



FINANCIAL AID DEPARTMENT

2013-14

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY (SAP)

POLICY

Federal and state financial aid regulations require Southwestern College to establish, define, and apply standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for all financial aid applicants, regardless of previous financial aid history. These standards are created to help students successfully achieve their program of study within the Federal maximum time allowed.

SWC requires that SAP be evaluated every academic year, and measure both the qualitative standard (cumulative GPA) and quantitative standards (completion rate, Pace) and (Maximum Time Frame). All students that have attempted 12 units or more, and therefore have an academic history, will be reviewed for SAP standards at the end of the spring semester prior to receiving financial aid. Students enrolled in a program of less than two years (Certificate of Achievement) will be the exception and reviewed for SAP after the end of every semester. All periods of enrollment at Southwestern College and transferable units from other colleges (determined from official transcripts on file at SWC) will be included as part of the SAP review.

SAP standards apply to all students, regardless of previous financial aid history. SWC's SAP policy for students receiving Title IV aid is stricter than the College's institutional policy for students not receiving Title IV aid. A summary of SWC's institutional policy is below.

Academic Disqualification

A student on academic probation status is disqualified when his/her semester grade point average falls below 2.0 for two consecutive semesters. A student whose semester grade point average equals or exceeds 2.0 but whose overall grade point average remains below 2.0 shall remain on academic probation.

Progress Disqualification

A student on progress probation is disqualified when his/her semester units of "W", "I" or "NP" exceed 50 percent of the units attempted for two consecutive semesters. A student whose semester units completed equals or exceeds 50 percent of the units attempted but whose overall units show 50 percent or more of "W", "I" or "NP" shall remain on Progress Probation.

SAP standards apply to all students requesting financial aid from the following federal and state funded programs listed below:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal William D. Ford Direct Loan Program
- Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)
- State Cal Grant Program (B & C)
- State Chafee Grant Program
- State Child Development Grant Program

The Financial Aid Office reviews the SAP policy yearly prior to each new award year.

Academic Year Definition

Southwestern College's academic year, for federal student aid purposes, is comprised of two 18-week semesters (fall and spring), which meets the federal minimum academic year definition (30 weeks of minimum instructions). SWC also offers a selection of courses during the summer term. Students are required to be enrolled in and attending at least 12 units each semester to be considered a full-time student, which means a full-time student is expected to complete at least 24 units per year.

Enrollment status is determined based on the number of units you are officially enrolled in according to your student records on the course census date. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course adds and drops have been properly, promptly and accurately posted to your record.

PROCEDURE

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM OF STUDY

Recipients of financial aid must be enrolled in a major or program of study, which leads to a Certificate of Achievement, Associate Degree, or a transferable program that leads to a Baccalaureate Degree. It is the student's responsibility to have an eligible major or academic program of study declared at Southwestern College. Students who have not declared an acceptable program of study cannot be accurately evaluated for SAP and will be notified and given the opportunity to update their record on WebAdvisor. It is the student's responsibility to report this update to the Financial Aid office, at which time they will be reevaluated.

Students are encouraged to meet with an academic counselor to create a Student Education Plan (SEP) which outlines the required courses that need to be taken to complete their academic program.

QUALITATIVE STANDARD: GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 or better to achieve satisfactory SAP status. This cumulative GPA includes any transferable work from other colleges or universities.

QUANTITATIVE STANDARD: COMPLETION RATE (PACE)

Students must maintain a satisfactory rate of course completion to ensure of completing his/her academic program within Federal timelines. The completion rate (Pace) is measured by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has successfully completed by the number of hours the student has attempted. Students must complete a minimum of 67% of the units attempted to maintain satisfactory SAP completion rate.

Examples of Completion Rate of 67%		
Enrollment Status	Attempted Units	Minimum Completed Units (67%)
Full-Time	12	8.5
$\frac{3}{4}$ Time	9	6.5
$\frac{1}{2}$ Time	6	4.5

Grades considered as units completed:	A	B	C	CR	NCR	D	P
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Note: A grade of "CR" or "P" counts as units completed, but will not be included in your GPA.

Grades not considered as units completed are:	F	I	NP	MW	W	IP
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Note: These grades are excluded from your GPA, with the exception of a grade "F."

