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## Financial Aid Information – Satisfactory Academic Progress

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### Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Federal regulations require that Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) review students' academic progress receiving federal financial aid. The SAP review evaluates whether a student is “making measurable progress toward completion of their course of study to continue receiving federal financial aid.” Tri-C’s Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards apply equally to all students who apply for federal student aid, regardless of enrollment status or program of study. All credits attempted since the first semester of enrollment, and all transfer credits will be included in the SAP evaluation, whether or not federal financial aid was utilized. All terms, including Summer, are equal and used in the SAP calculation.

After grades have been posted, the Student Financial Aid & Scholarships (SFAS) Office performs SAP evaluations for all students receiving federal financial aid at the end of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer). If students submit a FAFSA outside the evaluation period, their SAP status will be reviewed when the application is received.

### Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, at the end of every semester, a student must meet all the following Tri-C SAP standards:

1. Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of **2.0**; *and*
2. Complete at least **67%** of all courses attempted; *and*
3. Be within **150%** of the published credits required for degree completion.

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of **2.0** or above to comply with Tri-C SAP Standards. The GPA calculation is based on grades reported by faculty to the Registrar’s office. This is a fixed standard that does not change based on the student’s program or credit hours earned.

### Completion Rate

Students must complete at least **67%** of all courses attempted above to maintain compliance with Tri-C SAP Standards and complete within the maximum timeframe established for their program. This fixed standard does not change based on the student’s program or credit hours earned. For financial aid purposes, earned grades of A, B, C, D or P (Pass) are considered completed credits and are calculated in a student’s cumulative GPA; a grade of P is not calculated in the student’s GPA. Withdrawals (W), incompletes (I), failing grades (F, WF), and no pass (NP) are not considered completed credits and will affect the percentage of credits attempted.

**Note:** Up to thirty (30) credits of remedial coursework is not calculated in the credit hours attempted but will count toward the maximum credit limit.

### **Maximum Credit Limit**

Students must complete their program within **150%** of the published credits required for program completion to maintain compliance with Tri-C SAP Standards. This fixed standard does not change based on the student's program or credit hours earned. Students will receive a warning status notification when they have attempted 75 or more credits, and each semester thereafter. Once a student reaches 150% of attempted credits for their program of study, they are immediately ineligible for federal financial aid. If a student has transfer credits, up to 70 credits are counted towards the 150% attempted credit limit, leaving the student 20 attempted credits to complete their degree at Tri-C. Additional credits must be requested through the appeal process.

**Note:** Up to thirty (30) credits of remedial coursework is not calculated in the credit hours attempted but will count toward the maximum credit limit.

### **Other Grade Considerations**

**Audited Courses:** Audited courses are not included in a student's SAP calculation.

**Grade Changes:** Grade changes are evaluated by the Financial Aid Office, and SAP statuses are updated appropriately.

**Incomplete Grade:** Students who are either missing a grade(s) or have a grade of 'I' as part of their academic history cannot have an accurate SAP Status determined. Therefore, their financial aid eligibility will be suspended until the grade(s) have been recorded and the SAP status determined.

**Incomplete Term:** Students who have completed a semester receiving all failing grades (all F grades or a combination of F, NP, WF, or W) will be immediately disqualified for financial aid.

**Repeated Courses:** If a student repeats a previously passed course or the equivalent, only the highest grade will be used in computing the cumulative GPA. Course credit will be awarded only once in the semester in which the highest grade was awarded for the course unless the course description explicitly states that additional credit may be earned. Therefore, repeated courses with lower grades, including failing and withdrawal grades, will be included in credits attempted but excluded from credits earned.

**Transfer Credits:** All transfer credits accepted by Tri-C are counted as both credits attempted and credits earned; however, up to only a maximum of seventy (70) transfer credits are counted towards the 150% attempted credit limit.

### **Student SAP Notifications**

Students who have applied for financial aid and included Tri-C on their FAFSA will be notified via the Tri-C student email of their SAP status after the SAP evaluation has occurred. These notifications provide the students with their overall SAP standing and status for each GPA, Completion Rate, and Maximum Time Frame standards. Students with SAP warning status are notified that they will be disqualified from financial aid if they do not meet the SAP requirements at the end of their next semester. Students who become disqualified from financial aid due to SAP are provided information regarding their option to appeal the disqualification in this email notification. Students will be sent a SAP notification to their

personal email or home address if they cease enrollment at Tri-C. Students can also view their SAP status on their My Tri-C Space at any time or contact the SFAS office directly to inquire about their SAP status.

