



## Office of Student Financial Aid & Scholarships

### STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Federal regulations require that Cuyahoga Community College review the academic progress of students receiving federal financial aid. The review process evaluates whether a student is “making measurable progress toward completion of their course of study in order to continue receiving federal financial aid.” All credits attempted, since the first semester of enrollment, and transfer credits, must be included, whether or not federal financial aid was utilized. At Cuyahoga Community College, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is evaluated at the end of each semester. All terms, including Summer, are equal and used in the SAP calculation. If a student submits a FAFSA application after the evaluation, their SAP status will be reviewed at the time the FAFSA application is received.

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#### Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards

To be making satisfactory academic progress, at the end of every semester, a student must meet all of the following:

1. Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher; **AND**
2. Complete at least 67% of all courses attempted; **AND**
3. Be within 150% of the published credits required for degree completion (see ‘Maximum Credit Limit’ below).

A student’s cumulative GPA and the cumulative credits attempted and completed are used to determine SAP. The review is based on student’s entire enrollment history at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), and includes all transfer credits received. Students that change majors or pursue a subsequent degree after graduating must also meet the criteria described in this policy.

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), and grades of F (fail), withdrawal fail (WF), and NP (no pass) are not considered completed credits and will affect the percentage of credits attempted.

Students that are either missing a grade(s) or have a grade(s) of ‘I’ as part of their academic history cannot have an accurate SAP Status determined and therefore will have financial aid eligibility suspended until the grade(s) have been recorded and the SAP status determined.

**NOTE: Students who have earned a semester grade point average of 0.0 (zero) by receiving all or a combination of F, I, NP, W or WF will be immediately disqualified for financial aid and have to appeal the disqualification of their financial aid. Effective Summer 2016, WF grades have been eliminated; however students that attended Tri-C prior to Summer 2016 will still have these grades included in the SAP review process.**

#### Maximum Credit Limit

The maximum number of credits that can be attempted to complete an associate degree and receive federal financial aid is 90 credits. Students will receive a Warning status when they have attempted 70 credits and each semester thereafter. Once a student reaches 90 attempted credits, they are immediately ineligible for federal financial aid and will need to submit a SAP Appeal for reconsideration. Note: students may only receive an approved appeal (probation) for Maximum Credit Limit one time.

1. Withdrawals, incompletes, and repeated courses are considered in the calculation of credits attempted.
2. Audited courses are not included in the calculation of credits attempted.
3. If a student has transfer credits, up to 70 of those credits are counted towards the 90 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.

#### **Remedial Courses**

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

## **Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

Failure to meet the rate of completion requirement and / or the grade point average requirement will result in the following:

### **Financial Aid Warning:** (After one (1) semester)

1. Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress at the end of one term of enrollment will be placed on financial aid warning and will be notified of their financial aid status.
2. During the term of financial aid warning, students are eligible for federal financial aid and are encouraged to re-evaluate their academic progression toward the completion of their course of study, obtain academic advising, and other academic support resources to support their academic success.

### **Financial Aid Disqualification:** (After two (2) or more semesters)

1. Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress after at least two semesters of enrollment, will be placed on financial aid disqualification and notified of their financial aid status via email.
2. Students who are placed on financial aid disqualification will be ineligible to receive federal financial aid for the next semester of enrollment unless they have an approved SAP Appeal or until their academic standing improves to within SAP guidelines.

## **SAP Appeal Process:**

Federal regulations restrict those circumstances that may enable a SAP appeal from being successfully approved. There are several reasons a student may file a SAP appeal. These include the following: 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.

Specific steps on how to appeal are outlined in both the disqualification notice as well as the SAP Appeal Form, but in general, a student will be required to submit all of the following by the posted deadlines each term:

1. Completed SAP Appeal Form;
2. Signed personal statement outlining the situation that prevented the student from being successful, along with details on how this situation has been rectified, ensuring success in the future;
3. Supporting documentation of the extenuating circumstance;
4. Copy of your DegreeWorks Audit Report;
5. Completed SAP Academic Plan;
6. Certificate of Completion of the SAP Success Seminar.

**Submission of an appeal does not guarantee the reinstatement of financial aid eligibility. The decision of the SAP Appeal Committee is final. Students may not re-appeal the decision of the SAP Appeal Committee, unless additional information supporting original circumstances have been provided.**

## **SAP Appeal Outcomes:**

**Financial Aid Probation Status:** Students that have demonstrated mitigating circumstances contributed to their inability to meeting 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 that lost eligibility due to a **GPA and/or completion rate** must:
  - Follow the prescribed degree plan submitted with the SAP appeal; and
  - Earn a semester grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher; and
  - Successfully complete at least 67% of the courses they attempt within the semester.
2. Students that lost eligibility due to **Maximum Credit Limit** must:
  - Follow the prescribed degree plan and complete their degree within the number of credits as defined by the academic plan submitted with the SAP appeal; and
  - Maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher; and
  - Complete 100% of all courses attempted per semester

**Note:** If a SAP Appeal is approved for probation and the student does not enroll within one year, they will need to submit a new appeal to re-affirm academic program completion.

**Disqualification Status:** Students who have not demonstrated mitigating circumstances will have their SAP appeal denied and will remain ineligible for financial aid. Students who are 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.