1.2 Financial Aid Reference Documents

In addition to the Federal Student Financial Aid Policy and Procedures Manual, other regulations which affect student aid will be adhered to. These regulations and guides are located at 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
- The Blue Book
- 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

2.0 PHILOSOPHY AND POLICIES OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

2.1 Mission of Green Country Technology Center

The mission of Green Country Technology Center is, "**Preparing you for success.**"

2.2 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.

2.3 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. Jim Beard is the current Financial Aid Director.

2.4 Financial Aid Policy Development

The Financial Aid Director is responsible for initiating the development of financial aid policies and procedures at Green Country Technology Center. Others, including Student Services, will be involved.

3.0 ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL AID ORGANIZATION AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT

3.1 Purpose of the Financial Aid Office

The purpose of the Financial Aid Office is: (1) to provide professional financial counseling to students and parents concerning meeting the costs of education; (2) to administer Title IV Aid programs competently according to the institution's philosophy and policies as stated in Section 2 and federal regulations; and (3) to maintain institutional records of assistance programs and students assisted.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Financial Aid Director

3.2-1 Primary Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the Financial Aid Director 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. 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.

3.2-2 Specific Responsibilities

- 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 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 and Policy & Procedures Manual
- Preparing Federal Title IV Reports
- Processing incoming mail
- Other general office duties

3.3 Financial Aid Records Management

3.3-1 Location of Records

Financial aid records are located in the main Financial Aid office in Okmulgee. The Financial Aid Director 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.

- 3.3-2 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 Director. Application materials become the property of Green Country Technology Center upon submission and are maintained in the student's file.
- 3.3-3 Persons Designated to Provide Student Consumer Information & Distribution of Forms
Linda Williams and Lana Rose are designated as having the responsibility for distributing applications, forms and information to current and prospective students at Green Country Technology Center. Student Consumer Information is also located in the counselor office, in administrative offices, and in the Financial Aid office.
- 3.3-4 Office Hours and Services
Financial Aid Office hours are from 7:30 A.M. to 4: P.M. Monday through Friday.
- 3.3-5 Calendar of Financial Aid Activities
The Financial Aid Director attends Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education Financial Aid meetings, and U.S. Dept. of Education Delivery System Workshops.
- 3.3-6 Voter Registration
Voter registration forms are available at all times in the main office.

4.0 PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

- 4.1 Institutional and Program Eligibility
Documentation regarding Green Country Technology Center's eligibility for all aid assistance programs is located in the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Director is responsible for the coordination of the program participation agreements.
- 4.2 Financial Assistance Available at Green Country Technology Center
The following programs of assistance are available at Green Country Technology Center:
- 4.2.1 **Title IV Programs:**
Pell Grant
- 4.2.2 **Other Programs:**
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Workforce Investment Act
Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP), if applicable
Tribal Agencies
Veteran's Educational Assistance Programs/ Veteran's Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits
Vocational Rehabilitation
Green Country Technology Center Next Step Scholarship

5.0 STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION

(See Green Country Technology Center's Consumer Handbook in financial aid office, or central office)

6.0 ADMINISTRATION OF PELL GRANT PROGRAM

Green Country Technology Center awards federal financial aid in accordance with federal regulations and guidelines. Financial assistance is viewed only as supplementary. The student and the family of a student, when applicable, are expected to make every effort to assist with educational expenses.

6.1 Purpose of the Federal Pell Grant Program

The Pell Grant Program is a federally funded grant program, which provides up to \$5,350 to postsecondary students who are enrolled at least half time. The purpose of the program is to provide a foundation of aid to needy students. An academic year at GCTC is one in which a student completes a minimum of 36 weeks and 1050 hours of instruction.

6.2 Eligibility for Pell Grant Program

Eligibility is based upon meeting the general criteria as described in the Student and Consumer Information Handbook which may be found in the central office, in the Financial Aid office, or online at www.gctcok.com. Students may not receive a Pell Grant from more than one institution concurrently.