## **Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress**

### ***Financial Aid Warning***

Students who do not meet the GPA and/or Completion rate SAP standards at the end of one term of enrollment will be placed on Financial Aid Warning. During the financial aid warning term, students are eligible for federal financial aid and are encouraged to reevaluate their academic progression toward the completion of their course of study, obtain academic advising, and use other academic support resources to support their academic success.

If students are still not in compliance with all Tri-C SAP standards at the end of the warning period, they will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification.

### ***Financial Aid Disqualification***

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress after at least two semesters of enrollment, have reached or exceeded the maximum timeframe, or have an *incomplete term* (all failing grades) will be placed on financial aid disqualification and be notified of their status. Students placed on disqualification of financial assistance will be ineligible to receive federal financial aid for future semesters of enrollment.

Students disqualified from federal student aid may regain their eligibility by improving their academic standing to meet SAP guidelines or being granted an approved SAP Appeal.

## **SAP Appeal Process**

Students who lose eligibility for federal student aid due to not making satisfactory academic progress may appeal that result based on mitigating circumstances. Common situations that may cause a student to fail to meet SAP standards include death of a family member, disabling illness or injury to the student, disabling illness or injury of an immediate family member that required the student's care, the student's emotional or mental health issue that required professional care, or other unusual circumstances beyond the student's control.

Students who have exceeded the maximum timeframe (150%) must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above to be eligible to appeal. This requirement follows the College's graduation policy, which requires students to have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA to meet graduation standards.

Students must submit SAP appeals by the deadlines published on the [Student Financial Aid & Scholarships SAP Webpage](#). Appeals submitted after the deadline may be denied.

Students are required to submit all the following by the posted semester deadline if they want to appeal:

- 1. The SAP Appeal Form**, which includes a personal statement outlining:
  - The extenuating circumstances caused the student to fail to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.
  - What has changed will enable the student to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress at the subsequent evaluation.

- The steps the student will take to ensure they continue to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress in the future.
2. A copy of the **Degree Works Audit Report**
    - Must be for the program that the student is appealing for.
  3. A completed **Academic Plan**
    - Must include all remaining courses required for their program (including pre-requisites)
    - Students are not required to complete this with a counselor; however, it is recommended. Incorrect academic plans can result in an appeal being rejected or denied.

**Note:** Students can submit supporting documentation with the SAP Appeal Form. Although supporting documentation is not required, it is highly recommended. Students appealing for a maximum timeframe who are enrolled in a selective admission program must also submit their official notice of acceptance for their program. The College may request documentation if deemed essential to the appeal outcome.

**Submission of an appeal does not guarantee reinstatement of financial aid eligibility. The SAP Appeal Committee's decision is final.**

### **SAP Appeal Outcomes**

Students are notified of the approval or denial of their appeal via their Tri-C student email or mailed letter (maximum timeframe approvals only) within 14 days of the SAP Committee's final determination. If students have been approved, the outcome notice also informs the student of the expectations that must be met to remain on financial aid probation.

#### **Financial Aid Probation Status**

Students who have demonstrated mitigating circumstances leading to their inability to meet the SAP requirements will have their financial aid eligibility reinstated on a probationary basis. To receive aid beyond the probationary period, the student must meet the following:

1. Students who lost eligibility due to a **GPA and/or completion rate or incomplete term** must:
  - Follow the prescribed academic plan submitted with the SAP appeal; and
  - Earn a semester grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher; and
  - Complete at least 67% of the courses they attempt within the semester.
2. Students who lost eligibility due to **Maximum Credit Limit** must:
  - Follow the prescribed academic plan for their program of study and complete their degree within the number of credit hours approved by the SAP Appeal Committee and
  - Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher; and
  - Complete 100% of all courses attempted per semester.

Students on Financial Aid Probation may become disqualified at the end of the term SAP evaluation if they change their major without prior approval. Students who request to change their major or academic plan from those approved in their SAP Appeal must contact the financial aid office and may be required to submit additional SAP Appeal documentation (e.g., Degree Works Audit, academic plan).

**Note:** If an SAP Appeal is approved for probation and the student does not enroll within one year, they must submit a new appeal.

#### **Financial Aid Disqualification Status**

Students who have not demonstrated mitigating circumstances will have their SAP appeal denied and remain ineligible for financial aid. Students placed on Financial Aid Disqualification will have their SAP status evaluated at the end of each semester of enrollment to determine whether the student has complied with overall cumulative SAP standards to be returned to an eligible SAP status.