

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR FINANCIAL AID

(DUAL Enrollment Students should refer to the Dual Enrollment SAP Policy above.)

A. PURPOSE

This statement underscores the fundamental requirement for students to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to be eligible for various types of Student Financial Aid (SFA) funds:

1. Federal Pell Grants
2. Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
3. Federal Work-Study (FWS)
4. Federal Direct Loans and
5. HOPE programs

It emphasizes that Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) is obligated by the U.S. Department of Education to set and enforce minimum standards of SAP. Additionally, it stresses that students must be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress to remain eligible for financial aid at SCTC. This statement clarifies the vital link between academic performance and financial aid eligibility for students at the college.

To be eligible to receive Student Financial Aid (SFA) funds (Pell, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-study (FWS), Loans and HOPE); students must maintain satisfactory academic progress. Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) is required by the

U.S. Department of Education to establish minimum standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Students attending Southern Crescent Technical College must be in good academic standing and making satisfactory academic progress to receive financial aid.

SAP STATUS

1. Good Standing

If Students who are meeting the GPA, Completion Rate, and Max-time Frame are in good standing regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for your financial aid eligibility. It's important to maintain this status to continue receiving financial aid. If you have any questions or concerns about your SAP status, it's advisable to contact your school's financial aid office for clarification.

2. Financial Aid Warning

A student who fails to meet SAP (excluding maximum timeframe) at the end of an enrollment period will be automatically placed on “financial aid warning,” not to exceed one enrollment period. During the “financial aid warning” enrollment period, the student may receive federal financial aid despite the determination that the student is not meeting SAP standards. The student must meet SAP standards at the end of the financial aid warning period or will be suspended from further financial aid until such time as the student meets SAP standards (student must pay for any additional course enrollment after the financial aid warning period through personal or private funds) or the student must appeal and have the appeal granted.

3. Financial Aid Suspension

If a student's SAP review indicates that they do not meet the required GPA or are not maintaining the required pace, they become ineligible for all federal student aid funds. However, students who lose their aid eligibility have an opportunity to appeal. This means that they can submit a formal appeal, providing any relevant documentation or explanations for their academic performance, to have their aid eligibility reinstated. The appeals process allows students to address any extenuating circumstances that may have affected their academic progress and provide evidence of their ability to succeed if given the opportunity to continue receiving financial aid.

Student Notification of SAP Status

This statement emphasizes the importance of regular evaluation of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for all students, regardless of whether they receive financial aid. It highlights that students are notified of any changes in their eligibility status, and the college primarily communicates through SCTC student email. Additionally, students are encouraged to proactively check their SAP status on BannerWeb. The statement underscores the responsibility of students to be aware of SAP requirements and their status, stating that not receiving a notification does not excuse them from meeting SAP requirements or adhering to deadlines. This ensures that students remain informed and accountable for their academic progress and financial aid eligibility.

B. RELATED AUTHORITY

State Board Policy 6.6.4. governs the guidelines and regulations related to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving financial aid.

C. APPLICABILITY

This statement emphasizes the universality and equality of the SAP requirements at Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC). It highlights that all students, irrespective of their program of study, degree pursued, or any other personal circumstances, must adhere to the SAP policy. By enforcing these standards uniformly, the college ensures fairness and consistency in the administration of financial aid and academic expectations among all its students.

D. DEFINITIONS

These terms are crucial components of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy, which outlines the standards students must meet to maintain eligibility for financial aid. Here's a summary of each term:

1. **Academic Plan (AP):** A required course of action that specifies the steps a student must take over one or more terms to meet SAP requirements and continue receiving financial aid. This plan may include specific courses to take and minimum GPA targets.
2. **Completion Rate:** The percentage of coursework attempted by a student that must be successfully completed each term. Generally, students must complete at least 66% of their attempted coursework.
3. **Grade Point Average Requirement:** The minimum GPA a student must maintain each term to remain eligible for financial aid. Typically, this requirement is a GPA of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
4. **Maximum Time Frame:** The maximum number of credit hours a student can attempt while pursuing their program of study. This is usually set at 150% of the published length of the program.

5. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** The overall measure of a student's academic performance to ensure they are progressing toward completing their educational requirements in a positive manner.
6. **Warning:** A status assigned to students who fail to meet SAP requirements at the end of a term. During the warning period, students may continue to receive financial aid for one additional term to attempt to regain SAP.
7. **Suspension:** A status assigned to students who fail to meet SAP requirements for two consecutive terms or at the end of a probationary period. Students on suspension are not eligible for financial aid and must pay for tuition and fees until they meet SAP requirements.

E. PROCEDURE

1. Grade Point Average Requirement

To remain in good standing and continue receiving financial aid, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher. The GPA is verified at the end of each term. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, they are placed on financial aid warning for the next term.