6.3 Determination of Need

Green Country Technology Center 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:

- a. To the extent that they are able, parents have the primary responsibility to pay for their children's education.
- b. Parents will, as they are able, contribute funds for their children's education.
- c. Students, as well as their parents, have a responsibility to help pay for their education.
- d. 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. Briefly, for dependent students, three broad categories of family resources are examined in need analysis. They are: (1) Parent's Income (the Available Income Concept); (2) Parent's Assets (the Income Supplement Concept); and (3) Student Resources (including summer earnings, veteran benefits, and other similar benefits). For independent students, income and assets are examined. Need is determined for Pell Grants by a formula developed and updated annually by the Federal Government.

6.4 Amount of Pell Grant

Grant amounts are based upon cost of attendance, the Expected Family Contribution 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.

6.4 Crossover Payment Period Policy

For all crossover payment periods when we package the federal aid for the crossover period, we will do a comparison of the EFCs. We will use the award year that most benefits the student. If we only have a valid ISIR for one year on the date we package the federal aid, we will use the ISIR for that year and will not do another comparison at a later date.

7.0 APPLYING FOR PELL GRANT

7.1 Student Application for Pell Grant

Students must complete a "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" form. Application forms are free and may be obtained from the Financial Aid Director or online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Application forms can also be obtained by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED AID, or filled out online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. 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. This process is called verification.

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 involving the financial and non-financial data submitted on the application. The method of computation is applied to all students uniformly. The specific computations involved in the calculation may be obtained by contacting the Financial Aid Director.

Students should review all the information on the SAR. If any changes are necessary, the student should resubmit part two of the SAR to the Pell Grant processor following the directions for making corrections on the form, or the Student can make corrections on line using his/her PIN. If they meet all eligibility requirements, they will receive an award letter notifying them of the amount of their grant award 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 PIN. On the renewal the student should correct his or 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 three to five working days for their inspection. This ISIR will be used to determine the student's award.

8.0 PROCESSING STUDENT FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS

8.1 Preparation of Student Financial Aid Folder

The Financial Aid Director prepares the student's folder by making a label for the file showing the student's name.

8.2 Requirements Prior to Awarding Pell Grant

- Citizenship status
- Regular student in an eligible program/major
- 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 Bachelors degree
- Cost of attendance
- Enrollment period
- H.S. Diploma/GED/Ability to Benefit

8.2-1 File Documents Required for Students Selected for Verification

In addition to the documents listed in Section 8.2, students selected for verification [EFC on SAR/ISIR is followed by an asterisk (*)], must also have the following in their file:

- A copy of the independent applicant's (and spouse's) Federal Income Tax Return for the base year (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ) identical to that filed with the IRS.
- A copy of applicant's parent's and student's Federal Income Tax Return 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)

8.3 Procedure to Follow Concerning Missing Information

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

8.4 Procedure to Follow Concerning Conflicting Information

The Financial Aid Director 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 Aid Director proceeds with processing.

8.5 Procedure for Handling Void Applications

The applicant receives and may submit an eligibility letter only. The Financial Aid Director reviews comments on the letter explaining why the SAR/ISIR is void. If the applicant submits a void application, the Aid Director 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 pin number.

8.6 Procedure for Handling Rejected Applications

The applicant receives an Eligibility Letter and Information Review Form. 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 Director's role is the same as with the void application stated above.

8.7 Procedure for Handling Ineligible SAR/ISIR

The applicant receives an Eligibility Letter and Information Review Form. The eligibility letter states that the EFC (Expected Family Contribution) is too high for a Pell Grant. The Financial Aid Director checks information on the information Review Form for accuracy.

9.0 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.

9.1 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 form along with the documentation. The school also has the option of only verifying 30 percent of the applicants chosen for verification.

9.2 Items to be Verified/Acceptable Documentation

The Financial Aid Director 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 return and/or other primary documentation are listed below.

9.2-1 Household Size-Verification Worksheet completed and signed by student and/or parent is acceptable documentation.

9.2-2 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.**

9.2-3 Adjusted Gross Income-Acceptable documentation for independent students (and spouse) is a copy of U.S. Tax Return for the base year; for dependent students, a copy of parents and student’s U.S. Tax Return for the base year is needed. For Non-filers: Verification worksheet completed and signed by the student (spouse, optional) and/or parent or a signed statement that tax return was not and will not be filed and a listing of sources and amounts of all income for the base year provides acceptable documentation.

9.2-4 U.S. Income Tax Paid-Acceptable documentation for independent students is a copy of U.S. Tax Return for the base year; for dependent students, a copy of parents and student’s U.S. Tax Return for the base year is needed.

