

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards for Clock Hour Programs- Business Training and Medical Office Programs

Effective 2018/2019 Academic Year and supersedes all previous policies.

The U.S. Department of Education requires all colleges to establish and apply standards of satisfactory academic progress for eligible students to receive financial aid under the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA). As with any area of Title IV, it is critical to understand that students must meet all SAP requirements within the context of all existing federal and institutional regulations. Thus, students must meet all Title IV and institutional requirements and regulations in order to receive federal financial aid.

Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is determined at the end of every payment period by the Financial Aid Office. Students are required to make satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of an associate degree, an eligible vocational certificate, and/or transfer program to a four-year college/university.

This SAP standard covers all federal programs including: Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), and Direct Loans (subsidized, unsubsidized, and PLUS); and Arizona LEAP program.

Note: If you are a veteran and receiving VA benefits, please contact the Veterans Office, or if your program of study has specific requirements, please contact your program/academic advisor.

The College administers other types of financial assistance which may include, but are not limited to - scholarships (which may require a higher grade point average than the minimum in the SAP standard), VA benefits, and athletic scholarships. Academic progress (and other) requirements for non-Title IV aid are described in the eligibility criteria for those forms of assistance.

The following are the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards, which students must meet to maintain financial aid eligibility in clock hour courses. Clock hour students will be measured on a payment period basis and use only coursework listed in the specific program of study.

SAP Evaluation Items

Cumulative Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measure)

A student demonstrates progression through modules in their specific program with pass/fail grades.

Student must pass all courses offered in a payment period prior to moving into the next payment period.

Student who fails a module (earns a grade of 'F') in a payment period.

- If student earns 1st failing grade in the program he/she will be placed in Warning Status for the subsequent payment period.
 - If after the subsequent payment period the student passes the module in which he/she failed. Student will be placed back into good standing.
- If student earns more than one failing grade in the program he/she will be placed in Suspension Status for the subsequent payment period.
 - Student returning to the program after being exited due to more than one failure will be placed in Suspension Status.

Academic renewal or Academic Fresh Start is not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. This

process will not remove grades from this GPA calculation.

Course failures:

Successful completion of coursework is defined as earning a grade of P. While, grades of W (Withdrawn) documents that the student is on an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) and IP (In Progress) indicate that a student is enrolled in a class that crosses over academic years. All grades of F (Fail) are defined as unsuccessful completion.

Cumulative Pace of Completion (Quantitative Measure)

A student must complete at least 80% of the total number of hours scheduled for each payment period (Attempted hours divided by scheduled hours). For this calculation, there is no rounding.

Academic renewal or Academic Fresh Start is not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. This process does not remove clock hours from this calculation.

The numbers that result from the quantitative calculation for SAP are not rounded, they are truncated. For example, if the completion ratio is 79.6666% is truncated to 79.66% it is not rounded to 80%. Thus, a student's rate of completion must be equal to or above the minimums cited in the SAP standard without rounding.

The completion percentage will include all attended hours as completed hours and scheduled hours as attempted hours.

Maximum Timeframe

The total number of scheduled hours for the specific program, this includes prior hours if the student is retaking a module that was taken in a prior enrollment or if a student is repeating any coursework within the same enrollment. Student attending a clock hour program will be limited to 125% of the hours required to complete the student's program of study. For example, a student enrolled in 964 hour program may be paid financial aid for up to 1205 scheduled hours before losing eligibility to receive further financial aid.

Additionally, a student's eligibility may be determined earlier if it is mathematically impossible for the student to complete the program within the maximum timeframe. For example, a student has previously attempted 350 hours towards the same 924 hour program, however the student has returned to the program and is scheduled to attend another 924 hours before completing the program. Therefore, it is mathematically impossible as the student will need more hours than the maximum timeframe allows for the student to complete the program within the maximum timeframe.

If a student is unable to complete a degree or certificate program within the 125% timeframe calculation, the student is ineligible for financial aid as the student is not capable of completing the requirements within the regulatory guidelines.

Additional Certificates

Students who complete a clock hour certificate and seek additional clock hour certificates. Clock hours attempted from prior certificates will only be included in the SAP calculation if the module or coursework is included in the new certificate the student is trying to attain.

