

# Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

|   |           |                    |                       |
|---|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Policy Number</b>  | 700.12.01 | <b>Custodian</b>   | Student Services Dean |
| <b>Approved Date</b>  | 9/19/2023 |                    |                       |
| <b>Effective Date</b>   | 9/19/2023 | <b>Review Date</b> |                       |
| <b>References:</b> 34 CFR 668, 16 (3)-Student Assistance General Provisions, Repeated Course Policy, Incomplete Grade Policy, Academic Expulsion, Administrative Drop-Withdrawal Policy |           |                    |                       |

## 1. Purpose

The Department of Education, Federal regulations (34 CFR 668, 16(e)) require schools to have a Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy to carry out the statutory requirements that a student must be making satisfactory progress to be eligible for financial aid under the Student Financial Aid Programs (Title IV, HEA Financial Aid Eligibility).

## 2. Persons Affected

- 2.1. Student Services Staff
- 2.2. Registrar
- 2.3. Financial Aid Clerk/Coordinator
- 2.4. Students

## 3. Policy

This policy is to ensure the following:

- 3.1. WETCC has SAP standards requiring students to progress satisfactorily and timely toward their degree, diploma, or certificate completion.
- 3.2. Federal or state financial aid recipients meet SAP while working towards a degree, diploma, or certificate to remain eligible for aid.
- 3.3. WETCC has established SAP standards that it applies to students seeking financial aid.
- 3.4. WETCC abides by all federal and state regulations regarding financial aid.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1. Academic Contract. An agreement between an academic advisor or the student success coach and a student that outlines how the student will work towards meeting SAP while on academic or financial aid warning.
- 4.2. Academic Plan. An agreement between an academic advisor or the student success coach and a student that outlines how the student will work towards meeting SAP while on academic or financial aid probation.

- 4.3. Appeal. A process by which students who are not making SAP petition the college to reconsider their Title IV funds eligibility.
- 4.4. Course Repeats. When a student retakes the same identical course. Course repeats are evaluated in the completion rate and max time frame. The grade for the last attempt is used to calculate the GPA. Per the Course Repeat Policy, students cannot receive financial aid for more than one repeated attempt if the repeated attempt results in a passing grade.
- 4.5. Cumulative Attempted Credits. All successfully and unsuccessfully completed courses attempted at WETCC plus any credits transferred into WETCC are used to calculate SAP. WETCC credits include incomplete grades, course repeats, grade changes, and withdrawals.
- 4.6. Cumulative Earned Credits. Credit hours successfully completed at WETCC plus any accepted transfer credits.
- 4.7. Cumulative GPA (Qualitative). Students must maintain the following GPA.

| Cumulative Attempted Credits | Required Cumulative GPA |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1-16                         | 1.75                    |
| 17 and over                  | 2.0                     |

The GPA calculation includes letter grades of A (4.0), B (3.0), C (2.0), D (1.0), and F (0) for grades earned at WETCC and transfer credits. The most recent grade for a repeated course is used in the GPA calculation.

- 4.8. Extenuating Circumstances. Unforeseen conditions or events beyond a student’s control that directly and substantially impact a student’s ability to meet academic requirements. Examples of extenuating circumstances include a sudden or acute physical or mental illness, severe injury of self or significant others, death of a relative, or other personal or family crisis. Extenuating circumstances must be documented.

Extenuating circumstances do not include personal or family events such as holidays or weddings, academic or exam stress, transportation, or technological difficulties.

- 4.9. Financial Aid Warning. A status assigned when a student fails to make SAP. Students with a financial aid warning may receive financial aid for one payment period (semester) without submitting an appeal. During this period, the student must meet with the student success coach.
- 4.10. Financial Aid Probation. A status assigned when a student fails to make SAP after the financial aid warning period but who successfully appeals to have his or her aid reinstated. Aid eligibility may be reinstated for one payment period (semester).

- 4.11. Financial Aid Suspension. A status assigned when a student fails to make SAP during a warning period or exceeds the maximum timeframe of 150%. Students on suspension are ineligible for financial aid unless they have a successful appeal but may attend college at their own expense.
- 4.12. Incomplete Contract. An agreement between a faculty member and student that allows the student to complete coursework beyond the end of the current academic term. SAP is calculated without the grade for an incomplete course and re-evaluated after the end of the incomplete contract.
- 4.13. Maximum Credits Attempted (Maximum Time Frame). The time allowed for a student to complete their program of study. Federal regulations require students to complete their program of study within a reasonable period, defined as 150% times the minimum credits required to complete a program. The regulations would allow 90 credits attempted for programs that require 60 credits.

All credits attempted are counted, whether aid is received, not including credits attempted at other schools that WETCC does not accept as transfer credits. Students who cannot complete their program by the maximum credits are ineligible for federal aid.

- 4.14. Pace (Quantitative). The rate students must progress to ensure educational program completion within the maximum time frame. Students must successfully complete at least 67% of cumulative attempted courses, including transfer credits.

Pace is calculated by dividing cumulative credits earned by cumulative credits attempted and rounded to the nearest whole number.

$$\text{Cumulative Credits Earned} / \text{Cumulative Credits Attempted} = \text{Pace}$$

Grades of A, B, C, D, P, and S qualify as earned and attempted credits. Audits, incompletes, withdrawals, drops, F, and U grades are attempted but not earned credits.

