

# Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy for Student Financial Aid Recipients

## PREFACE

In March 2005, the Connecticut Community Colleges approved a uniform satisfactory academic progress policy for all students receiving financial aid. Recent changes to federal regulations (effective July 1, 2011) have required the Connecticut Community Colleges to make updates to this policy. This updated standard is reflected in the policy statement below and is effective with the Fall 2011 semester. Questions concerning this revised policy should be addressed to the Director of Financial Aid Services at the attending college.

## POLICY

A student receiving Federal Title IV financial aid or other financial aid directly administered or certified by the college must maintain satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of a certificate or degree program of study. Satisfactory academic progress for financial aid recipients is measured by using a quantitative and qualitative standard and is an assessment of a student's cumulative academic record at the college.

A student must successfully complete two-thirds (66.66%) of the credits (earned credits/attempted credits) s/he attempts. All attempted credits resulting in either an academic grade or administrative transcript notation will be included in the quantitative calculation. Incomplete courses, course withdrawals, course repetitions, noncredit remedial courses (with appropriate credit equivalency evaluation), and ESL courses will also be included in this assessment. Transfer credits will be counted as both attempted and earned credits in the calculation for determining satisfactory academic progress.

A student must also maintain a cumulative minimum grade point average (qualitative standard) as noted below in order to be making satisfactory academic progress and be eligible to receive financial aid.

| <u>Earned Credits</u> | <u>Minimum GPA</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ≤ 15.99               | 1.50               |
| ≥ 16.00               | 2.00               |

A student's cumulative academic history will be evaluated at the end of each enrollment period and prior to the subsequent term's financial aid disbursement. This policy will be used to evaluate all students; regardless of their enrollment level.

### **Repeated/Audit Coursework**

Financial aid recipients are limited to one repetition of a previously passed course in their program of study. A second repetition of a previously passed course will not be eligible for financial aid payment. Audit courses are not financial aid eligible.

### **Maximum Credit Hours**

A student may receive financial aid for any attempted credits in his/her program of study that do not exceed 150% of the published length of the student's educational program at the college. For example, a student enrolled in a 60-credit degree program may receive financial aid for a maximum of 90 attempted credit hours. Similarly, a student enrolled in a 30-credit certificate program may receive financial aid for a maximum of 45 attempted credit hours. Any attempted credits at the college must be included in the calculation. The 150% maximum credit hours rule is applicable to students who change majors or who pursue a double major.

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## Communication

A student will receive notification prior to the start of a period of enrollment via postal mail or email that will describe any changes to the status of their academic progress. Updates to academic progress standing may also be made available to students through the use of myCommNet online access (<http://my.commnnet.edu>).

## Financial Aid Warning

Any student who fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standard will be placed on Financial Aid Warning. The Warning period will be the student's next semester or period of enrollment at the college. The college will communicate the Warning status to the student and inform the student that s/he must meet the academic progress standard by the end of the subsequent enrollment period in order to maintain eligibility to participate in the financial aid programs at the college.

## Termination

Any student who fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standard at the end of the Warning period will become ineligible from the financial aid programs at the college. The college will communicate the Termination status to the student and inform the student of the available Reinstatement and Appeal Process.

## Reinstatement Policy

A student's financial aid eligibility will be automatically reinstated at such time as the student meets the minimum satisfactory academic progress standard. Reinstatement to the financial aid programs may also occur upon a successful appeal by the student (see Appeal Process below).

## Financial Aid Probation

Any student who fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standard at the end of the Warning period will become ineligible from the financial aid programs at the college. Ineligible students have the opportunity to file an appeal regarding their termination from the financial aid programs. Students that have failed the academic progress standard and have been approved with a successful appeal will be considered on Financial Aid Probation.

## Appeal Process

A student may request consideration for reinstatement to the financial aid programs through the following Appeal Process:

If the student feels his/her failure to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standard was the result of an unusual or extraordinary situation that affected successful progression, the student may appeal to the Financial Aid Office. Some personal mitigating circumstances could include illness or injury of the student or dependent of the student; a death in the family; or other undue hardship as the result of special circumstances. An appeal form is available in the Financial Aid Office.

To provide consistency in decision-making, a Financial Aid Administrator will make all appeal decisions in a timely manner after the receipt of the appeal form. The student must: 1) explain the extenuating circumstances causing the non-compliance; 2) substantiate it with third party documentation, (i.e. letter from the doctor who treated the student); and 3) give a detailed explanation of specifically what has changed that will allow satisfactory progress to be demonstrated at the next evaluation.

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Should an appeal be approved and the student is not mathematically able to return to satisfactory academic progress at the conclusion of subsequent enrollment period, a Financial Aid Administrator will devise an appropriate academic plan for the upcoming semester with the student. For example, the terms of an academic plan may be as follows:

1. Register and successfully complete a minimum of six (6) credits; and
2. Successfully complete these courses with a minimum GPA of 2.0.

At the end of the semester, grades will be evaluated. If the student has met the required terms of the academic plan, the student may continue to receive financial aid the following semester. If the student fails to meet the terms of the academic plan in any subsequent semester, the student will become ineligible to participate in the financial aid programs until the student is able to once again meet the minimum requirements for academic progress. The student's progress will continue to be monitored at the end of each semester with the same terms in place until the student is in compliance with Connecticut Community Colleges' satisfactory academic progress policy.

If the student's appeal is denied and the student is already registered for the upcoming semester, the student is responsible for any monies owed to the college. If the student pays for the next semester and successfully completes all classes with a GPA of 2.0 or better, the student may appeal again after that semester.