9.2-5 Certain Untaxed Income and Benefits
 Child Support – Verification Worksheet completed and signed by student and/or parent is acceptable documentation.

IRA/Keogh deductions – Acceptable documentation is the tax return or alternative tax documents.

Foreign Income Exclusion – Acceptable documentation is the tax return or alternative tax documents

Interest on Tax-Free Bonds – Acceptable documentation is the tax return or alternative tax documents.

9.3 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:

VERIFIED ITEMS	1040	1040A	1040EZ
ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME	37	21	4
INCOME TAX PAID	61	37	10
TAX EXEMPT INTEREST INCOME	8b	8b	
DEDUCTIBLE IRA/KEOGH	28 + 32	17	
FOREIGN INCOME EXCLUSION – Form 2555, line 45 or Form 2555EZ, line 18			
UNTAXED PORTIONS OF IRA DISTRIBUTIONS	15a-15b	11a-11b	
UNTAXED PORTIONS OF PENSIONS (excludes rollovers)	16a-16b	12a-12b	

9.4 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.

9.5 Verification Checklist Procedures

When the Financial Aid Director 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 Financial Aid Director makes the corrections or updates information. The Financial Aid Director files the checklist and all related documents in the student's financial aid file folder.

9.6 Tolerance Option & Net Difference/Error

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

9.7 Verification Status Codes

A Verification Status Code of "V" – Verified indicates the Financial Aid Director 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.

9.8 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.

9.9 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.

9.10 Verification of Other Information

The SAR/ISIR will often have comments requiring the Financial Aid Director to verify specific items. For example: Citizenship status must sometimes be verified.

9.11 Interim Disbursements

Green Country Technology Center withholds disbursement of any Title IV Federal Financial Aid until a student has completed the verification process.

10.0 OTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

10.1 Review of General Eligibility Requirements

The Financial Aid Director reviews the documents in the file and ascertains that the student meets general qualifications for financial assistance.

10.1-1 Citizenship Status

An applicant must be a citizen or eligible non-citizen. Unless the SAR/ISIR demands it, US citizens who answered yes to the citizenship question do not have to verify citizenship. Permanent residents must submit proof of status to aid office. This proof becomes a permanent

part of their file. All eligible non-citizens must submit proof of status for file. Proof includes US passport stamped “non-citizen national”, or “Form-I-151 (green cards.) Other forms of documentation are rare and the Financial Aid Director will consult the Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook if necessary. A document verification request will be made on all aliens seeking aid.

10.1-2 Regular Student Status

Students must be regular students to be eligible for financial assistance. A regular student is defined as a student who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment for the purpose of obtaining a certificate. The student must meet Ability to Benefit statute by having a high school diploma, GED or by passing a federally approved ability to benefit test. Applicants may schedule an Ability to Benefit test with the ACC Coordinator, Deena Harvey.

10.1-3 Admittance to an Eligible Program/Major

The Financial Aid Director ascertains from institutional records on enrollment and admission that student is enrolled in an eligible program/major. An eligible program/major for Pell purposes must be at least 600 clock hours in length.

10.1-4 Enrollment Status

Student must be enrolled at least half time to be eligible for Pell grants. The Financial Aid Director documents the status on evaluation in the student’s file after consulting institutional enrollment records.

10.1-5 Need

Need for the Pell grant program is documented by submission of a valid SAR/ISIR with an EFC of less than 4618 by the student.

10.1-6 Repayment Status

Student signs statement concerning grant overpayment status on Step 7 of the FAFSA.

10.1-7 Default Status

If a student is in default, he/she is not eligible for further Title IV assistance. However, it is possible for the student to obtain satisfactory arrangements for repayment. Student 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 before any funds may be disbursed.

10.1-8 Statement of Educational Purpose

This statement appears in Step 7 of the FAFSA.

10.1-9 Educational History of Student

If the student has attended this school in the past, the Financial Aid Director reviews previous file and ascertains whether the student was making satisfactory progress in previous course work. If the student has attended other schools in the past, the Aid Director can assess the NSLDS information from SAR/ISIR concerning defaults and overpayments. If the student has attended another school within the current award year, he will access National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) on the web at www.nsls.ed.gov. If the student is a transfer student for Pell purposes the NSLDS will give the student’s current year Pell disbursement and the current year scheduled award. This information is used in award calculation.