Incomplete grades require a written contract. Faculty assign a final letter grade when the student completes the course, which replaces the incomplete grade. Faculty assign an "F" if the student does not complete the course before the contract expires. SAP is calculated once final grades have been entered into the SIS.

Repeat courses count as attempted each try but count as earned only once. Students cannot receive financial aid for more than one repeated attempt if the repeated results in a passing grade. Repeated courses must be identical.

- 4.15. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Standards that ensure a student is successfully completing a degree program with a satisfactory grade and in a timely manner. SAP has three measurable components: cumulative GPA (qualitative), pace (quantitative), and maximum credits attempted (maximum time frame).

- 4.16. Student Information System (SIS). WETCC uses Populi for its student information system.
- 4.17. Successful Completed Grades. A, B, C, D, P (pass), or S (satisfactory) are counted toward hours attempted.
- 4.18. Transfer Credits. Credits WETCC accepts for college-level courses taken at another higher education institution that are equivalent to courses offered at WETCC. See the Transfer of Credit Policy for transfer criteria.
- 4.19. Unsuccessful Completed Grades. F, NS (not satisfactory), NP (not passing), I (incomplete), or W (withdrawn) are counted toward hours attempted.

## **5. Procedures**

- 5.1. The registrar and financial aid coordinator/clerk review the status of all student's attempted hours, completed hours, and cumulative GPA for WETCC and any transfer credits at the end of each semester to determine each student's SAP status. This evaluation will be within two weeks of final grades being posted. WETCC evaluates SAP after every semester.
- 5.2. The registrar notifies students not meeting SAP standards and the student success coach of the student's status.
- 5.3. Students who do not meet SAP standards meet with the academic dean and registrar to complete an academic contract or plan before the end of the add/drop period of the following semester. Students then meet with the student success coach to implement the plan throughout the semester.
- 5.4. The financial aid coordinator/clerk creates and shares the Academic Progress Report with the registrar, student services dean, and academic dean.
- 5.5. The registrar processes incomplete contracts and ensures final grades are entered into the SIS.
- 5.6. The registrar notifies the financial aid coordinator/clerk, student services dean, and academic dean of students in jeopardy of not meeting SAP standards or who do not meet the quantitative or qualitative measures.
- 5.7. Suspended students who want to appeal must submit an academic appeal at least two weeks before the start of the following semester. Students returning from the previous semester must appeal by the posted add/drop date for the semester, or they will be dropped from their classes.

### Financial Aid Warning

- 5.8. The registrar places students who do not meet the required cumulative GPA (qualitative) or cumulative completion percentage (quantitative) by the end of a semester on financial aid warning. These students may enroll and retain their financial aid eligibility for one semester after they complete an academic contract at the beginning of the warning term of enrollment. Students who fail to complete an academic contract will be administratively dropped from all courses before the posted add/drop date.
- 5.9. The registrar removes students on financial aid warning who meet the cumulative GPA and completion percentage by the end of the warning period are removed from warning status.
- 5.10. The registrar places students who fail to meet the required cumulative GPA or minimum cumulative completion percentage after the warning period on financial aid suspension.

### Financial Aid Suspension

- 5.11. Suspended students who would like to appeal their ability to enroll based on extenuating circumstances must submit an appeal to the registrar. Appeals must have a written statement and supporting documentation.
- 5.12. The registrar, financial aid coordinator, student services dean, and academic dean consider each appeal on its merit. The academic dean makes the final decision.
- 5.13. The registrar notifies students in writing of the decision. Appeal decisions are final and not appealable.
- 5.14. The Appeals Committee reviews financial aid suspension appeals within three business days of receipt of an appeal. If the committee approves the appeal, the student is placed on probation for the current term and is eligible to receive financial aid for that term. Probation is for one semester.

If the committee determines that the student can make SAP by the end of the next term, they place the student on SAP probation without an academic plan for one term.

If the committee determines that the student requires more than one term to make SAP, they place the student on SAP probation with an academic plan for one term. Students who will take more than one term to meet SAP must appeal after every semester until they meet SAP requirements.

If the committee denies the appeal, the student is not eligible to receive financial aid. The student can register without financial aid after meeting with his or her advisor.

- 5.15. The registrar notifies students placed on probation in writing. Students on probation may continue to receive financial aid during the probationary period.
- 5.16. The Financial Aid Office verifies with the student success coach if students are making SAP or the terms of the academic plan at the end of each term.
- 5.17. Students on probation meet with the student success coach to complete an academic plan at the beginning of the probation term of enrollment. The college will administratively drop students from all courses who fail to complete an academic plan before the end of the add/drop period.

Students must meet the quantitative and qualitative measures at the end of the probationary period to avoid being placed on financial aid suspension. Students who do not meet SAP at the end of an SAP probationary period must submit a SAP appeal.

- 5.18. Students approved for enrollment reinstatement must submit an academic plan to the student success coach, and they are placed on probation for one semester. Financial aid will be awarded based on available funding at the time of reinstatement.

Students not approved for reinstatement must clear all SAP deficiencies at their own expense before additional reinstatement consideration is available.

**Revision History**

| Rev. Date | Rev. No. | Revision  |
|-----------|----------|---|
|           |          | Changed from evaluating all credits a student earned at any institution to evaluating WETCC credits and any credits WETCC accepts as transfer credits. When calculating cumulative attempted credits, cumulative earned credits, and GPA. |
|           |          | Rounding the pace (quantitative) calculation.   |