

## SATISFACTORY PROGRESS POLICY

**Standards:** Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation, Sections III-B, IV-C, and VIII-A

**Rationale:** Avocational ESL institutions recognize their obligation to ensure that enrolled students have the ability to successfully complete their program. Institutional procedures are clearly defined for determining a student's satisfactory progress based upon established criteria. The institution's criteria address the required elements outlined below.

### **Policy Requirements.**

1. Institutions approved to issue Form I-20's adhere to all policies and guidelines of the Department of Homeland Security.
2. Satisfactory Progress policies and procedures are published in the institution's student handbook.
3. Satisfactory Progress policies are cumulative, include all periods of attendance at the institution, and are applied consistently to all students attending similar programs.
4. General Elements of Satisfactory Progress (SP) Policy.

#### **A. Qualitative Standard**

The policy includes a qualitative measure of the student's progress, such as a grade point average (GPA), work projects completed, or comparable factors that are measurable against generally accepted criteria.

The policy requires all students to have a minimum grade point average or equivalent by completion. If an institution uses a method of evaluation other than letter or numeric grades, the policy must define and include a rationale for the evaluation method.

#### **B. Quantitative Standard**

The policy includes a quantitative measure that defines the total length of the program in clock hours as well as the number of clock hours for each level and/or term.

#### **C. Evaluation of Student Progress**

The policy divides the program into evaluation periods based upon the published program length. For programs with terms of four weeks or longer, an evaluation must occur by the end of the first half of each term.

#### D. Progression through Academic Proficiency Levels

Academic proficiency levels are defined in accordance with general standards and conventions in ESL, e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced and nuances thereof (pre-intermediate, upper intermediate, etc.). Students progress through academic levels in a sequential manner, i.e., intermediate follows beginner, etc. A level may be repeated only once. An exception with sound rationale may be made, on a one-time basis, for a student to repeat a single level one additional time, at the discretion of the institution.

#### E. Leave of Absence and Vacation Policies

In an immersion language program leaves of absence and vacations may have an impact on student progress. Therefore, institutions are required to have a leave of absence/vacation policy in accordance with ACCET Document 36 – Leave of Absence Policy.

#### F. Consequences of Failure To Meet SP Standards

1. Consequences: The policy states the consequences of failure to meet the satisfactory progress standards and how the student is notified.
2. Probation: If the policy includes a probationary period, it specifies the following:
  - a. the length of time;
  - b. the terms or conditions;
  - c. the student's visa status during the probation; and
  - d. the consequences for failure to meet the terms of probation.
3. Appeals: The policy includes specific procedures under which a student may appeal a determination that he or she is not meeting the SP standards. The procedures must:
  - a. require written appeals;
  - b. require substantiating documentation, where appropriate;
  - c. provide a time frame for the student to make the appeal;
  - d. indicate which school official(s) is responsible for deciding the appeal; and
  - e. provide a time frame for the institution to decide the appeal and notify the student in writing.