

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR FINANCIAL AID

A. PURPOSE

To be eligible to receive Student Financial Aid (SFA) funds (Pell, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-study (FWS), Loans and HOPE); students must maintain satisfactory academic progress. Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) is required by the U.S. Department of Education to establish minimum standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Students attending Southern Crescent Technical College must be in good academic standing and making satisfactory academic progress to receive financial aid.

Notification

Each student's SAP status is evaluated at the end of each term of enrollment, regardless if the student received any type of financial aid. Students are notified if there is a change in their eligibility. The Financial Aid Department uses the SCTC student e-mail as the primary means of communication. Students may check their SAP status on BannerWeb at any time. *It is the student's responsibility to be aware of SAP requirements and his or her respective SAP status.* Failure to receive a notification of SAP status does not exempt a student from the requirements or consequences of their respective SAP status or any applicable deadlines.

B. RELATED AUTHORITY

State Board Policy 6.6.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress

C. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to all students while attending Southern Crescent Technical College.

D. DEFINITIONS

Academic Plan (AP): An academic plan is a required course of action that covers one or more terms of enrollment. It may specify courses and/or term grade point averages that need to be reached in order to continue to receive financial aid.

Completion Rate: Students must complete 66 percent of course work attempted each

term. Grade Point Average Requirement: a GPA of 2.0 or higher, on a 4.0 scale each term.

Maximum Time Frame: one and one half (150 percent) times the published length of the program in which a student is enrolled.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): the student is proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling their educational requirements.

Warning: financial aid warning is a status assigned to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress at the end of the term. Students will be allowed to continue receiving financial aid for one additional term in a warning status, in an attempt to regain SAP.

Suspension: financial aid suspension is a status assigned to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress for two consecutive terms, or at the end of a probationary- AP period. The student is not eligible for financial aid and must pay for tuition and fees until the SAP requirement is met.

E. **PROCEDURE**

Grade Point Average Requirement

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 to remain in good standing each term. A student's GPA will be verified at the end of each term. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 is placed on financial aid warning for their next term of attendance. A student will be allowed one term to increase the cumulative GPA to the satisfactory level. If, after one term, the GPA remains below 2.0, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension.

Completion Rate

In order for students to graduate within the maximum "time frame" of hours, they are expected to have completed at least 66% of their credit hours attempted. A student who has not successfully completed 66% of his/her cumulative hours attempted (at the end of any term) will be placed on financial aid warning during the next term of attendance. A student will be allowed one term to increase the cumulative completion rate to the satisfactory level. If, after one term, the cumulative completion rate remains below 66% the student will lose financial aid eligibility (placed on financial aid suspension).

Total hours attempted consist of all hours attempted at Southern Crescent Technical College. All transfer credits are included in the computation for the cumulative GPA for financial aid.

Grades

Grades of W (withdrew) and I (incomplete) are not included in calculating a student's GPA, but are counted as coursework attempted, thus they count against the 66 percent completion rate. F (Failing) grades are calculated in the student's GPA and count against the SAP 66% completion rate. Grades received for learning support courses do not affect the GPA, but the hours are calculated in the 66% completion rate. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Z grades are used to denote unsuccessful completion due to documented COVID-19 emergencies. Z grades are excluded from attempted hours and GPA calculation. ***Effective AY2020 spring and summer terms and AY 2021 fall and spring terms.***

Repeated Courses

All repeated courses and their grades would be included in the 66% and Maximum Allowable Total Attempted Hours calculations.

Maximum Time Frame

There are a maximum number of hours that students may attempt in pursuing their program of study. All students must complete their educational objective within a maximum time frame of one and one half (150 percent) times the length of the program in which they are enrolled. This means that once a student has attempted one- and one-half times the minimum number of credit hours necessary for completing program requirements, the student is ineligible to receive financial aid.

Example of maximum time frame calculation for a program:

- o If a program requires 62 credits for completion
- o Then, $62 \times 150\% = 93$ attempted credits is maximum time frame.

If a student graduates from a program and wishes to seek an additional degree or diploma then the cumulative hours for completion of the previous program will be added to the cumulative hours for completion of the second program plus 50 percent of the total will be used to establish maximum time frame. Students who has an approved max timeframe appeal can continue to receive aid for the approved program as long as he/she maintains a 2.0 GPA and 66% completion ratio. If the student changes major, a new appeal may be required.

Example of maximum time frame calculation for an additional program after graduation:

- o If the completed program and current programs require 116 credits for completion (62 credits for previous program and 54 credits for current program)
- o Then, $116 \times 150\% = 174$ attempted credits is maximum time frame.

Attempted hours include all attempted hours at SCTC and all accepted transfer credits.

If the student qualifies for graduation in a particular major but makes a personal decision to remain in school and take additional classes, the student is no longer entitled to receive Federal Title IV Aid. If the time limit is exceeded, aid eligibility ends. The student shall be placed on financial aid suspension status.