10.1-10 Veterans Benefits

If the student receives veteran’s benefits, the Director of Full Time Programs is the designated person that knows if the student is receiving benefits. Documentation and amounts are placed in the student file and noted on contract/award letter.

10.1-11 Social Security Benefits

If the student receives social security benefits, the amount is verified with a tax return, a Form 1099 or a signed statement by the applicant and/or spouse or parents certifying that the amount of social security is correct. This is required only if the student is selected for verification.

10.1-12 Undergraduate Status

Student states on FAFSA if they have obtained a Bachelor's degree. A student who has a bachelor's degree is not eligible for a Pell grant.

11.0 STUDENT BUDGET

For purpose of awarding Title IV need-based assistance, Green Country Technology Center estimates reasonable expenses for the following categories of students:

11.1 2010-2011 Student Budget

STUDENT CLASSIFICATION	NINE MONTH	TWELVE MONTH
INDEPENDENT	\$14,056	\$18,740
DEPENDENT	\$ 6,632	\$8,842

Based on an Oklahoma Department of Commerce Consumer Price Index January 2009.

11.2 Budget Allocations

These expenses are allocated as follows: Housing/Food – 58%; Transportation – 17% and Personal Expenses – 25%. The cost of tuition, books, supplies and fees are added to determine cost of attendance.

12.0 DETERMINING AWARDS

12.1 Steps in Computing the Pell Grant Award

There are five 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

12.1-1 Determination of Cost of Attendance

Pell grant cost of attendance is used to determine Pell grant payment 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. Tuition cost is \$2.50 per hour for in-District adults. Major costs are published in the Student Consumer Information Guide, which is available at both campuses in the central offices, counselors' offices, financial aid office, administrative offices, and online at www.gctcok.com

12.1-2 Determination of Scheduled Award

Once the Pell Cost of Attendance is determined, the Financial Aid Director determines the scheduled award on the full time regular payment schedule for Pell grants for the award year.

12.1-3 Determination of Pell Payment Periods

The Financial Aid Director 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 ISIR/SAR is received prior to the end of student's first pay period. Disbursements thereafter are based on satisfactory progress and upon completion of the hours in the student's previous pay period. The Financial Aid Director consults a calendar sheet and ascertains the beginning and ending dates of each payment period, then determines in which award year each payment period

belongs. An award year is defined as July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next year. If the majority of a payment period occurs entirely within an award year, it is part of that award year.

12.1-4 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.

12.1-5 Determination of Total Expected Disbursement

12.1-5a 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.

12.1-5b For Transfer Students/Prior Credit

A student who has received a Pell grant from another school in the current award year is a transfer student. The Financial Aid Director will consult the NSLDS and determine the scheduled award and disbursement. A student may receive up to two scheduled federal Pell grant awards during a single award year if the eligible student is enrolled: at least half-time for more than one academic year or more than two semesters, or the equivalent time during a single award year; and is in a program in which the major 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 200 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.

Students enrolling at Green Country Tech 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 AARTS, SMART, CGI, AND CCAR transcripts.

The instructor will meet with the student either prior to enrollment or at the beginning of his/her major to determine what, if any credit will be applicable to the major at Green Country Tech. For evaluation purposes the instructor will keep in mind the timeliness of the training, the pertinence to the courses in the major, 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 want 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 within one week.

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.

Advanced standing credit can also be issued to GCTC students who complete one major at GCTC and then enroll in another, or those who may change from one major to another. The decision as to whether or not the credit will be issued will be determined by the instructor after a student/instructor meeting as stated above, and not tuition or fees will be charged to the student for the advanced standing credit granted.

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

After the instructor determines that prior or advanced standing credit will be granted, transcripts from other schools and accredited institutions, if the student is a financial aid recipient, the transcript will be evaluated by the Financial Aid Director credit may be given for appropriate units of instruction. Financial aid will be adjusted accordingly in approved majors.

12.2 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 director, 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. The GCTC Leave of Absence policy can be found in its entirety in the Student Consumer Information Guide.

