

20 **Section Twenty: Satisfactory Academic Progress**

20.1 Institutional Policy

Federal law requires students receiving federal student aid to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as defined by Piedmont Community College (PCC) and U.S. Department of Education. Federal student aid includes Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Grant, and Federal Work-Study. Satisfactory academic progress applies to state grants as well, which includes: North Carolina Community College Grant and North Carolina Education Lottery Scholarship. The school's Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Policy includes minimum standards for a (1) **qualitative measure or grade point average**, a (2) **quantitative measure or pace of completion**, and a (3) **maximum timeframe**. Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured at the end of each term.

20.1.1 Qualitative Measure or Grade Point Average (GPA)

PCC is required to apply reasonable standards for measuring whether a student is maintaining satisfactory academic progress in their chosen program of study.

To be considered in good academic standing with the College, a student must maintain the following cumulative grade point average:

<i>Associate Degree</i> Hours Attempted	Cumulative Grade Point Average
01-22	1.50
23-40	1.75
41-OVER	2.00

<i>Diploma and Certificate</i> Hours Attempted	Cumulative Grade Point Average
01-15	1.50
16-28	1.75
29-OVER	2.00

Cumulative Grade Point average To Graduate - 2.00

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average at or above 2.0. If the student does not have a cumulative 2.0 GPA at the end of each semester/term, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning, see Section 20.2.1. The student will be allowed one more semester/term of financial aid to reestablish satisfactory academic progress. If the student fails to reestablish satisfactory academic progress, financial aid will be suspended, see Section 20.2.2. Financial aid will remain suspended until the student is meeting satisfactory academic progress. Once standards are reestablished, eligibility will be reinstated for the subsequent academic term.

20.1.2 Quantitative Measure or Pace of Completion

Students receiving financial aid must earn 67% of the total cumulative credit hours attempted. The number of hours attempted is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which the student was enrolled at the general 10% point of each term. The total number of hours earned is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours from each term at PCC for which the student received a passing grade as noted on the student's academic transcript.

Example: Hours Attempted Only

Fall Semester 16 credits

Spring Semester 14 credits

30 attempted credit $\times .67 = 20.1$ credit hours must be earned

Only grades of A, B, C, D, or CE (Credit by Exam) will be considered as earned hours. Grades of F, I (Incomplete), W (Withdrawal), WP (Withdrawal Passing), and WF (Withdrawal Failing) will count as hours attempted, but will not count as hours earned. A grade of NS (No Show) will not be counted as hours attempted or earned.

Transfer credit hours will count as hours attempted and hours earned.

Quantitative Satisfactory Academic Progress is cumulative and covers all periods of enrollment including those for which the student did not receive funds from Title IV programs or state aid.

If the student has not earned **67%** of the cumulative credit hours attempted at the end of any semester/term, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning, see Section 20.2.1. The student will be allowed one more semester/term of financial aid to reestablish satisfactory academic progress. If the student fails to reestablish satisfactory academic progress, financial aid will be suspended. Financial aid will remain suspended until the student is meets satisfactory academic progress, see Section 20.2.2. Once standards are reestablished, eligibility will be reinstated for the subsequent academic term.

20.1.3 Maximum Timeframe

Students must complete their program(s) of study in a timeframe not to exceed 150 percent of the published length of the program(s) of study measured in credit hours. Transfer credit hours applicable to the program(s) of study accepted from other institutions are included in the calculation of the maximum timeframe.

20.1.3.1 Students Enrolled in a Single Program of Study

To comply with maximum timeframe of SAP, students are required to complete their program(s) of study within 150% of the length of the educational program as published in the student handbook or catalog.

20.1.3.2 Students Changing Programs of Study

To comply with maximum timeframe of SAP, the student's new program will be evaluated for prior credit from previous courses attempted that are applicable to the new program of study. These hours will count toward the student's maximum timeframe calculation. If none of the courses are applicable from the prior program of study, then the student starts the new program of study having zero hours attempted towards maximum time frame. Students are required to complete their program(s) of study within 150% of the length of the

educational program as published in the student handbook or catalog.

20.1.3.3 Students Enrolled in Programs Consecutively

To comply with maximum timeframe of SAP, the student is given a new maximum timeframe for the new program of study upon completion of a previous program. The student's new program will be evaluated for prior credit from previous courses attempted that are applicable to the new program of study. These hours will count toward the student's maximum timeframe calculation. If none of the courses are applicable from the prior program of study, then the student starts the new program of study having zero hours attempted towards maximum time frame. Students are required to complete their program(s) of study within 150% of the length of the educational program as published in the student handbook or catalog.

20.1.3.4 Students Enrolled in Multiple Programs Concurrently

To comply with the maximum timeframe of SAP, the student's programs will be evaluated for maximum timeframe individually for each program of study. If the student is over the maximum timeframe in either program, the student will be suspended from receiving additional funding for courses only in the ineligible program. Students are required to complete their program(s) of study within 150% of the length of the educational program as published in the student handbook or catalog.

20.1.4 Remedial Coursework

Students who have been accepted into a degree program and required to take remedial coursework as determined by placement testing are limited to 30 semester hours of remedial coursework. Remedial hours attempted in excess of 30 total semester credit hours cannot be counted toward enrollment status for federal and state grants. Remedial hours are not considered when

determining maximum timeframe but are considered in both qualitative and quantitative standards for financial aid students.

