

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) measures the academic progress of the student towards the attainment of an academic credential. Federal regulations require that all students who receive Title IV funds as part of their financial aid package maintain SAP. The SAP policy applies to all students within categories, e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and graduate students, and may differ based on program of enrollment.

The evaluation criteria for SAP include a qualitative and quantitative component.

The qualitative measure is based on the cumulative grade point average (GPA). The quantitative measure is based on the number of credit hours the student attempts and earns. This calculation is completed by dividing the cumulative number of credit hours a student successfully earns by the total number of credit hours the student attempts over the student's academic career in a particular program at the Institution. Students are also expected to complete their program within 150 percent (%) of the length of the program as measured in credits.

### Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

The academic progress of students enrolled in associates, bachelors and master's degree programs will be assessed at the end of every two (2) semesters. The academic progress of students enrolled in technical, post-baccalaureate and graduate certificates programs will be assessed at the end of each semester. The Registrar's Office will notify students in writing, through e-mail, of their academic status.

Students are prohibited from receiving federal student financial aid after attempting 150% of the number of credits required for their academic program unless a successful appeal is filed. This calculation includes all attempted credits, including transfer credits, related to the student's academic program.

To maintain good standing, students must comply with the following:

**Qualitative component** – the Institution establishes specific minimum GPA requirements by program level (i.e., certificate, associate, bachelor and master). For most programs, the minimum GPA increases as credits attempted increase. Students enrolled in a program of more than two academic years must have a GPA of at least a "C" or its equivalent, or have academic standing consistent with the Institution's requirements for graduation at the end of the student's second academic year. Regardless of the student's enrollment status (i.e., full-time, half-time, etc.), federal regulations consider that a student is at the end of his/her second academic year after two academic years of attendance (i.e., four semesters). Refer to Appendix A, Satisfactory Academic Progress Tables, for the qualitative components per program level.

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### Quantitative component –

- The Institution uses a graduated completion percentage by program level. The student must earn the minimum percentage of attempted credits depending on the program level and academic year in which the student is enrolled.
- All credits attempted and earned, including transfer credits that count towards the program of study of the student, are considered in the calculation.
- The student must complete the program within 150% of the length of the program of study to be eligible for Title IV funds. For example, if a student is enrolled in a bachelor's degree program of 120 credit hours, the student may attempt up to 180 credit hours (120 credits x 150% = 180 credits).

Refer to Appendix A, Satisfactory Academic Progress Tables, for the quantitative components per program level.

### Changes in Status

If a student wants to enroll in a different academic program, the student must request approval from the Dean of the School. Only attempted and earned credits from the student's current program of enrollment are included in the quantitative measure and only the grades for courses from the student's current program of enrollment are included in the qualitative measure. However, students are encouraged to carefully consider program changes because federal regulations limit total lifetime financial aid eligibility.

Students who discontinue their studies and subsequently apply for readmission will be readmitted under the current SAP policy and will have the same SAP status that resulted as of the end of the last term attended. Students applying for readmission will be referred by the Office of Admissions to the School for evaluation. If the student does not meet SAP, the University will determine if he/she may be readmitted, provided an appeal has been approved.

Students requesting admission into a new academic program after having completed his/her prior program of study will begin the new program with a new SAP history. If a student transfers in credits from the completed program of study, only those transfer credits that apply to the student's current program of enrollment will be considered when measuring SAP.

### Impact of Course Repetitions, Withdrawals, Incompletes and Transfers on Satisfactory Academic Progress

- **Course Repetitions** - Federal regulations limit repetition of courses that can be paid with Title IV financial aid funds. Generally, failed courses may be repeated until passed and courses that you have passed can be repeated only once. Please check with the Financial Aid Office if you are not sure whether a course can be repeated with financial aid. If a

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student repeats a course, only the highest grade earned will be included in the student's cumulative GPA. However, each attempt at the course will count as credits attempted.

- **Withdrawals** - If a student withdraws from a course, the credits for the course count toward the determination of credit hours attempted but will not be considered in the cumulative GPA.
- **Incomplete Courses** - If a student has an incomplete in a course, the credits for the course count towards the determination of credit hours attempted. The course will not be considered in the cumulative GPA until a grade is assigned.
- **Transfer Credits** - If a student transfers in credits from another institution, the accepted credits count toward the determination of credit hours attempted and earned, but will not be considered in the cumulative GPA. Only those transfer credits that apply to the student's program of enrollment at the Institution will count as credits attempted and earned. Refer to the Institution's catalog for requirements on accepted transfer credits from another institution.

### **Remedial and Developmental Courses**

Financial aid recipients may receive aid for a maximum of 30 semester credit hours in developmental coursework. Students enrolled in remedial courses are expected to receive passing grades in those courses in order to progress into the next term. Remedial courses do not count towards the determination of credit hours attempted and earned and will not be considered in the cumulative GPA when determining SAP.