12.3 Pell Grant Calendar & Calculation Worksheet

To facilitate the above calculations, a Pell Grant Calendar & Calculation Worksheet has been developed.

- Financial Aid Director completes the top portion of the Calendar & Calculation Worksheet with student's name and EFC.
- Financial Aid Director determines the payment periods, classifies payment periods into award years and shows the expected disbursement for each payment period in the award year.
- Financial Aid Director includes the expected disbursement for each payment period.

This sheet becomes a permanent part of the student's file and serves to document exactly how and why a student received a particular award. It is also useful when completing the origination record, disbursement record and the student's award letter.

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

Green Country Technology Center currently uses Common Origination and Disbursement for Pell Applications. It is also used in submitting Pell Origination and Pell Disbursement Records. This system also conducts edit checks to make sure necessary information is submitted. This information is then sent via modem to the Department of Education. The Department processes it and returns it back to Green Country Technology Center to pull down from their electronic mailbox.

12.5 Award Letter/Contract and Acceptance

If a student meets all eligibility requirements and the Financial Aid Director has received all application materials required, verified the SAR/ISIR, if necessary, completed Pell Grant Calendar/Calculation Worksheet, the aid director packages student for an award letter/contract.

13.0 **DISBURSEMENTS**

13.1 Initial/Subsequent Disbursements

13.1-1 Initial Disbursement

The Financial Aid Director 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

ISIR/SAR is received prior to the end of student's first pay period. Disbursements thereafter are based on satisfactory progress, and completion of hours in the first payment period.

13.1-2 Subsequent Disbursements

If this is a subsequent (not first ever received) Pell disbursement, student must have maintained satisfactory progress for previous pay period.

13.2 Disbursement Periods

GCTC has two payment periods per award year, and Pell Grants will typically be disbursed twice a year, dependent upon when the student enrolled in the major, and on whether the majority of the hours in a payment period fall within that award year.

13.3 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 major will have a progress report upon completion of the first 450 hours. The second progress report will be made upon completion of the last 450 hours in that major. When an interval spans a period of non-enrollment, progress will be assessed at the point where attendance recommences.

13.3-1 Progress Reports

The Financial Aid Director obtains progress reports from instructors to monitor satisfactory progress. If student is not making satisfactory progress, the student is notified in writing of the unsatisfactory status. 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 director, and the Director of Full Time Programs). 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.

13.4 Disbursement Procedures

Student contracts serve as a requisition and are submitted to the Business Office indicating the names of the students that funds are to be disbursed to and the amount of disbursements. The Business Office issues checks as directed by the contracts received from the Financial Aid Director. Checks are given to the Central Office Secretary for disbursement to students. Once the business office receives disbursement paperwork confirmation, they request funds through GAPS. The funds are electronically deposited into the General Fund. Funds are not drawn from GAPS until after they are disbursed to the student/student's account. Green Country Technology Center never holds funds past 3 business days. The checks are given to the Central Office Secretary for the payment period and the student's account is credited for tuition and fees. The remaining funds are given to the student to be used for non-institutional, educationally related expenses.

14.0 REVISION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

There may be instances that warrant a change to the original award letter. The Financial Aid Director 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.

15.0 OVERPAYMENT

15.1 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:

- a. Student error, such as failing to report the spouse's income on the application.
- b. 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.

- c. Required recalculations, when a student never begins attending class or withdraws from school after receiving a cash disbursement for living expenses. (See Repayment)
- d. Optional payments, for instance, when the school makes an interim disbursement to a student selected for verification, but the student never completes verification.

15.2 Overpayment Due to Institutional Error

If the Financial Aid Director 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.

15.3 Overpayment Due to Incorrect Data

If the overpayment is due to incorrect data on the SAR/ISIR, the Financial Aid Director will assist the student in correcting the SAR/ISIR. The Financial Aid Director will withhold subsequent payments until the corrected SAR/ISIR is received. If possible, the Financial Aid Director adjusts total award. If this is not possible, then the Financial Aid Director will attempt to collect overpayment from the student. If the overpayment cannot be collected in this manner, the Financial Aid Director 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.

15.4 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.

16.0 RETURN OF TITLE IV/REPAYMENTS

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

16.1 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 the Student/Consumer Handbook) and a leave of absence has not been requested (or one has been requested but denied) on the 10th 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. (see 16.1-1) 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.

