

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

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

Rationale: Vocational 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 academic progress based upon established criteria. The institution's criteria address the required elements outlined below.

Policy Requirements:

- A. Institutions that participate in the federal Title IV programs adhere to all policies and guidelines of the U. S. Department of Education.
- B. Satisfactory academic progress policies and procedures are published in the institution's catalog.
- C. Satisfactory academic progress policies are cumulative, include all periods of attendance at the institution, and are applied consistently to all students attending similar programs.
- D. General Elements of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

1. 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 "C" grade point average or equivalent by graduation. A "C" grade point average is equivalent to a minimum of a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or a 70% on a 100% scale. If an institution uses a method of evaluation other than letter or numeric grades, the policy must define and include a rationale for what standard is the equivalent of a "C" average.

2. Quantitative Standard:

The policy includes a quantitative measure that defines the minimum percentage or amount of work which allows the student to complete the program within the maximum time frame. The quantitative standard may be expressed in credit hours, clock hours, or a percentage; however, for a program measured in credit hours, the quantitative standard must be expressed in credit hours.

3. Increments for Evaluation:

Each program is divided into evaluation periods or increments, based upon the published

program length. Evaluation periods or increments must align with payment periods, for institutions participating in federal Title IV financial aid programs. An increment may not be longer than one half the program or one half an academic year, whichever is less.

4. Maximum Time Frame:

The policy establishes the maximum time frame in which a student must complete the program. The maximum time frame may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program measured in academic years, academic terms, credit hours attempted, clock hours completed, or elapsed calendar time, as appropriate. For a program measured in credit hours, the maximum time frame must be measured in credit hours.

5. Evaluation of SAP Standards:

Each evaluation must include an assessment of the qualitative (e.g. grade point average) and quantitative measure of the student's rate of progress (PACE).

6. Consequences of Failure To Meet SAP Standards:

- a. Consequences. The policy states the consequences of failure to meet the satisfactory academic progress standards and how the student is notified.
- b. Warning, if applicable. If the policy includes a warning period, it specifies the following:
 - i. the length of time, with no single warning period exceeding a payment period;
 - ii. the terms or conditions;
 - iii. the SAP status during the warning period; and
 - iv. the consequences for failure to meet the terms of the warning.
- c. Appeals. The policy includes specific procedures under which a student may appeal a determination that he or she is not meeting the SAP standards. The procedures must:
 - i. require written appeals;
 - ii. require substantiating documentation including a definitive statement from a student as to why s/he failed to meet SAP standards and what has changed in the student's situation that will allow him/her to meet SAP standards at the end of the next SAP evaluation;
 - iii. provide a time frame for the student to make the appeal;
 - iv. indicate which school official(s) is responsible for deciding the appeal;
 - v. provide a time frame for the institution to decide the appeal and notify the student in writing; and
 - vi. require an academic plan for the student before an appeal may be granted by the institution.

- d. Academic Plan, if applicable: The policy specifies that in conjunction with a successful appeal, the institution will develop an academic plan with the student that, if followed, will ensure that the student is able to meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards by a specific point in time, and may require more frequent SAP evaluations than by the next payment period.
 - e. Probation, if applicable: The policy defines probation and specifies that:
 - i. Probation is the status assigned to a student after s/he fails to meet SAP standards, successfully appeals, and, if applicable, has had financial aid reinstated.
 - ii. A probationary period may not exceed one payment period.
 - iii. The consequences for failure to meet the term of probation, including the loss of Title IV financial aid eligibility, if applicable.
 - f. Reinstatement. If the policy includes procedures for a student to reestablish SAP status other than through the appeal process, it specifies the process and the conditions placed on a student during this period.
- E. Additional Elements of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):
- 1. The policy defines the effect of the following on a student's academic progress, when applicable, including both the qualitative and quantitative measures.
 - a. Incomplete grades
 - b. Course withdrawals
 - c. Course repetitions
 - d. Non-credit remedial course work
 - e. Transfer of credit from other institutions
 - 2. The policy addresses both transfer and readmitted students, including qualitative and quantitative measures and the impact on the maximum time frame. The same requirements are applied to transfers from one program to another within an institution and must be cumulative. Note: Federal Title IV regulations require that an institution count transfer hours which are accepted toward completion of a student's program as both hours attempted and hour completed (earned).
 - 3. If incremental qualitative or quantitative measures less than the minimum are allowed at any evaluation period, the institution must demonstrate that the student is able to attain the minimum standard at graduation.