

7.12.4 Financial Aid Suspension Appeal Process

Last Revised: March 2024

Policy: Piedmont Community College (PCC) requires that all students receiving Federal or State student aid must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to comply with Federal and State regulations that require students receiving financial aid to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Definitions

Financial Aid Suspension—a designation used when students fail to reestablish satisfactory academic progress, thus becoming ineligible to receive financial aid.

Financial Aid Warning—a designation used when students do not make satisfactory academic progress (SAP).

Maximum Time Frame—150% of the length of the educational program as published in the PCC General Catalog and Student Handbook.

Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)—students must maintain a cumulative GPA at or above 2.0. This minimum GPA calculation is specific to financial aid calculations and uses grades for all attempted hours except grades of WE and IE. Note: The minimum GPA for financial aid calculations should not be confused with the minimum GPA required for graduation (see PCC Policy 6.12 Grading System – Curriculum).

Minimum Semester Credit Hour Completion Rate—the student must earn 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted (hours earned, divided by hours attempted), where earned hours include A, B, C, D, P, P1, P2, P3, and CE (Credit by Exam), and attempted hours include all grades except WE and IE. For example, a first-year student who enrolls in 12 hours for the fall term must have completed at least 8.04 hours at the end of the fall term.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)—a standard defined in federal financial aid guidelines that stipulates a student maintain a 2.0 overall financial aid GPA, maintain a 67% completion rate of all courses attempted, and complete their program of study within a 150% timeframe of

the published program length. Note: Financial aid satisfactory academic progress (SAP) should not be confused with standards of academic progress as described in PCC Policy 6.13 Standards of Academic Progress.

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: Piedmont Community College's Board of Trustees has approval authority for this policy. The Vice President, Student Development has monitoring authority for this policy.

Procedure:

Section 1: Financial Aid Warning

- 1.1. Students who fail to maintain the following SAP standards will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester:
 - 1.1.1. Minimum GPA
 - 1.1.2. Minimum Semester Credit Hour Completion Rate
- 1.2. During the warning period, students are eligible to receive financial aid.
 - 1.2.1. At the end of the warning period, SAP will be evaluated to determine whether the standards in item 1.1 have been met.
- 1.3. Students who do not meet SAP will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

Section 2: Financial Aid Suspension

- 2.1. Students are placed on Financial Aid Suspension when either of the following occurs:
 - 2.1.1. Failure to meet SAP standards after a period of Financial Aid Warning.
 - 2.1.2. Failure to complete a degree within the maximum timeframe for their primary program of study.
 - 2.1.2.1. For example, a student enrolled in the Business Administration Associate Degree program (60 hours required) will be able to attempt 90 hours.
- 2.2. Students on Financial Aid Suspension are ineligible to receive Federal or State financial aid.

Section 3: Financial Aid Suspension Appeal Process

- 3.1. Students with mitigating circumstances may appeal their financial aid suspension.
 - 3.1.1. Examples of mitigating circumstances may include injury, illness, illness of immediate family, death of a relative, or undue hardship due to special circumstances beyond a student's control.
- 3.2. Students may submit the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Request form, along with their documentation to the Financial Aid office.
 - 3.2.1. The Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Request form is updated each semester and is available on the [PCC website](#) (Home → How to Pay → Financial Aid → Financial Aid Forms & Maintaining Your Funding → Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Request).
 - 3.2.2. The Appeals Request will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee.
 - 3.2.2.1. The Committee is selected by the Director, Financial Aid/Veterans Affairs.
 - 3.2.2.2. The Committee will consist of three Student Development staff excluding financial aid staff.
 - 3.2.2.3. The Committee will review the student's appeal and provide the Financial Aid Office with the decision.
 - 3.2.2.4. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student in writing of the committee's decision.
 - 3.2.3. If an appeal is denied, a student may follow the College's grievance procedure if they feel the policy has not been applied correctly (See PCC Policy 7.12 Student Grievance Process).
 - 3.2.4. Students who have their appeal(s) approved are required to achieve a 100% completion pass rate of all courses and maintain a 2.5 or higher term GPA until SAP is reestablished.
 - 3.2.4.1. Students who fail to meet the requirements of the appeal will be placed back on Financial Aid Suspension.
- 3.3. Students with extreme mitigating circumstances hindering their academic progress during their term of enrollment on appeal may submit a second and final appeal to the Dean, Enrollment Services.

Legal Citation: [Department of Education Student Federal Aid Handbook- Student Eligibility – SAP; North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority \(NCSEAA\)](#)

History: Effective February 2012; Revised September 2021, March 2024

Cross-references PCC Policy 6.12 Grading System – Curriculum, Policy 6.13 Standards of Academic Progress, and Policy 7.12 Student Grievance Process