16.1-1 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.

16.1-2 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 Director 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:

1. The student owes an overpayment of Pell Grant funds
2. The student's eligibility for additional Title IV funds will end if the student fails to take positive action (by the 45th day following the date the school sent or was required to send notification to the student.)
3. 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

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

16.2 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.

For an example of the application of the refund policy (see 16.1). An appeals process exists for students who believe that individual circumstances warrant exception from the published policy (see 17.4).

17.0 SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

17.1 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 high school diploma, GED, or ATB testing results. If a student is admitted based on testing scores, they must agree to actively pursue a GED. Later this means that the student is performing well enough in terms of progress, grades, and the institutional attendance policy to continue enrollment. The institutional attendance policy states that the student may be absent no more than 10% in a pay period. This 10% of absences is considered excused and will not have to be added to the student's pay period. This policy is distributed to students upon enrollment.

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/major to complete that program/major 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/major.

Example: A student is enrolled in a 1050 hour program/major. The maximum time a student can attend Green Country Technology Center in that 1050 hour program/major 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/major 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 three components to satisfactory progress: qualitative, quantitative, and attendance.

- 1) **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 Director 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 Probation.
- 2) **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.

- 3) Attendance: Students must have acceptable attendance for each payment period. Acceptable attendance is defined in the Student Handbook as missing no more than 10 % of any pay period, documented or undocumented. Withdrawal from a course does not eliminate the satisfactory academic progress requirements.

17.2 Probationary 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 probation 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 probationary period the student will continue to receive financial aid. Students who fail to meet the required grade, percentage of progress, and 90% attendance requirements at the end of their probationary 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.

17.3 Course Repetitions

Students wanting to repeat a specific program/major must have permission of the instructor and Director of Full Time Programs to do so. A repeated class 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.

17.4 Re-Establishing Eligibility

A student who is denied aid due to unsatisfactory progress will be informed in writing of his/her probationary status. Student may receive one financial aid disbursement during their probationary period. If a student fails to come back into compliance with satisfactory progress requirements during the probationary 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:

A student who is placed on suspension may regain eligibility as follows:

- a. 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 450 hours and is denied further aid on the basis of unsatisfactory progress. Student attends for 450 additional hours and achieves a cumulative grade of "C." Student will regain eligibility for aid.
- b. 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.
- c. Denial of aid for lack of attendance: Student must meet attendance requirements for the next pay period (not to exceed 10% absences in a pay period).

17.5 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 Director 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 director, and Director of Full Time Programs). 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.

18.0 WITHDRAWAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFUND

18.1 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/major 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:

1. The notice will be forwarded to the student's instructor to obtain the student's grade at the time of the withdrawal.
2. The notice will also be forwarded to the financial aid office if the student is on financial aid.
3. The financial aid office will calculate any refunds due to the Title IV program and notify the student in writing within five days.
4. The student will be billed for any refunds due to the Federal Financial Aid programs.
5. 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.
6. If the student has not repaid the funds within 45 days, the Collection Department of the U.S. Department of Education will be notified.
7. Institutional Refund Policy
For the Green Country Technology Center District, if a student drops a program before completion, tuition refunds will apply as follows:

No tuition refund will be given for program courses that the student has completed.

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.

1. Students withdrawing before completing 25% of the class (program) scheduled hours will receive a refund of one half of the amount paid.
2. Students withdrawing after completing 25% of the class (program) scheduled hours will receive no refund.

No refunds will be given for books, supplies, fees, or any other non-tuition cost.

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 10th 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 (1) the end of the payment period, (2) the end of the academic year, or (3) the end of the student's educational program.

19.0 RECORDS AND ACCOUNTING

19.1 Student Records

Federal Regulations require that student files be maintained for three (3) years beyond closing of award by ED Payment Management System. A student's file ultimately includes the student's FAFSA application, SAR/ISIR and all related documentation.

19.2 Electronic Statement of Account

The Financial Aid Director maintains all Electronic Statements of Account by fiscal year in financial aid files. Initially 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. Statements of Account summarize current and future payment data submitted via Origination Records and Disbursement Records. The Financial Aid Director reconciles the statement.