QUANTITATIVE STANDARD: MAXIMUM TIME LIMIT

The maximum timeframe allowed for a student to maintain satisfactory SAP standing in achieving their academic goal is 150% of the minimum required credits to complete the academic program.

Completing 60 units is a minimum standard for completion of many of the academic programs at Southwestern College. Therefore, 90 units is the maximum time frame in which a student can receive financial assistance. However, not all academic programs are 60 units in length, for example Certificate of Achievements and specialized technical programs. The maximum time limit is calculated specifically for each individual academic program, for example:

Maximum Units Time Frame Chart Examples	
Degree Program	Maximum Units Time Frame
AA/AS or Transfer Program	90 units attempted (60 units x 150%)
Certificate of Achievement	36 units attempted (24 units x 150%)
Special Programs: Nursing, Dental, etc.	97.5 units attempted (65 units x 150%)

- Repeated courses will count toward the 150% maximum units allowed.
- The maximum time frame will not be extended for students who change academic programs or have prior degrees or certificates.
- Students who have a Bachelor's Degree or higher from a domestic or foreign school have exceeded the maximum time frame and will not be eligible for additional financial aid.
- A maximum of 30 units of Basic Skills/Remedial and/or 30 units of ESL courses will be excluded from the maximum unit limit.

DISQUALIFICATION

Any student who fails to meet all of the above listed SAP standards will be disqualified through an automated process in Colleague that measures all qualitative and quantitative standards and checks each student's record for an eligible program of study. Students that do not meet the SAP standards will be notified via email of the disqualification and will not be eligible to receive financial aid. SAP disqualified students are not eligible to receive Federal or State aid, with the exception of a Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGFW), which is exempt from SAP regulations but subject to income eligibility requirements set by the state legislature. Students will also be notified of their ability to appeal the disqualification.

APPEAL

Students may appeal their SAP disqualification by first attending a SAP Orientation Workshop and then submitting a completed appeal packet to the Financial Aid Office, including the following information:

- A statement of any extenuating circumstances that may have occurred that explains why the student failed to achieve SAP. Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to, personal illness or injury, serious illness or death of a family member, auto accident or other situation beyond the control of the student, and;
- A statement of what has changed in the student's situation and;
- An explanation of how this change will ensure academic success at the next SAP evaluation and;
- A current Student Education Plan (SEP), dated the current academic year and;
- Supporting documents (i.e. medical records, legal documents, death certificate) that may assist in justifying the student's situation/case.

Complete appeal packets are forwarded to the Appeals Committee which consists of Financial Aid Specialists. Each appeal is reviewed at least twice with a recommendation for approval or denial. Appeals are then forwarded to the Director of Financial Aid for final review. The timeframe for processing appeals can take 2-4 weeks or longer if additional information is needed from the student.

The Committee will review the appeal and notify the student of the results. **All decisions made by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee will be final.**

If the Committee approves the appeal and the student is able to meet SAP standards within one semester, the student will be reinstated for financial aid and placed on “Probation”. If the appeal is approved and the student cannot meet the standards within one semester, the student may be placed on an Academic Plan. In order to remain eligible for financial aid, the student must comply with the conditions of the plan.

If the appeal is denied, the student will remain disqualified and ineligible for financial aid.

Deadlines to submit SAP appeals are as follows:

Fall term - December 1st, Spring term – May 1st Summer term – July 1st

PROBATION:

Students with an approved appeal are on financial aid probation for one semester and are eligible for Federal and State financial aid if all other eligibility requirements are met. Students must meet all SAP standards at the end of the probation semester as referenced above *and/or* meet any specific appeal requirements to regain SAP good standing in order to be considered eligible for additional financial aid in subsequent terms. Students who fail to achieve SAP standards at the end of the probationary term will be disqualified for additional financial aid.

SAP will be evaluated at the end of the probation semester after grades have been recorded to determine future eligibility for financial aid and therefore the posting of subsequent financial aid will be delayed until your SAP status can be determined.

REINSTATEMENT:

Students who are placed on probation but do not meet SAP standards at the end of the probationary term are disqualified for future aid until they can meet the standard. Students placed on an Academic Plan will have progress reviewed by meeting with a Financial Aid Specialist and submitting a follow up appeal for the subsequent term. **Reinstatement is not automatic and is not guaranteed.**

THIS POLICY SUPERSEDES ALL PRIOR POLICIES.