For example, if a student completed the Medical Office Specialist program and is now enrolled in the Medical Records Technology program. The prior hours that count for both certificates will be included in the SAP calculation. However, any prior clock hours attempted that only count towards the Medical Office Specialist program and not in the Medical Records Technology program will be excluded from the SAP calculation.

Repeating Coursework

Grades for prior attempts are included when calculating the qualitative component (grade-based). Example: Student earned an 'F' in BO 750, but repeated the course and earned an 'P'. Both grades of 'F' and 'P' will be

used in the calculation.

Additionally, repeated hours will be included in both attempted and scheduled hours when assessing the student completion percentage. Example: Student earned an 'F' in BO 750, but repeated the course and earned an 'P'. The student attempted 300 hours (150 hour each time) and attended all the hours scheduled . The student has a 100% completion rate in BO 750.

Lastly, the scheduled hours used in determining the completion rate will also be included in measurement of maximum timeframe.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards - Statures

Satisfactory Academic Progress is determined at the end of each payment period (scheduled clock hours). All payment periods at Pima Community College are included when determining a student's satisfactory academic progress, even if the student did not receive financial aid in the past.

There are defined outcomes once SAP has been determined at the end of each payment period (each program may have different payment periods), below is an example of a payment period:

If the college states an academic year for a clock hour student is 900 hours (38 weeks). The principles below would be followed:

- Programs lasting less than one year (900 hours) in length would be split into 2 equal payment periods.
 - Example: Program is 720 hours (30 weeks) in length
 - Each payment period would be 360 hours (15 weeks)
- Programs lasting more than one year length (1,200) hours would first split into 2 equal payment periods of 450 hours for the first academic and split the remaining hours in the second academic year unless the remaining hours are less than 450.
- Example: Program is 1200 hours (46 weeks) in length
 - 1st Academic year
 - Each payment period would be 450 hours (17 weeks)
 - 2nd Academic year
 - Last payment period would be 300 hours (12 weeks)

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards for clock hour students, for financial aid purposes, will be each payment period using defined grades.

Financial Aid Good Standing Status

Student has met all of the requirements of satisfactory academic progress and will continue to be eligible for federal and state financial aid grants and loans, as long as all other financial aid requirements are met.

Financial Aid Warning Status

Student did not meet all the requirements of satisfactory academic progress and are now placed on "Warning". Students will receive financial aid if they are on "Warning" status, as long as all other financial aid requirements are met.

Students have the current term in which they have been placed on "Warning" to meet all of the conditions of satisfactory academic progress or they will be disqualified from financial aid for the next term.

Students must meet all of the SAP standards to be considered to be in good satisfactory academic standing. The College issues a formal warning payment period to students at the end of the first payment period during which they fail to meet one or more of the SAP standards. Students who enroll during their warning payment period and who still have not met all of the SAP standards at the end of their warning payment period are immediately ineligible for Title IV financial aid for the subsequent payment period. Students who have not met all of the SAP standards are ineligible for Title IV aid at the end of the warning payment period whether or not they received financial aid during the warning semester.

Students may not be eligible for a warning semester if they previously failed one or more SAP requirements

and continued their enrollment without being issued a warning payment period. Students are subject to current SAP standards and requirements regardless of those that may have been in place during their past semesters of enrollment.

Students who meet all of the SAP standards during their payment period of warning are returned to good satisfactory academic standing for financial aid. If a student who has returned to good standing subsequently completes a payment period and has not met all of the SAP standards the student will again be placed on warning for the subsequent payment period of enrollment.

Example:

1st payment period - warning status

2nd payment period - good standing

3rd payment period - warning

A student may not have more than one sequential warning status; but, must come into good SAP before a second warning status may be applied.

Students who fail to reach all of the cumulative SAP standards after a warning payment period and are therefore not in satisfactory academic standing are ineligible to receive further Title IV funding, unless they have submitted an appeal (as below) which is approved by the PCC Financial Aid Appeal Committee. Students who submit an appeal, which is approved, will be placed in Financial Aid Probation status and required to follow an academic plan.

