Satisfactory Academic Progress Overview and Best Practices

Presented by
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Evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress
What Is Satisfactory Academic Progress?

- Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is the progress required of a financial aid recipient in academic studies to successfully complete the educational program within a specified period.
“As Strict or Stricter” Policy Requirement

- A school's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy must be as strict or stricter as its academic standards for a student enrolled in the same program who is not receiving assistance under an FSA program for all categories of students
## Consumer Information Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Prospective Students</strong></th>
<th><strong>Currently Enrolled Students</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readily available in paper or electronic format</td>
<td>Easy accessible to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessible to the public</td>
<td>Easily accessible to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe standards for maintaining and re-establishing Title IV aid eligibility</td>
<td>If online, provide exact URL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not via restricted Intranet</td>
<td>Annual notice of SAP policy</td>
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<td>SAP evaluation results, if eligibility is affected</td>
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Evaluation Frequency and Timing

Several factors can influence a school's decision on the frequency of its evaluation of SAP, including:

- Academic calendar
- Appeals process (if any)
- Capabilities of financial aid management system
- Resources

A school’s evaluation of a student's academic progress is based on the payment period and program length:

- ≤ 1 year = every payment period.
- > 1 year = either every payment period or annually.
Clock-Hour Program Evaluation Timing

- For clock-hour programs, the school may evaluate progress at various points:
  - Upon the completion of scheduled clock hours for the payment period, regardless of attendance.
  - After the student attends the scheduled clock hours.
  - When the student successfully completes the scheduled clock hours for that payment period.
Nonterm Credit-Hour Programs Evaluation Timing

• For nonterm credit-hour programs, a school may evaluate progress:
  • On the date the student was scheduled to earn the credit hours; or
  • When the student successfully earns the credit hours.
Qualitative Component: Academic Standing

- Quality of the student’s work
- Grade Point Average
- Comparable Qualitative Measure
- Graduated Standard

Equivalent of a “C” or better
Quantitative Component: PACE

Cumulative Credit Hours Earned

Cumulative Credit Hours Attempted

Credits Required by Specific Date

Maximum Timeframe
Quantitative Component: PACE Cont.

Graduated quantitative standard (optional)

Transfer students

Accepted transfer credits count as both earned and attempted hours
Quantitative Component: Timeframe

- Undergraduate Programs: Maximum Timeframe is 150% of published length of a program in credits or calendar time
- Graduate Programs: Maximum Timeframe is defined by the school, based on length of program
- Unlike with PACE, maximum timeframe cannot be rounded.
- Maximum timeframe for standard and nonstandard credit-hour programs can be expressed in either credit hours or calendar time.
Quantitative Component: Timeframe Cont.

- If it is determined that it is mathematically impossible for a student to complete their program within 150% of its length, for undergraduate and graduate programs, the student becomes ineligible for financial aid.
Additional General SAP Policy Requirements

• An institution’s SAP policy must define how the following elements impacts GPA and pace standards:
  • Withdrawal and incomplete grades
  • Grade changes
  • Repeated coursework
  • Transfer hours
  • Audited Courses
  • Pass-or-Fail Courses
Additional General SAP Policy Requirements Cont.

• An institution’s SAP policy must also define how the following elements impacts GPA and pace standards:
  • Remedial Coursework
  • English as a Second Language
  • Continuing Education or Enrichment Courses
  • Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs
  • Subscription-Based Programs
SAP Appeals, Probation, and Academic Plans
Consequences of Not Meeting SAP Standards

Failure to make SAP results in immediate loss of aid eligibility

Eligibility may be regained if:

- Pay for classes without federal financial aid
- Successfully appeal, if an institution has an appeal process
# SAP Appeals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions and Circumstances</th>
<th>Define valid reasons to appeal</th>
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<tr>
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<td>No regulatory limits on appeals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Student’s unforeseen circumstances</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Actions taken to improve academic progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Processing SAP Appeals</td>
<td>Define appeal procedure</td>
</tr>
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<td>Define who and how appeal decisions are made</td>
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Financial Aid Probation

- Financial aid probation may be granted only after a successful appeal
- This status may follow or replace financial aid warning
- A school may choose to limit number of times
- It is applicable for only one payment period.
  - The student must have the potential to meet SAP by the end of the payment period
  - If the student is still failing, they are ineligible for aid unless a subsequent appeal results in an academic plan.
Academic Plans

- An Academic plan is a long-term plan for success
  - Tailored to the student’s unique needs
  - Includes appropriate checkpoints and milestones
  - Specifies a specific point in time for meeting SAP standards
    - It may extend beyond 150% maximum timeframe
  - This plan may be granted only after successful appeal
  - It may follow or replace financial aid warning or probation
Academic Plans Cont.

- A school reviews the student’s SAP after the first payment period.
- Subsequent reviews may align with the school’s SAP review cycle or occur more frequently.
- Failure to adhere to the plan and failure to meet SAP standards result in the loss of Title IV eligibility.
Re-Establishing Eligibility

• SAP policy must describe how to re-establish eligibility
  • Financial aid warning
  • Appeal, if available
  • Attend without Title IV aid
• Students must be notified
  • School policies and procedures
  • Consequences of failure
  • How to re-establish eligibility
Best Practices
Individualized Support

• Connect students to Campus Support Services, such as academic advising, tutoring, or counseling services, with a focus on early intervention.

  • Points of intervention could include:
    • SAP notices and communications
    • Student interactions
    • Appeal sessions
Collaborative Partnerships

• Share student SAP data with support services for early identification and intervention.
• Ensure advisors and success coaches are well-informed on SAP policy and procedures through training and regular updates.
• Collaborate with other Enrollment Services departments to improve administrative capabilities to streamline processes.
Accessibility & Transparency

• Simplify language and avoid jargon in SAP policies and procedures to improve understanding.
• Centralize SAP information on a dedicated webpage or portal.
• Ensure transparency in appeal decision-making.
• Remove bureaucratic barriers to the appeal process.
Evaluations and Appeals

- Evaluate SAP at the end of each term instead of at the end of the academic year.
- Consider implementing a probationary period.
- Develop personalized academic plans.
- Allow for the submission of multiple SAP appeals.
- Utilize virtual modalities for appeal review.
Thank you for attending!