

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY

The U.S. Department of Education and the State of Illinois regulations require that McHenry County College (MCC) establish and maintain a policy to measure whether students receiving federal or state financial aid funds are making Satisfactory Academic Progress toward degree completion. MCC has implemented the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy necessary to evaluate all recipients' continued eligibility for financial aid funding. All students are evaluated to the same Satisfactory Academic Progress standards regardless of program and enrollment status (full time, part time). All students who do not attend, withdraw from courses, defer grades, or perform poorly will not maintain satisfactory academic progress toward completion of the program of study and will become ineligible for financial aid.

MINIMUM SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS

- **Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)**
 - Students must achieve and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.0 in all credit courses attempted throughout an entire enrollment at MCC, whether or not financial aid funds were received. This grade point average standard does not include developmental courses and, for repeated courses, it only includes highest earned grade.
- **Cumulative Completion Rate**
 - Students must complete at least 67% of the credit courses attempted throughout an entire enrollment at MCC, whether or not financial aid funds were received.
- **Maximum Time Frame**
 - Students must complete an academic program before the total number of attempted credit hours exceeds 150% of the credits required to complete that academic program.

IMPORTANT

For the purposes of SAP, the following grades count as ATTEMPTED but NOT COMPLETED:

- F – Failed course
- I – Incomplete course
- W – Withdrawn course

All attempted credit hours at McHenry County College will be counted toward cumulative completion rates and maximum time frame requirements. These include:

- Developmental courses
- Repeated courses
- Withdrawn courses
- Transfer courses
- Courses that have grades forgiven
- Non-completed courses

Students can only receive federal student aid funds for up to 30 credit hours of developmental courses.

Students are allowed to use financial aid funds for a one-time only repeat of previously passed coursework (i.e. repeating a course to meet an academic requirement for that particular course, such as a minimum grade.) If a course is repeated, only the higher grade is used in the calculations of the cumulative GPA but all will remain on the transcript and all are counted toward attempted hours for financial aid purposes.

REVIEW OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS

The Office of Financial Aid and Veteran Benefits determines compliance with the SAP standards for financial aid funds recipients by reviewing a student's cumulative academic record at the conclusion of every semester: fall, spring and summer. Students who have an academic record (including accepted transfer credits) at MCC will be evaluated according to the Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements (above) and placed in the appropriate following status:

- **Satisfactory Status**
 - Student is meeting or exceeding the minimum satisfactory academic progress requirements of a 2.0 GPA and 67% Completion Rate.
- **Warning Status**
 - The first semester a student's academic record falls below the minimum academic standard requirements, a Warning Status is given as an opportunity for the student to regain **Satisfactory Status**. Students may receive financial aid funds for one more semester if all other financial aid eligibility requirements are met.
- **Warning Maximum Time Frame**
 - If a student's attempted credit hours are approaching the 150% allowed for their academic program, a Warning Status is given.
- **Suspension Status**
 - When a student, previously placed in **Warning Status**, fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress requirements at the end of their warning semester, the student will be placed on Suspension Status. The student will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid funds without a granted appeal and/or academic plan, if required.
- **Maximum Time Frame Status (MTF)**
 - When attempted credit hours exceed the allowed 150% for the declared academic program, a student is placed in Maximum Time Frame Status. In order to receive federal financial aid, a student must complete their associate degree or certificate program within 150% of the published length of the program as measured by credit hours attempted. For example, if an associate degree requires 60 credits, a student must complete the program within 90 attempted credits. A student will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid funds without a granted appeal and a signed Academic Degree Audit.

APPEALS FOR A SUSPENDED or MAXIMUM TIME FRAME STATUS

All students in **Suspension Status** have the opportunity to appeal this determination. A student deciding to complete an appeal for the status will need to submit the appropriate appeal form with the following information:

- A Student must discuss, in detail, their reasons for not meeting the standards during this evaluation period.
- A Student should thoroughly explain what mitigating circumstances impacted their performance. Mitigating circumstances can include but are not limited to a death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student or family member, an auto accident and/or another situation beyond reasonable control of the student.
- A Student must also include how their situation has changed, what has the student done to change their situation to allow them to meet Satisfactory Academic standards going forward.
- Students may submit relevant supporting documentation.

All appeals will be reviewed by the SAP Committee to determine whether individual situations merit an extended period of financial aid funding.

