

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY**

The U.S. Department of Education and the State of Illinois regulations require that McHenry County College (MCC) establish and maintain a policy to measure whether students receiving federal or state financial aid funds are making Satisfactory Academic Progress toward degree completion. MCC has implemented the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy necessary to evaluate a recipient's continued eligibility for financial aid funding. Students who do not attend, withdraw from courses, defer grades, or perform poorly will not maintain satisfactory academic progress toward completion of the program of study and will become ineligible for financial aid.

### **MINIMUM SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS**

- **Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)**
  - Students must achieve and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.0 in all credit courses attempted throughout an entire enrollment at MCC, whether or not financial aid funds were received. This grade point average standard does not include developmental courses and, for repeated courses, it only includes highest earned grade.
- **Cumulative Completion Rate**
  - Students must complete at least 67% of the credit courses attempted throughout an entire enrollment at MCC, whether or not financial aid funds were received.
- **Maximum Time Frame**
  - Students must complete an academic program before the total number of attempted credit hours exceeds 150% of the credits required to complete that academic program.

### **IMPORTANT**

For the purposes of SAP, the following grades count as ATTEMPTED but NOT COMPLETED:

- F – Failed course
- I – Incomplete course
- W – Withdrawn course

All attempted credit hours at McHenry County College will be counted toward cumulative completion rates and maximum time frame requirements. These include:

- Developmental courses
- Repeated courses
- Withdrawn courses
- Transfer courses
- Courses that have grades forgiven
- Non-completed courses

Students can only receive federal student aid funds for up to 30 credit hours of developmental courses.

Students are allowed to use financial aid funds for a one-time only repeat of previously passed coursework (i.e. repeating a course to meet an academic requirement for that particular course, such as a minimum grade.) If a course is repeated, only the higher grade is used in the calculations of the cumulative GPA but all will remain on the transcript and all are counted toward attempted hours for financial aid purposes.

## **REVIEW OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS**

The Office of Financial Aid and Veteran Benefits determines compliance with the SAP standards for financial aid funds recipients by reviewing a student's cumulative academic record at the conclusion of every semester: fall, spring and summer. Students who have an academic record (including accepted transfer credits) at MCC will be evaluated according to the Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements (above) and placed in the appropriate following status:

- **Satisfactory Status**
  - Student is meeting or exceeding the minimum satisfactory academic progress requirements of a 2.0 GPA and 67% Completion Rate.
- **Warning Status**
  - The first semester a student's academic record falls below the minimum academic standard requirements, a Warning Status is given as an opportunity for the student to regain **Satisfactory Status**. Students may receive financial aid funds for one more semester if all other financial aid eligibility requirements are met.
- **Warning Maximum Time Frame**
  - If a student's attempted credit hours are approaching the 150% allowed for their academic program, a Warning Status is given.
- **Suspension Status**
  - When a student, previously placed in **Warning Status**, fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress requirements at the end of their warning semester, the student will be placed on Suspension Status. The student will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid funds without a granted appeal and/or academic plan, if required.
- **Maximum Time Frame Status (MTF)**
  - When attempted credit hours exceed the allowed 150% for the declared academic program, a student is placed in Maximum Time Frame Status. A student will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid funds without a granted appeal and a signed Degree Audit.

## **APPEALS FOR A SUSPENDED or MAXIMUM TIME FRAME STATUS**

All students in **Suspension Status** have the opportunity to report mitigating circumstances which impacted their performance. Students may submit the proper appeal form and relevant supporting documentation, outlined in the Appeal Process, to the Office of Financial Aid and Veteran Benefits. All appeals will be reviewed by the SAP Committee to determine whether individual situations merit an extended period of financial aid funding.

If an appeal is GRANTED and it is determined a student should be able to meet the SAP requirements by the end of the subsequent semester, the student is placed on **Probation Status**.

- **Probation Status**
  - After an appeal has been granted, a student may receive financial aid funds for the semester in which the appeal was granted.

If it is determined a student will require more than one semester to meet the SAP requirements, the student will be required to complete and follow an academic plan before an appeal can be GRANTED. The student will be placed in **Probation – 2 Status**.

- **Probation – 2**
  - The appeal has been approved with a required two semester academic plan. After the first semester, the academic plan will be reviewed and if fulfilled, the student will be placed in Probation Status for the following term and no new appeal is required. If after the first semester, the academic plan is not fulfilled, the student will be placed in Suspension Status and a new appeal is required.

*\* At the conclusion of the second semester review, any student who has not achieved SATISFACTORY status will be placed in Suspension Status and will be required to appeal. \**

Students in **Maximum Time Frame Status** must complete the academic program they were pursuing at the time they exceeded the 150% requirement. Students may only change their academic program under special circumstances per Director of Financial Aid approval. Students will be placed in **Maximum Time Frame Status** and an appeal is required after the SAP evaluation each semester for financial aid fund eligibility.

If an appeal is GRANTED, the student will be placed on **Probation Status**. The student will be eligible to receive financial aid funds for the semester in which the appeal was granted. Once the semester is over, the student will automatically be placed back into a Maximum Time Frame Status and be required to appeal again.

## **DENIED**

If a student's appeal is denied, awarded financial aid funds for the student will be removed while the student remains in an Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Status as outlined above. Students in this status can only regain eligibility by taking action that will bring their academic standing at or above the minimum satisfactory academic progress requirements.

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## **DEADLINE DATE**

Appeals must be submitted for the semester in which the student is seeking financial assistance two weeks prior to the term's end date. Appeals will be reviewed by the SAP Committee and the student will be notified of the decision within two weeks.

## **NOTIFICATION OF STATUS**

It is the student's responsibility to know their academic progress standing and how it affects their financial aid fund eligibility. More information can be found on the student's Self-Service Financial Aid page under the description Satisfactory Academic Progress.

After the SAP evaluation process at the end of each semester, notification of statuses will be sent to students using their email address on file at MCC.

After reviewing an appeal, students will receive email notification of the decision or further instructions for completing an Academic Plan.

## **NOTICE**

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is subject to change without notice to comply with federal or state regulations.