

## McDaniel College: Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients

Educational institutions that participate in federal financial aid programs are required to define and enforce Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards for those students receiving financial aid. The standards used for financial aid recipients must be at least as rigorous as those applied to the general College population. These standards assure that completion of a degree will occur, and within an established time frame.

The standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress measure a student's academic progress both qualitatively and quantitatively. Therefore, in addition to minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements, the federally-established standards include requirements that students progress in their academic program by successfully completing the majority of courses for which they enroll and place a limitation on the maximum period of time that students can receive federal financial aid while pursuing a degree at an educational institution. In addition, certain types of courses are limited or excluded from eligibility.

The federal standards apply to all federal, state, and institutional need-based financial aid programs administered by Financial Aid Office. These standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress are required to maintain eligibility for financial aid.

The requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid eligibility are different than the college's minimum scholastic requirements. It is possible for the Office of Academic Affairs to permit a student to remain enrolled at the college, but the student may not be eligible for financial aid.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements:

- Maintain the required cumulative grade point average
- Maintain a successful course completion rate (pace) of at least 67%
- Complete an academic program within the maximum timeframe (MTF)
- Meet the Graduate Program academic requirements

#### Qualitative measure:

- **Grade point average (GPA):** maintenance of a minimum cumulative grade point average.
  - Graduate Students-3.0 cumulative GPA

#### Quantitative measures:

- **Pace/Progress:** this measure assesses the pace at which a student progresses toward attainment of her/his degree. The calculation to determine the pace is to identify the number of credit hours completed toward the program and divide it by the number of credit hours attempted. To ensure quantitative progress, students are

required to complete a minimum required percentage of all attempted courses.

Example of Pace:

A student has enrolled in 24 credits to date. Of the 24 attempted credits, the student completed 21 credits with passing grades and has withdrawn from one three-credit course. The pace of this student is calculated as  $21/24 * 100\% = 87\%$ .

- **Maximum Timeframe (MTF):** Federal law requires a Maximum Timeframe (MTF) be established during which a student receiving federal financial aid must complete their educational program. The MTF for a graduate program may be no longer than the number of credits established by the Registrar's Office for the program of study. If a student completes one degree and decided to earn a second degree, the MTF would reset.

### *Graduate Student*

If a graduate student is enrolled in an academic program requiring 36 credit hours to graduate, she/he would be allowed up to 36 attempted credits in order to obtain his/her degree.

Credits counted in the MTF are all attempted credits at McDaniel College (even when not a financial aid recipient) and all transfer credits accepted toward their academic program (at the time of SAP Review). At the point that all required coursework for an academic program has been completed, financial aid eligibility will be suspended even if the student does not apply to graduate.

- **Academic Probation:** Graduate students who are placed on academic probation by the Graduate and Professional Studies are considered to be failing SAP standards (even if the GPA, Pace, and MTF requirements are being met).

### **Frequency of Review**

The Office of Financial Aid will review the status of all financial aid applicants at the conclusion of **each semester (summer, fall, and spring)**, when grades are available. The review consists of the cumulative record of all prior semesters (including semesters when a student may not have received financial aid funding), including transfer credits accepted toward an academic program at the time of the SAP Review. All elements of satisfactory academic progress will be evaluated: cumulative grade point average, maximum timeframe, pace/progress rate, and academic probation.

### **What if a student doesn't meet the SAP requirements?**

#### *Financial Aid Warning*

If a student is deemed as not making Satisfactory Academic Progress, the student is given the status of financial aid warning. During the subsequent semester, the student will receive aid and will have the opportunity to meet the SAP standards. If the standards are met by the end of that semester, the financial aid warning is lifted and the student maintains eligibility for financial aid for the next semester. If at the end of the semester, the student does not meet the SAP standards, the student's eligibility for financial aid is suspended.

A student may be placed on financial aid warning multiple times if they have intermittent semesters of meeting and not meeting SAP requirements. Example: A student is not meeting SAP standards upon review of the fall 2014 semester performance and the student is placed on warning. At the end of the following semester, spring 2015, the student is meeting SAP standards and the student maintains eligibility for financial aid. At the end of

fall 2015 semester, however, the once again has not met SAP standards. The student is again placed on warning. In other words, the clock re-sets after each semester of successfully meeting SAP requirements.