20.1.5 Transfer Students

Students transferring to PCC from another school will be considered making satisfactory academic progress at the time of their enrollment. Transfer credits applicable to the student's program(s) are included in the quantitative measurement and maximum timeframe but not in the qualitative measurement.

20.1.6 PCC Returning Students

Returning students will have their cumulative GPA carried forward and hours attempted carried forward in accordance with regulations stating that satisfactory academic progress standards must cover all periods of the student's enrollment, including those periods for which the student did not receive aid from Title IV or state funds.

20.1.7 Early Registration

Students, who choose to register early for classes and then are determined to be ineligible for financial aid because of failure to meet satisfactory academic progress standards, will be responsible for payment of tuition, fees and expenses that may have been charged to Title IV or state funds.

20.1.8 Incompletes

A course for which an incomplete grade is received must be completed by the end of the next fall or spring term, or the grade becomes a permanent "F" on their academic transcript. The incomplete grade is treated as an "F" for satisfactory academic progress purposes. Incompletes count towards both qualitative and quantitative measures of satisfactory academic progress. Failure to remove incompletes could prevent a student from meeting satisfactory progress.

20.1.9 Repeats

Repeat coursework is included in the GPA and as attempted hours.

20.1.10 Withdrawals

W (Withdrawal), WP (Withdrawal Passing), and WF (Withdrawal Failing) will count as hours attempted, but will not count as hours earned. W grades do not have a GPA value and are not included in the qualitative measurement.

20.1.11 Students Enrolled Less Than Full-Time

SAP will be calculated in the same manner for part-time students as it as for a full-time student. All SAP requirements as stated in Sections 20.1.1, 20.1.2 and 20.1.3 are applicable to part-time students.

20.2 Institutional Procedures

Students are notified of the SAP Policy in the PCC General Catalog and Student Handbook. In addition, a SAP Policy handout is mailed to aid recipients with each award letter (see Exhibit 20A). 1 copy of the SAP Policy will be posted on the school's website.

20.2.1 Warning

Students who fail to meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements after any semester/term in good standing are placed on financial aid warning and are considered to be making unsatisfactory academic progress. Students in this category may continue to receive financial aid for one additional term. The student will be notified if placed on warning status. A student will be placed on warning if the following occurs:

1. Failed to achieve a cumulative 2.00 grade point average.

2. Failed to complete 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted.

20.2.2 Suspension

A student may be suspended following a term on warning status if any of the following occurs:

1. Failed to achieve a cumulative 2.00 grade point average.
2. Failed to complete 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted.

The student will be suspended immediately once they reach the maximum timeframe for completion of his/her program of studies as defined in Section 20.1.3.

The student will be notified if placed on suspension status.

20.2.3. Consequences of Suspensions

Students who do not maintain satisfactory academic progress lose eligibility for financial aid until satisfactory academic progress is met. Financial aid remains suspended until SAP is reestablished, unless an appeal is approved by the Appeals Committee or the Dean of Student Development.

20.2.4. Academic Probation

A student who fails to meet the minimum grade point average requirements defined in Section 20.1.1 is placed on academic probation for the next semester of attendance. During the semester on academic probation, the student is required to sign an Educational Contract which specifies the courses to be taken, extra help necessary to improve the academic standing and the grades needed to continue enrollment. Students on academic probation could become ineligible for financial aid during the probationary semester if they do not meet the minimum financial aid SAP requirements. A student

on academic probation should wait to register for the subsequent semester until the previous semester grades are available. A veteran may receive educational benefits for only one semester while on academic probation. The student will be notified if placed on academic probation status.

20.2.5. Appeal Process

Students on financial aid suspension may appeal their status if they have mitigating circumstances by completing an Appeal Form and supporting documentation. Examples of mitigating circumstances may include injury to student, illness of student, illness of immediate family, death of a relative or undue hardship due to special circumstances beyond a student's control. The student's submission must include the reason for the appeal along with supporting documentation and what has changed in the student's situation in order for the student to regain eligibility. Students submit their appeal form to the Financial Aid Office.

The Appeals Committee reviews the student's appeal and the Financial Aid Office notifies the student in writing of the committee's decision. Students that are denied their appeal can follow up with the College's Student Grievance and Appeals Procedure. Copies of the Student Grievance and Appeals Procedure may be obtained from the Office of Student Development.

20.2.6. Financial Aid Probation and Academic Plan

Students who have an approved appeal will be placed on financial aid probation for one term and on an academic plan for any additional period needed to meet the minimum SAP requirements after the initial probationary term. The student will be eligible for financial aid during financial aid probation and while following the academic plan. Students on an academic plan must achieve a 100% pass rate of all courses attempted during their term(s) on appeal. Students are also required to maintain a term GPA of 2.5 or higher. Students remain on the academic plan until SAP is reestablished. If the student does not meet the requirements of the academic plan, they will be placed back on financial aid suspension. Students with extreme mitigating circumstances during their term(s) on academic plan may submit

a second and final appeal to the Dean of Student Development. Examples of mitigating circumstances may include injury to student, illness of student, illness of immediate family, death of a relative or undue hardship due to special circumstances beyond a student's control. The student's submission must include the reason for the appeal and what has changed in the student's situation in order for the student to regain eligibility. Students submit their appeal form to the Financial Aid Office and the student will be notified of the outcome of the appeal.

Students must submit appeal forms within two business days prior to the first day of classes for the term. Appeal forms can be obtained on the college's website and from the Financial Aid Office.

Documentation for appeals will be maintained in the Financial Aid Office.