If an appeal is **GRANTED** and it is determined a student should be able to meet the SAP requirements by the end of the subsequent semester, the student is placed on **Probation Status**.

- **Probation Status**
 - After an appeal has been granted, a student may receive financial aid funds for the semester in which the appeal was granted.

If it is determined a student will require more than one semester to meet the SAP requirements, the student will be required to be placed on and follow an academic plan before an appeal can be **GRANTED**. The student will be placed in **Probation – 2 Status**.

- **Probation – 2**
 - The appeal has been approved with a required two semester academic plan.
 - After the initial semester, the academic plan will be reviewed and if student fulfilled the academic plan requirements, the student will be placed in a Probation Status for the subsequent term and no new appeal is required.
 - If, after the initial semester, the academic plan is not fulfilled, the student will be placed in the Suspension Status again. This Suspension Status will make the student no longer eligible to receive financial aid funds. A student may request another appeal from the committee but must submit the appropriate appeal form with information on why they were unsuccessful in meeting the academic plan during the semester, explaining how their situation has changed to allow for success in the upcoming semester, and what steps the student has taken to reach Satisfactory Academic Progress moving forward. The student may submit relevant supporting documentation along with the appeal form. Once the committee decides, the student will be notified via email of the outcome. If the student is approved, they will be required to be placed on and follow an academic plan. If the student is denied, they will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid funds until Satisfactory Academic Progress is met.

Students in **Maximum Time Frame Status** must complete the academic program they were pursuing at the time they exceeded the 150% requirement. Students may only change their academic program under special circumstances per Director of Financial Aid approval. Students will be placed in **Maximum Time Frame Status** and an appeal is required after the SAP evaluation each semester for financial aid fund eligibility.

A student deciding to complete an appeal for the status will need to complete the appropriate appeal form and include the following information:

- A Student must discuss, in detail, their reasons for not completing their program in the given timeframe frame of 150% of total credit hours required for program such as MCC graduate, transfer credits not applying to current program, significant prerequisites were required, or other mitigating circumstances that caused the excessive amount of credit hours attempted.
- A Student must also include how they will maintain complete their degree without any distractions moving forward.
- Students may submit relevant supporting documentation.

All appeals will be reviewed by the SAP Committee to determine whether individual situations merit an extended period of financial aid funding. If the SAP Committee approves of the appeal, the student will be placed on **Probation Status**. The student will be required to sign an Academic Degree Audit, ensuring the student understands what courses are required to complete the program and be required to meet the SAP Standards of a 2.0 GPA and 67% Completion Rate for the term in which the appeal is approved. The student will be eligible to receive financial aid funds for the semester in which the appeal was granted upon the Office of Financial Aid receiving the signed Academic Degree Audit document.

Once the semester is over, the student will automatically be placed back into a Maximum Time Frame Status. If the student met the SAP Standards for the term, they will be required to appeal the Maximum Time Frame Status again with stating what made them successful for the term and how they intend to utilize the resources available to continue making progress towards program completion. If the student failed to meet the SAP Standards for the term in which the Maximum Time Frame Status appeal was approved, the student can no longer appeal the status and will no longer be eligible to receive Financial Aid for any future terms until the student completes their academic program.

DENIED

If a student's appeal is denied, any awarded or pending financial aid funds for the student will be removed from the student's account and the student will be required to pay the charges owed in another method other than financial aid while the student remains in an Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Status or Maximum Timeframe Status as outlined above. Students will also not be eligible for any future financial aid funding until Satisfactory Academic Progress standards have been met.

DEADLINE DATE

Appeals must be submitted for the semester in which the student is seeking financial assistance two weeks prior to the term's end date. Appeals will be reviewed by the SAP Committee and the student will be notified of the decision within two weeks.

NOTIFICATION OF STATUS

It is the student's responsibility to know their academic progress standing and how it affects their financial aid fund eligibility. More information can be found on the student's Self-Service Financial Aid page under the description Satisfactory Academic Progress.

After the SAP evaluation process at the end of each semester, notification of statuses will be sent to their MCC student email address.

After reviewing an appeal, students will receive email notification of the decision or further instructions for completing an Academic Plan to their MCC student email address.

NOTICE

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is subject to change without notice to comply with federal or state regulations.

<https://www.mchenry.edu/financialaid/progresspolicy.html>