### *Financial Aid Suspension*

A student who is not meeting SAP requirements **after** a semester of financial aid warning will be notified that eligibility for aid has been suspended.

If a student is placed on academic probation, financial aid is suspended without a warning period. The student may appeal the suspension. The outcome of the appeal will determine whether the student is granted financial aid probation or if the suspension remains unchanged.

### *Appeal Circumstances*

Circumstances to appeal a suspension decision are limited. A student may appeal a suspension if the student did not make satisfactory academic progress due to the death of a relative, illness of the student, or other extenuating circumstances. All circumstances must be documented (and may or may not be approved by the committee).

### *Appeal Process*

Appeals should be submitted within a deadline listed in the suspension letter. Late appeals may be considered, but timely review is not guaranteed before the start of the semester.

If a student chooses to appeal the suspension, the student may complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form, attach documentation that supports the basis of the appeal and submit the form and documentation to the Financial Aid. The appeal will be reviewed by a committee. The committee may uphold the suspension, approve the appeal, or require additional information prior to making a decision.

- If the committee determines the appeal cannot be approved, the suspension remains in force and financial aid eligibility remains suspended.
- If the committee determines the appeal is sufficient *and* the student should be able to achieve satisfactory academic progress *by the end of his/her next term of enrollment*, the student will be granted *financial aid probation* for one semester. At the end of the semester of financial aid probation, the student's performance will be reviewed.
  - If SAP requirements have been met, the student regains financial aid eligibility.
  - If SAP requirements have not been met, the student's eligibility for aid is again suspended.
- If the committee determines the appeal needs the support of the academic unit, the academic advisor and/or Academic Dean will be asked to complete an *academic plan* form for the student. Based on the guidance in the academic plan, the student may be granted financial aid probation *for a defined period of time* while achieving the provisions of the academic plan.
  - The student's performance will be monitored every semester, even if the academic plan extends the period of financial aid probation to more than one semester. An academic plan will have specific goals for a student to achieve each semester of financial aid probation and if the goals are met, the student continues on financial aid probation until the end of the defined period of

time. If a student does not meet the specific goals of the academic plan, the student's eligibility for aid is suspended.

- At the end of the defined period of time of the academic plan, the student's performance will be reviewed.

\*If SAP requirements have been met, the student regains financial aid eligibility.

\*If SAP requirements have not been met, the student's eligibility for aid is again suspended.

### *Financial Aid Probation*

Financial Aid Probation is a status assigned to a student who has failed to make SAP, successfully appealed and has had eligibility for aid reinstated for a defined period of time. Students on financial aid probation must follow the guidelines of their academic plan. The student's academic advisor and/or Academic Dean must complete the applicable section on the form.

### *Academic Plan*

An Academic Plan is a course of action that, if followed, will ensure that the student is able to meet the College's Satisfactory Academic Progress standards by a specific point in time.

### **How can a student regain eligibility if/when an appeal is denied or aid is suspended a second time?**

If an appeal is denied, a student may regain eligibility by completing a specified number of credit hours (as determined by the academic advisor) without the benefit of federal or state financial aid, by restoring good academic standing with the College, and by meeting SAP standards. If those conditions are met, a student must then submit a new appeal to request a review of eligibility for financial aid. In some cases, the students with denied appeals are allowed to keep their institutional funding as a temporary assistance.

If a student has successfully appealed financial aid suspension and is placed on financial aid probation but fails to meet the requirements of the financial aid probation contract/academic plan, the student may not appeal again unless the student has new unusual circumstances that led to academic difficulties.