19.3 Pell Processed Disbursement List/Financial Aid Excel Spreadsheet

The Financial Aid Director uses the Pell Processed Disbursement list to students to reconcile total disbursements made. The total disbursed is then reconciled with GAPS and the Electronic Statement of Account.

19.4 The Business Office/GAPS

The Business Office at Green Country Technology Center maintains the records of the money ordered through GAPS. They use computer entry to track the receipt and disbursements of federal money from the Activity Fund.

19.5 Description of Accounts

Activity Fund: All receipts and disbursements of cash related to the Pell Grant Program are recorded in this account.

20.0 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.

20.1 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 Director to address unusual circumstances that affect student eligibility.

20.2 Areas in which Professional Judgment Can Be Exercised

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

- (1) Data Items used to calculate EFC, which may include:
 - (a) Unusual medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance
 - (b) Extended family support
 - (c) Elementary and secondary education tuition and dependent care expenses
 - (d) Unusual debt
 - (e) Income reduction
- (2) Dependency Status
- (3) Satisfactory Academic Progress

20.2-1 Dependency /Status

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

- (1) They were born before January 1, 1986.
- (2) The student will not be working on a master's or doctorate program during the school year.
- (3) The student is married as of the date he or she applies.
- (4) The student has children and provides more than half of their support.
- (5) 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).
- (6) The student is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.
- (7) The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- (8) 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.
- (9) The student is or was an emancipated minor as determined by a court in his state of legal residence.
- (10) 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, 2008.
- (11) 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 July1, 2008.

- (12) 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 July1, 2008.
- (13) 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:

- (1) An abusive relationship with the family
- (2) A student who has been abandoned by parents.

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

20.3 Procedure to Follow for Professional Judgment

A student may request a review of special circumstances or Financial Aid Director may determine after reviewing the students application that the student may need special consideration. The Aid Director 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 Director will review the request and decide whether professional judgment should be exercised. Aid Director 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 Director will be filed in the student's financial aid file folder.

When Professional Judgment is used, the Financial Aid Director 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.

20.4 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.

21.0 **FRAUD**

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

21.1 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.

21.2 Procedures for Fraud

If, in the Financial Aid Director'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 Aid Director will notify the student and schedule an appointment to discuss the situation with the student. If the student does not make an appointment, the Aid Director may:

1. Not process a financial aid application until the situation is resolved satisfactorily.
2. Not award financial aid.
3. Cancel financial aid.
4. 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 1-800-MIS-USED.

22.0 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Financial aid records and student files are audited every year. Auditors review a sample of student aid files to ensure that the Financial Aid Director is in compliance with federal, state and institutional policies.

22.1 Preparation for Audit

The only preparation for an audit is to cooperate with the auditor's requests. Typically, the auditor will randomly select a specific number of students to inspect. The files are pulled and given to the auditor. Any additional assistance requested is responded to promptly. The results of the audit are then submitted through E-Z Audit. If any revisions need to be made they are resubmitted within 15 calendar days.

23.0 DESCRIPTION OF OKLAHOMA HIGHER LEARNING ACCESS PROGRAM (OHLAP)

23.1 Purpose of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program

The purpose of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) is to assist students by providing scholarships equivalent to all or part of tuition expenses for students who complete the program's requirements while in high school. See www.okhighered.org/ohlap/scholarhip.

23.2 Application Procedures

Students desiring to apply for OHLAP must be an Oklahoma resident, be enrolled in the OHLAP program in the eighth, ninth, or tenth grade in an Oklahoma high school, and be the child of parents, custodians, or legal guardians who earn less than \$50,000 per year.

23.3 Eligibility Requirements

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

- a. Meet eligibility requirements
- b. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as post-secondary (undergraduate) student.
- c. Begin post-secondary education within three years of graduating from high school
- d. Be a resident of Oklahoma
- e. Maintain satisfactory progress and attendance in his/her course of study.

23.4 Criteria for Selecting Recipients from Group of Eligible Applicants

Post-secondary institution must verify the eligibility of an OHLAP student within the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. No scholarship payments will be made to the institution by the OSRHE unless the student is officially on the record as completing the OHLAP program.

23.5 Criteria for Determining Amount of Student's Aid

Grant amounts are based:

- a. Upon the type of institution attended

- b. Upon the number of hours in which the student enrolls
- c. Oklahoma Board of Regents makes final decisions.