During the financial aid warning period, students have one term to increase their cumulative GPA to the satisfactory level of 2.0 or higher. If, after this warning term, the GPA remains below 2.0, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension, meaning they will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid until they meet the GPA requirement.

2. Completion Rate

To maintain eligibility for financial aid and graduate within the maximum timeframe, students must complete at least 66% of the credit hours they attempt. If a student fails to meet this requirement at the end of any term, they will be placed on financial aid warning for the next term.

During the financial aid warning period, students have one term to increase their cumulative completion rate to the satisfactory level (66% or higher). If, after this warning term, the cumulative completion rate remains below 66%, the student will lose financial aid eligibility and be placed on financial aid suspension.

It's important to note that the total hours attempted include all hours attempted at Southern Crescent Technical College, as well as any transfer credits. These attempted hours are used to calculate the cumulative GPA for financial aid purposes.

3. Maximum Time Frame

To calculate the maximum time frame for an additional program after graduation, you would follow these steps:

1. Determine the total number of credits required for both the completed program and the current program. Let's say it's 116 credits (62 credits for the previous program and 54 credits for the current program).
2. Multiply the total number of credits required by 150% to find the maximum time frame. Using the example: 116 credits x 150% = 174 attempted credits

So, in this scenario, the maximum time frame for the student to complete the additional program after graduation is 174 attempted credits.

It's important to note that attempted hours include all attempted hours at SCTC and all accepted transfer credits. Additionally, if a student decides to remain in school and take additional classes beyond the maximum time frame, they are no longer entitled to receive Federal Title IV Aid, and their aid eligibility will be suspended.

Students who attempt more than 150% of their current program of study will be required to submit a Maximum Timeframe appeal before receiving financial aid. To include a copy of their DegreeWorks for their current program.

Appeal of Financial Aid Suspension

The appeal process provides students with an opportunity to present their case and seek reinstatement of financial aid if they have faced extenuating circumstances affecting their academic progress. The process for appealing the suspension of financial aid due to unsatisfactory academic progress is outlined as follows:

1. **Appeal Submission:** Students must submit their appeal in writing, providing supportive documentation of mitigating circumstances that hindered their academic progress. The appeal form can be obtained from the Financial Aid Office or the college's financial aid website.
2. **Review by Appeals Committee:** The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee will review the appeals prior to the beginning of each semester.
3. **Notification of Decision:** The Financial Aid Office will notify students of the committee's decision as soon as possible. Decision results will also be available on Banner Web.
4. **Final Decision:** The committee's decision is final. If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on financial aid probation status for the subsequent semester(s) and given an academic plan to follow.
5. **Probation Status Requirements:** While on probation status, the Financial Aid Office may require the student to maintain specific conditions such as a specified percentage of semester coursework, cumulative GPA, and tutorial assistance.

6. **Evaluation at the End of Semester:** At the end of the semester, the student's progress will be evaluated. If any of the prescribed conditions are not met during the semester, eligibility will be denied, and the student will be placed back on financial aid suspension.

The appeal process provides students with an opportunity to present their case and seek reinstatement of financial aid if they have faced extenuating circumstances affecting their academic progress.

Appeal for Max Time Frame

Students who attempt more than 150% of their current program of study are required to submit a Maximum Timeframe appeal before they can receive financial aid. As part of this appeal process, students need to include a copy of their DegreeWorks for their current program. DegreeWorks is a tool used by academic institutions to track students' progress towards their degree or program requirements, including completed and remaining courses, grades, and overall academic standing. Providing a copy of DegreeWorks helps financial aid offices assess whether the student is on track to complete their program within the allowable timeframe and whether additional aid should be granted considering their academic progress.

Academic Plans

Academic Plans serve as a structured pathway for students to regain and maintain their eligibility for financial aid while addressing any academic challenges they may face. The Academic Plans outlined in the financial aid policy are structured to support students who have successfully appealed a financial aid suspension and are placed on probation. Here are the key points regarding Academic Plans:

- **Requirement for Financial Aid Eligibility:** Students on probation must adhere to an Academic Plan to continue receiving financial aid.
- **Term Evaluation:** The fulfillment of the Academic Plan requirements is evaluated at the end of each term.
- **Consequences of Non-Compliance:** Failure to meet all requirements of the Academic Plan will result in the student being placed on financial aid suspension.
- **Right to Appeal:** If there were mitigating circumstances preventing the student from meeting the requirements of the Academic Plan, they have the right to appeal the financial aid suspension.
- **Grade Requirements:** Students must complete all attempted courses with a grade of C or better. If they receive a D grade during this period, they may be required to submit a new appeal.
- **Withdrawal Restrictions:** Students cannot withdraw from any course while on an Academic Plan.