Financial Aid Probation Status

Students who fail to reach all of the SAP standards and are therefore not in satisfactory academic standing are only eligible to receive further Title IV funding if they enroll using their own resources until they meet cumulative SAP standards or submit a SAP appeal (as below) and are approved by the SAP appeals committee or college designee. Students who submit an appeal that is approved will be placed on probation and must follow an academic plan prescribed by an academic advisor/counselor. During a probationary semester the student must pass 100% of attempted courses in the period while passing each course in the payment period or meet the cumulative SAP standards, in which case the student has achieved Good Standing. Students who fail to meet either conditions of the probationary payment period will be suspended from further Title IV funding. A suspended student may submit a second appeal as long as the appeal reflects new extenuating circumstances. If approved, a student may be reinstated Title IV aid if all other eligibility requirements are met. Students are also required to meet the College's academic standards during any probationary semester.

Financial Aid Suspension Status

Students who are not meeting cumulative SAP standards and are not eligible for warning status, and have not successfully appealed (or failed to meet conditions of approved appeal) will be placed or remain on suspension status. Students on financial aid suspension are not eligible for Title IV aid but may appeal their suspension.

Reestablishing Aid Eligibility

Students who choose not to appeal, or whose appeals are not approved, may be able to re-establish eligibility for Title IV aid. Such students may (if they are otherwise eligible) continue to enroll for courses at the College at his/her own expense until they have met all of the SAP standards that are applicable for the receipt of Title IV aid. Neither paying for one's classes nor sitting out for a payment period affects a student's academic progress standing, so neither (alone or together) is sufficient to re-establish aid eligibility, if the student has not met all of the SAP standards.

Appeal Process for Financial Aid Reinstatement or Extension

HEA regulations allow but do not require an institution to permit students who are not in satisfactory academic standing to appeal his/her status in order to receive Title IV funds. PCC allows Title IV applicants and

recipients, who are not in satisfactory academic standing, to appeal his/her status by accessing the College's SAP appeal process as described on the website. All students who submit an appeal must also include a completed academic plan. Students should note that classes that are required in the academic plan may or may not be eligible for Title IV aid. It is possible that a class that is included in the academic plan, such as a prerequisite that is not a program requirement, is not eligible for Title IV financial aid.

If a SAP appeal has been approved, students must adhere to all the requirements detailed in his/her academic plan as a condition of receiving financial aid. The financial aid office will review the student's progress at the end of each probationary payment period to determine if the terms of the academic plan have been met.

Students who enroll under an approved SAP appeal are required to follow his/her academic plan without deviation. Students who deviate from his/her academic plan are ineligible for financial aid. Students who wish to change his/her academic plan must submit a subsequent appeal to approve the change.

Modifications that are not considered changes and therefore do not require you to appeal include alterations in the sequence of courses, approved course substitutions, advisor approved adjustments or corrections and schedule updates that are initiated by the college such as to program of study requirements, course numbers, course descriptions and course cancellations.

As required by federal regulations, PCC reviews academic progress at the end of the payment period for those students on probation, to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan and has met all SAP standards based upon the payment period grades and completion of clock hours the student is eligible to receive Title IV aid so long as the student continues to meet those requirements.

Federal and institutional SAP requirements continually change and evolve. As such, the student's original SAP appeal is also subject to review at the end of the payment period and may be rejected if it does not meet current SAP requirements, regardless of the student's academic performance during the probationary semester.

Students who experience new extenuating circumstances, that were reasonably un-foreseeable at the beginning of the probationary payment period and that are beyond the student's control, may appeal. The circumstances that are cited in the appeal must be timely to the payment period of enrollment during which the academic difficulty occurred. These extenuating circumstances must have been sufficiently disruptive that the student was prevented from continued enrollment and/or successful completion of the payment period and meeting of the SAP standards.

Students who have failed one or more of the SAP standards are required to present and document extenuating circumstances with his/her appeal.

Extenuating Circumstances

Circumstances such as youth, being a first time college student, difficulty adjusting to college, time management issues, failure to balance social life against academic workload requirements, lack of focus, prioritization of other activities above coursework and inability to afford enrollment expenses in the absence of financial aid are not alone sufficient to qualify as extenuating.

Documented extenuating circumstances might include, but are not limited to:

- Major illness or injury for student, spouse of student's immediate family
- Loss of employment for the student, student's spouse, or parents
- Student or parents marital status change; i.e., separation or divorce
- Death in the student's immediate family
- Deployment to active duty/reserves by the student, student's spouse, student's parents
- Natural disaster affecting the student, student's spouse, or student's parents

All SAP appeals will be evaluated by the SAP appeals committee or its designee. The SAP appeals committee determines whether or not the circumstances that the student submitted in the appeal are extenuating. As noted in the instructions that accompany the SAP appeal process, the student must document all extenuating circumstances, explain changes that will allow for academic success during future enrollment, and must submit an advisor-approved academic plan.