### **Special Considerations:**

- Dismissal-students who are dismissed by the College will have their eligibility for financial aid suspended as well. If they appeal the dismissal and are allowed to remain in the program, they must go through a financial aid appeal to see if eligibility for financial aid could be restored at a probationary status.
- Clemency-Students who are eligible for academic clemency may not be in compliance with federal SAP policy and/or state regulations and are ineligible for aid.
- Transfer Credits-Courses that are transferred from another institution and accepted toward an academic degree program (at the time of SAP Review) at the College count as attempted and completed hours for the purpose of measuring pace and for Maximum Timeframe (MTF).
- Advanced Placement Credits – AP credits received by the College are included in the number of attempted and completed credits
- Incomplete Grades-Credits hours in which a student receives a grade "I" are included in the number of attempted credits, but don't count toward successfully completed hours. Students with "incompletes" may have difficulty meeting the SAP standards at the time of evaluation, but may request reevaluation upon completion

- Failing Grades-Credit hours in which a student receives a grade “F” are included in the number of attempted credits.
- Withdrawals- Credit hours in which a student receives a grade “W” are included in the number of attempted credits.
- Repeated coursework- *pertains to Undergraduate students only* - Per federal regulations, an undergraduate student may retake a course for which he/she received a *failing grade* (there is no limit on the number of times it may be repeated). The undergraduate student may retake a course one time only for a course in which he/she received a *passing grade*. This will be reviewed at census dates and undergraduate students’ aid packages will be adjusted as necessary. The highest grade earned for the repeated course will be used in the cumulative GPA calculation for SAP purposes.
- Audited Credits-grades for audited class are not considered attempted coursework. A student cannot receive financial aid for audited courses.
- Summer or January term Classes-credit hours attempted during summer or January term will be included in the calculation of SAP.
- Federal TEACH Grant-this federal grant has additional academic requirements and generally requires students to maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA.
- Challenge/CLEP credits-no aid is granted for credits which are earned by a student through a challenge/CLEP exam.
- Grade Changes -Students who are receiving aid on a probationary basis must resolve all incomplete grades BEFORE the Financial Aid Office can make a final determination that they meet the satisfactory academic progress guidelines. Students must report any grade changes that impact their aid eligibility directly to the Financial Aid Office. Students must notify the Financial Aid Office once their final grades have been posted.
- Remedial Coursework- Not offered
- English as Second Language (ESL) Coursework- Not offered

## **Definitions:**

### *Academic Plan*

An Academic Plan is a course of action that, if followed, will ensure that the student is able to meet the University’s Satisfactory Academic Progress standards by a specific point in time. Academic plans are included in the student’s probation contract.

### *Academic Program*

The “major” in which the student plans to obtain a degree.

### *Add/Drop Period*

A specific period of time (defined by the Registrar’s Office) at the beginning of each semester during which a student may adjust his/her class schedule.

### *Audit Courses*

Courses that do not meet or apply to degree requirements. (Ineligible for financial aid).

### *Dropped course*

To drop a course is to cancel a course for which a student was enrolled at conclusion of the Add/Drop period of a semester, yet maintain enrollment for at least one other course. (Dropping a course should not be confused with Withdrawing from a semester).

#### *Extenuating Circumstances*

Unusual events (that influenced the student's ability to succeed).

#### *Financial Aid Probation*

Financial Aid probation is a status assigned to a student who has failed to make Satisfactory Academic Progress, appealed and has had eligibility for aid reinstated for a defined period of time.

#### *Grade Point Average*

*Cumulative:* The overall average of a student's grades while attending McDaniel College (used to determine satisfactory academic progress).

*Semester:* The average of a student's grades for one semester.

#### *Financial Aid Probation Contract*

A form that the student and academic advisor and or/Academic Dean work together to complete and submit to Financial Aid when a student has successfully appealed and been placed on financial aid probation.

#### *Graduate student*

A student enrolled in a program of study that leads to a Master's degree.

#### *Repeated course*

A course for which a student previously enrolled, yet re-enrolls and takes the course again.

#### *Successful Completion*

Finishing the courses for which one is enrolled at conclusion of the Add/Drop period and with grades meeting graduation standards.

#### *Suspension*

Termination of financial aid eligibility.

#### *Transfer Credit*

When a student changes schools, courses originally taken at prior school(s) that are accepted for credit-toward-program by the new school.

#### *Undergraduate student*

A student enrolled in a program of study that leads to a Bachelor's degree.

#### *Withdrawal*

To withdraw is to cancel all courses for which a student was enrolled at conclusion of the Add/Drop period of a semester. (Withdrawing from a semester should not be confused with dropping a course).

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