- **Components of Academic Plan:** The Academic Plan may include various requirements such as meeting with academic advisors or participating in specific workshops mandated by the Appeals Committee.
- **Verification:** The Financial Aid Office verifies that all requirements of the Academic Plan have been met before posting aid for the next term.

GRADE CHANGES

The purpose of this process is to ensure that changes in a student's academic record are accurately reflected in their SAP status, which in turn determines their eligibility for financial aid. This statement outlines the process regarding grade changes, particularly regarding incomplete ('I') grades, and its potential impact on a student's financial aid eligibility:

- **Notification:** When the Registrar's Office notifies the Financial Aid Office of grade changes, including changes from 'I' grades to actual grades, the Financial Aid Office is alerted.
- **Recalculation of SAP Status:** Upon receiving this notification, the Financial Aid Office recalculates the student's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status.
- **Potential Impact:** This recalculation could affect the student's future financial aid eligibility based on the updated academic standing.

Incomplete (I) Courses

This policy ensures that incomplete courses are appropriately accounted for in both quantitative and qualitative assessments of student progress. This area clarifies the treatment of incomplete courses ('I' grades) in the context of satisfactory academic progress:

- **Quantitative Aspect:** Any course with an 'I' grade is counted as part of the hours attempted by the student.
- **Qualitative Aspect:** Once the 'I' grade is changed to an actual grade, the course is considered completed.
- **Timeline for Completion:** The student has four weeks into the following semester to complete the work for the incomplete course.
- **Consequence of Non-Completion:** If the incomplete work is not finished within the specified timeframe, the 'I' grade is converted to an 'F'.

Grades

Grades of W (withdrew) and I (incomplete) are not factored into a student's GPA calculation but are considered as attempted coursework, thus impacting the 66 percent completion rate requirement. This means that students who withdraw from courses or receive incomplete grades are still accountable for those attempted hours when assessing their progress towards completing their program.

Failing grades (F) are included in the GPA calculation and count against the SAP 66 percent completion rate. Therefore, failing grades negatively impact both the GPA and the completion rate.

Grades received for learning support courses do not affect the GPA calculation but are included in the total hours attempted for the completion rate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Z grades may be used to denote unsuccessful completion due to documented COVID-19 emergencies. Z grades are excluded from both attempted hours and GPA calculation. This exception is applicable for the academic years 2020 spring and summer terms, as well as the academic year 2021 fall and spring terms.

Repeated Courses

When calculating the completion rate and maximum allowable total attempted hours for financial aid purposes, all repeated courses and their grades are included in the calculations.

For example, if a student repeats a course to improve their grade, both attempts of the course will count towards the total attempted hours. Similarly, the grades earned in both attempts will be factored into the cumulative GPA calculation.

This means that repeated courses contribute to both the completion rate (ensuring the student is progressing towards completing their program within the required timeframe) and the maximum allowable total attempted hours (ensuring the student does not exceed the maximum timeframe allowed for financial aid eligibility).

Including repeated courses in these calculations helps ensure that students are making satisfactory academic progress and using their financial aid eligibility effectively.

Transfer Students

Transfer students accepted by Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC), who have not previously enrolled at SCTC, will be classified as maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for their first term enrolled. During this initial term, only classes transferred into SCTC will be used in the calculation of the student's completion rate.

At the conclusion of the first term, the student's grades will be assessed according to SCTC's Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements. This evaluation will determine whether the student continues to meet the standards for SAP eligibility moving forward.

*** Special Covid-19 Note**

This note provides important information for students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic regarding their academic progress and financial aid eligibility at SCTC. Here's a summary:

1. **CARES Act Flexibility:** The CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, provided institutions with increased flexibility in financial aid regulations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. **Campus Closure and Remote Learning:** Following Executive Orders by Governor Brian Kemp, SCTC closed its campuses to students and shifted to remote learning technology for the remainder of the Spring 2020 term to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

3. **Z Grades for COVID-19 Withdrawals:** Students who withdrew from class(es) after March 13, 2020, and before the last day of classes may receive a Z grade, denoting unsuccessful completion due to the COVID-19 emergency. Z grades are excluded from attempted hours and GPA calculation.
4. **SAP Requirements and CARES Act:** Financial aid recipients are required to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements. The CARES Act allows institutions to exclude attempted credits not completed due to a qualifying COVID-19 emergency from SAP calculations, beginning with the Spring 2020 term. Students who withdrew or failed classes on or after March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 health emergency may continue to receive financial aid without the withdrawal/failing grade(s) impacting their quantitative SAP calculation.
5. **Qualitative Component of SAP:** The exception for COVID-19 withdrawals does not apply to the qualitative component of SAP. Students failing to meet the 2.0 GPA SAP requirement or those who withdrew or failed classes prior to March 13, 2020, will have their financial aid suspended. These students can submit a SAP appeal and must provide documentation of a qualifying emergency for aid restoration.