Documentation typically consists of provider confirmation of injury or illness, an employer's separation letter, police incident or accident report, attorney's letter, divorce decree, deployment orders, obituary or death certificate as applicable; however, the SAP appeals committee or its designee solely determines the sufficiency of documentation in accordance with the circumstances presented.

The student's extenuating circumstances must have been reasonably un-foreseeable and also must have been beyond the student's control. Please note, having extenuating circumstances does not in any way guarantee that your SAP appeal will be approved. If your circumstances were reasonably foreseeable, pre-existing, are deemed to have been within your control, or were present and you decided to enroll anyway, your SAP appeal is likely to be denied. Your SAP appeal is also likely to be denied if you enrolled for more than two payment periods without seeking intervention and treatment for an existing issue (or issues).

If a SAP appeal is approved for a student who does not enroll for the next scheduled payment period, the approval is subject to resubmission to the SAP appeals committee or its designee for reevaluation. If the SAP appeals committee or its designee confirms that the approval is still valid the student is eligible to receive financial aid so long as all other eligibility criteria are met.

If the SAP appeals committee or its designee determines that the approval is not valid the student is ineligible for any financial aid that is governed by the SAP standards. The student may be eligible to submit a new SAP appeal and should review the current SAP appeal guidelines.

If your SAP appeal is denied you can only re-appeal if you have extenuating circumstances and/or documentation that you did not include with your initial submission. Re-appealing because you do not agree with the SAP Appeal Committee's decision is not a valid basis upon which to submit another appeal.

Leave of Absence (LOA) for Clock Hour Students

A student granted an LOA that meets the criteria in this section is not considered to have withdrawn, and no Return calculation is required (if LOA is approved through federal financial aid). Upon the student's return from the leave, he or she continues to earn the federal student aid previously awarded for the period.

Leave of Absence 1. A Leave of Absence (LOA) is requested by a student due to unforeseen barriers that prevent them from completing training and have a reasonable expectation of the student's return.

2. A Leave of Absence must be requested in advance by the student utilizing a Leave of Absence Form which includes the reason for the Leave of Absence. 2.1. In some cases a student may not be available when the emergency occurs. In those cases the coordinator of the program may note on the Leave of Absence Form that the student was unavailable but was notified of the impact the leave of absence will have on them and the reason the student was unavailable (for example, hospitalization). The form must be collected at a later date.
3. The program coordinator or CTD director must approve a leave of absence in order to verify that the student and program know the impact of the leave of absence on the student's training and the student. Students must also sign the FA acknowledgement if they are receiving federal financial aid so students understand the impact of the leave of absence regarding their funding and financial aid.
4. Any time additional fees are charged (i.e. repeat class that is not free), this must be considered an exit and then a new enrollment, with a new enrollment agreement. This is not a Leave of absence. This is regardless of receipt of Federal Financial Aid or other assistance.
5. A student can return to class prior to the end of the LOA, but the LOA does not end until a student has returned AND completed hours to the point in which they left the program (If a student repeats hours, they must complete the repeat hours prior to be taken off of an LOA).
6. If a student fails to return from an LOA, the student's withdrawal date is the student's last date of attendance in which the complete an academic activity.
7. LOA time limit of 180 days in 12 months includes all repeated hours and includes weekends and scheduled breaks.
8. Leaves of absences for students on financial aid must comply with current financial aid guidelines throughout the time they are granted. Leave of absences will be determined to be Approved or Unapproved for federal financial aid purposes according to federal financial aid guidelines.
9. Students not on financial aid still follow the financial aid guidelines for the general leaves of absence. (Pima Community College Catalog ADDENDUM 2015/2016, page 3)

The decision of the SAP Appeals Committee or College Designee is final and can neither be appealed elsewhere in the College, nor can it be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

[References:](#)

Federal Student Aid Regulations: 34 CFR 668.42(c)(2), 34 CFR 668.4, 34 CFR 668.22(d)
Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 1 pages 15-19