23.6 Method and Frequency of Disbursement

At the completion of the drop/add period of each semester (OSRHE Policy II-2- 333), institutions must submit a claim to the OSRHE which contains pertinent student information on each eligible student. Upon receipt of the claim from the institution, the OSRHE will verify the claim and make payment to the institution. Payment is by check, usually once a semester. Checks are sent to the school and disbursed by the Central Office Secretary.

24.0 GCTC NEXT STEP SCHOLARSHIPS (NON-NEED BASED & INSTITUTIONAL AID)

24.1 NEXT STEP SCHOLARSHIP

Green Country Tech’s Next Step Scholarship waives \$200.00 tuition on the last payment for the Practical Nursing major. Scholarship recipients are required to pay fees for that program. The Next Step Scholarship is designed for individuals who have a high school diploma or GED, and have completed the Pre-Nursing major. For all subsequent career programs, the student will be required to pay tuition. The student will still be able to apply for financial aid.

24.2 Application Procedures

To receive a Next Step Scholarship, the student must have completed the Pre-Nursing major and provide a copy of their high school diploma or GED.

24.3 Eligibility Requirement

The student must have a high school diploma or GED, completed the Pre-Nursing major, and be accepted in the Practical Nursing major.

24.4 Criteria for selecting Recipients from Group of Eligible Applicants

All students who meet the eligibility requirements and make application receive scholarships.

25.0 OTHA GRIMES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

25.1 Purpose of Otha Grimes Memorial Scholarship

The Otha Grimes Memorial Scholarships are reserved for adult students who have initiated formal training to achieve technology career objectives.

25.2 Application Procedures

Applicants must use the authorized application form provided them by their counselor; fill out as directed and return to the counselor’s office by the stated deadline.

25.3 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 State Department of Career and Technical Education Foundation. The scholarship stipulates that the award be used toward books, tuition, and other direct expenses incurred for technology training.

25.4 Method and Frequency of Disbursements

Scholarships are awarded once in the Fall, and once in the 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 Secretary to the student for approved expenses.

26.0 OTHER PROGRAMS

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

1. Workforce Investment act is a federal program which provides job search support and training to eligible person.
2. Green Country Technology Center is on the approved list of training providers in the state of Oklahoma.
3. Contact Jim Beard in Guidance/Financial Aid, GCTC, for further information.

Vocational Rehabilitation

This is a program of assistance for individuals who are physically or mentally disabled. Services include testing, psychological evaluation, medical examination and counseling services. In some cases Vocational Rehabilitation pays tuition, fees, books and supply costs. Contact Jim Beard in Guidance/Financial Aid, GCTC, for further information.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Assistance is provided to individuals who are at least 1/4 Indian and listed on tribal rolls. Tribes handle assistance through tribal and area offices. Grants may provide tuition, supplies and living expenses. Contact Jim Beard in Guidance/Financial Aid, GCTC, for further information.

Veteran's Educational Assistance Programs

Any veteran who meets eligibility requirements may attend the VA approved daytime classes at Green Country Technology Center. Individuals who wish to attend Green Country Technology Center and expect to receive monthly educational stipends must present a court-certified copy of VA Form DD214. Both half and full-time benefits are available. Contact Jim Beard in Guidance/Financial Aid, GCTC, for more information.

Veteran/Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits

Some veterans who have been determined by the Veteran's Administration to possess at least 20 percent service-related disability may be eligible for special benefits under the VA/VCR program. Benefits such as tuition assistance and purchase of required supplies may be available to the qualified veteran. For further information contact Jim Beard in Guidance/Financial Aid, GCTC, for more information.

26.1 Purpose

Scholarships from other sources and/or agencies are often available to assist students in meeting the costs of their education.

26.2 Administration of Other Scholarships

Other scholarships at GCTC are administrated following the policies and regulations as stated by the agencies awarding said scholarships.

27.0 NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of Green Country Technology Center to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, gender/sex, age, qualified handicap, marital or veteran status, or the presence of non-job related medical conditions or disabilities in any of its educational programs and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services. Inquiries concerning application of this policy may be referred to Mike Carman, Title IX/Section 504 Compliance Coordinators, 1100 N. Loop 56, Okmulgee, OK 74447, 918-758-0840.