Transfer Students

Transfer students accepted by SCTC, not previously enrolled at SCTC, will be classified as maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress for the first term enrolled. Only classes transferred in will be used in the completion rate calculation. At the end of the first term, the student's grades will be measured in accordance with the college's Satisfactory Academic requirements.

Warning/Suspension

If a student fails to meet the cumulative GPA, cumulative completion rate, or the maximum time frame standards at the end of a term, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning. The student will continue to receive financial aid while on financial aid warning. However, if the student does not meet the satisfactory academic progress standards by the end of the warning period, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. The student can continue taking courses while on suspension, but will receive no financial aid assistance.

Financial Aid Probation

Financial Aid probation is assigned to students whose SAP appeal has been approved. The probation status is good for only one term to allow the student time to make SAP. During the probationary period, the student must maintain a 2.00 GPA and a 66% completion ratio. Withdrawing from any classes while on probation will change the student's status to Financial Aid Suspension. In order to receive financial aid after the probation period, a student must meet all SAP requirements or meet all requirements of an Academic Plan that has been established for him/her by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. Students who are on Financial Aid Probation and fail to meet SAP requirements or the requirements of an Academic Plan after one term on probation will result in the student being placed on financial aid suspension. Students who are on Suspension are not eligible for financial aid.

Appeal of Financial Aid Suspension

Students have the right to appeal their suspension of financial aid if they have mitigating circumstances that prevented them from making satisfactory academic progress. A student wishing to appeal financial aid suspension must do so in writing with supportive documentation. The form may be obtained from the Financial Aid Office or Southern Crescent Technical College's financial aid website.

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee will review appeals prior to the beginning of each semester. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student of the committee's

decision as soon as possible. Decision results will also be available on Banner Web. The committee's decision is final. If approved, the student will be placed on financial aid probation status for the subsequent semester(s) and given an academic plan to follow. While at this status, the Financial Aid Office may require the student to maintain a specified percentage of semester coursework, cumulative GPA, and tutorial assistance. If any of the prescribed conditions are not met during the semester, eligibility will be denied and the student will be placed back on financial aid suspension at the conclusion of the semester.

Academic Plans

Students who successfully appeal a financial aid suspension and are placed on probation may be required to follow an Academic Plan as determined by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee in order to continue receiving financial aid. Students on an Academic Plan are required to meet all requirements of the Plan each term. The fulfillment of these requirements will be evaluated at the end of each term. Failure to meet all requirements of the Academic Plan will result in the student being placed on financial aid suspension. A student has the right to appeal the financial aid suspension, if there were mitigating circumstances that prevented him/her from meeting the requirements of the Plan.

Academic Plans require students to complete all attempted courses with a grade of C or better. Students who receive a D grade during this period may be required to submit a new appeal. In addition, students cannot withdraw from any course while on an Academic Plan. The components of a student's Academic Plan may include, but are not limited to:

- a requirement to meet with the student's academic advisor and/or a member of Student Affairs Retention staff
- a requirement to enroll as part-time
- to participate in a specific workshop on campus, or
- any other requirement mandated by the Appeals Committee

The Financial Aid Office will verify that all requirements of the Academic Plan have been met prior to posting aid for the next term.

***Special Covid-19 Note:**

The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) was signed into law on March 27, 2020, as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, giving institutions increased flexibility in financial aid regulations. In accordance with Executive Orders issued by Governor Brian Kemp on March 16, 2020; March 26, 2020; April 1, 2020; and April 2, 2020, to stop the spread of COVID-19, all TCSG colleges, including Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC), closed its campuses to students/guests, requiring students to complete the rest of the Spring 2020 term via remote learning technology.

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, students who withdraw from class(es) after March 13, 2020 and prior to the last day of classes may be eligible to receive a Z grade. Z grades are used to denote unsuccessful completion due to COVID-19 emergency. Z grades are excluded from attempted hours and GPA calculation. Note: Effective AY2020 spring and summer terms and AY 2021 Fall and Spring terms.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) - In accordance with Federal regulations, financial aid recipients are required to meet SAP requirements. The CARES Act allows institutions to exclude from SAP calculations any attempted credits that were not completed due to a qualifying COVID-19 emergency beginning with the Spring 2020 term without requiring an appeal from the student. Students who withdraw or fail class(es) on or after March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 health emergency, will not have the withdrawal/ failing grade(s) counted against their quantitative SAP calculation, and may be eligible to continue to receive financial aid. Please note that this exception does not apply to the qualitative component of SAP. Students not meeting the 2.0 GPA SAP requirement or students who withdrew or failed classes prior to March 13, 2020 will have their financial aid suspended. These students will be allowed to submit a SAP appeal and must provide documentation of a qualifying emergency before aid can be restored.

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