### **Financial Aid Warning and Failure to Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Students enrolled in technical, post-baccalaureate and graduate certificates programs, for which SAP is evaluated at the end of each semester, will be placed on financial aid warning status for the next semester attended as a consequence of not making satisfactory progress. The Institution uses this status without appeal or any other action by the student. The Registrar's Office will notify the student in writing, through e-mail, of the financial aid warning status.

*The student must meet SAP as of the next evaluation point (by the end of the next semester attended) in order to receive financial aid in future terms.* Students who did not meet SAP as of the next evaluation point become ineligible for federal financial aid funds and may continue their studies at the Institution at their own cost. If the student believes there were extenuating circumstances associated with his/her inability to meet SAP, he/she may appeal his/her termination

status to the Appeals Committee. See section titled Financial Aid Ineligibility and Appeal Procedures below.

### **Scholarship and Grant Recipients**

Other scholarship and grant programs may not allow for a financial aid warning period. In these cases, failure to meet SAP in any given term may result in the termination of scholarship or grant funds. Please refer to your scholarship or grant information materials or contact the Financial Aid Office at 787-257-7373 extension 3304 or 3400.

### **Financial Aid Ineligibility and Appeal Procedures**

Students enrolled in degree programs, for which SAP is measured at the end of every two semesters, will be informed in writing, through e-mail, of his/her loss of financial aid eligibility due to the failure to meet SAP and will be advised of the process for re-establishing financial aid eligibility. Students who have lost eligibility for financial aid based on a failure to meet SAP standards may appeal their loss of eligibility if they have suffered extenuating circumstances, such as the following:

- Student's injury or illness,
- Death of a relative, or
- Other special circumstances.

Students who wish to make an appeal must be current on all financial obligations. Students may not use financial aid to make retroactive tuition and fee(s) payments.

As part of the request for an appeal, the student must explain how the critical situation prevented him/her from meeting the academic progress. The student must also describe how his/her situation has changed in order to allow the student to meet the SAP standards at the next evaluation. As part of the appeal, the student must submit the following:

- SAP Appeal Form (please refer to the form for further instructions)
- Signed dated letter
- Supporting documentation (third-party documentation may be required as appropriate)

In order for the appeal to be considered, the student must submit the SAP appeal documentation to the Institution's Professional Counselor, who will submit the documentation to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will evaluate the merits of the appeal by reviewing the documentation submitted as well as the student's previous academic performance at the Institution. The Appeals Committee may request additional information or documentation, as needed. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will notify the student in writing, through e-mail, the determination made by the Appeals Committee.

The student must submit an appeal to the Institution in writing after the receipt of the failure to meet SAP notification and before enrollment in a subsequent semester. The Institution will have ten (10) calendar days for the evaluation process after receiving the student's appeal documentation.

### **Financial Aid Reinstatement**

If the Institution approves a SAP appeal, the student will be placed on financial aid probation for the next semester attended. The student may also be placed on an academic plan. The Institution will advise the student in writing, through e-mail, of the progress the student must achieve to ensure he/she meets the SAP policy or the requirements of the academic plan by the end of the next semester attended. Students will be eligible for financial aid while on financial aid probation.

After the end of the financial aid probation semester, the Institution will measure the student's academic progress. The student will retain financial aid eligibility only if the student meets published minimum SAP standards or meets the requirements of the academic plan at the end of the semester of financial aid probation. If the student does not comply with SAP or meets the requirements of the academic plan, he/she is not eligible for financial aid funds, unless the student successfully appeals his/her status again.

Any student who loses financial aid eligibility due to failure to meet SAP and attends school at his/her own cost will regain financial aid eligibility in the academic semester following the semester in which the student meets the minimum SAP standards.

## Appendix A

### Satisfactory Academic Progress Tables

<b>Technical Certificate Programs</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 15	55%	1.65
16 – 30	60%	1.75
31 – 45	64%	1.90
46 +	67%	2.00

<b>Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Programs</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 18	55%	2.00
19 – 36	60%	2.00
37 +	67%	2.00

<b>Associate's Degree Programs</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 28	57%	1.70
29 – 56	62%	1.85
57 +	67%	2.00

<b>Graduate Degree Programs (Masters and Graduate Certificates)</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 18	55%	3.00
19 – 36	60%	3.00
37 +	67%	3.00

<b>Bachelor's Degree Programs</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 30	55%	1.70
31 – 60	60%	1.85
61 – 90	64%	2.00
91 +	67%	2.00

<b>Teacher Preparation Bachelor's Degree Program</b>		
Credits Attempted	% of Credits Earned	GPA
1 – 30	55%	2.70
31 – 60	60%	2.85
61 – 90	64%	3.00
91 +	67%	3.00