

STANDARD OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

Policy

Fort Peck Community College (FPCC), in compliance with federal regulations, established the following policies and procedures to ensure that students who receive federal aid (Pell, FSEOG, FWS) are making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward a certificate or associate degree. Students who fail to meet these standards of satisfactory academic progress will not be eligible to receive federal financial aid until eligibility is once again established.

Measures of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

SAP standards are measured as qualitative academic standards (grade point average) and quantitative rate of progression or PACE of completion (number of credits completed divided by number of credits attempted) in the degree.

Grade Point Average or GPA (Qualitative)

At the end of their first academic year, students must earn a cumulative GPA of at least 1.75 and a 2.0 at the completion of their third semester. If students receive any of the following programs at FPCC: Pell Grant, Federal Work Study (FWS); Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG); for purposes of determining financial aid eligibility, the cumulative GPA calculation will not include transfer credits accepted towards degree or certificate at FPCC or remedial course points are included in the student's cumulative GPA.

FPCC will evaluate the cumulative GPA for students who received federal Title IV aid at the end of the Fall semester, Spring semester and Summer term. Any first-year student who does not meet the minimum 1.75 cumulative GPA or any second-year student who does not meet the minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA will be placed on either probation or suspension for the next semester the student enrolls at FPCC, depending upon their academic status. Students will be notified in writing if they have failed to meet the standard. Students on Financial Aid Probation, have access to all financial programs for which they are eligible for during that semester. If the student does not earn a 2.00 cumulative GPA during the probation semester, the student will be placed on suspension, which terminates financial aid eligibility. A suspended student may file an appeal to reestablish eligibility for federal financial aid.

Completion of Attempted Credits or "Pace" (Quantitative)

Pace is measured in two increments:

- Completion of Attempted Credits: Students must successfully complete two-thirds (66.667%) of the cumulative credits attempted in the degree or certificate.
- The percentage is calculated for the cumulative pace by dividing the total number of successfully completed credits by the total number of credits attempted in the degree or certificate. The number of attempted credits for the term shall be determined based on number of credits enrolled on the last day to add or change a class at 100% tuition refund rate.

Maximum Time Frame

All students are expected to complete the degree or certificate requirements within 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if a program requires 60 credits to complete, the student would be allowed 90 attempted credits (60 credits x 150% = 90 attempted credits) or if a program requires 30 credits to complete, the student would be allowed 45 attempted credits (30 credits x 150% = 45 attempted credits).

A student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension if the student has not completed the degree requirements within the 150% maximum time frame. A student may appeal the disqualification status due to the 150% maximum time frame limitation.

The following are considered when evaluating a student's satisfactory academic progress:

- Successful Completions: Successfully completed credit hours include grades of A, B, C, D, and P (Pass). Credit hours that are not considered successfully completed include, I (Incomplete), WIP (Work-In Progress), F (Fail), and W (Withdraw); however, these hours are included as attempted hours. If a grade is officially changed by the instructor, the student is asked to notify the Financial Aid Office.
- When credits are first transferred in, the cumulative credit calculation on the academic transcript includes all transfer credits accepted by FPCC and will include all FPCC credits attempted and completed.
- FPCC does not monitor changes of majors. All grades earned, credits attempted and credits completed are included in the SAP determination even if the student has changed majors.
- All periods of a student's enrollment count when assessing progress, even periods in which the student did not receive Title IV or institutional funds.
- Remedial course credits are not included in the 66.667% semester and maximum time frame calculations.
- Audit classes are not considered in SAP measurements.
- Students may repeat a previously passed course once and have it calculated in federal financial aid payments. The highest grade of the two repeated courses is included in the GPA Calculation. Each repeated course credit is included in both the 66.667% and the maximum time frame calculations.

Monitoring Progress

Financial aid satisfactory academic progress at FPCC is measured at the end of each semester and summer term. The overall cumulative grade point average (GPA), pace, and maximum time frame assessment will be based on the student's entire academic record.

Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students will be notified in writing if they have failed to meet the above standards

Financial Aid Warning

A student is usually put in a warning status the first time he or she fails to meet the above standards. A student on financial aid warning may continue to receive financial aid, except for work study, for one payment period. A student does not need to take any action at this point unless he/she wishes to participate in the work study program while in the warning status.

Work study termination may be appealed in writing to the director of financial aid. The appeal should include a personal statement that clearly details the circumstances that hindered the student's academic performance, how the circumstances have been resolved or managed to permit the student to meet the standards, a plan of action to meet the conditions of the warning, and why working will not jeopardize that plan. Relevant documentation should accompany the appeal letter. At the end of the warning period, a student's satisfactory progress will be evaluated again. If it is determined that the student is meeting the minimum progress standards, the student will be considered to be in good standing and may continue to receive financial aid.

Financial Aid Termination

If the student fails to meet the minimum satisfactory academic standards after the warning period, aid will be terminated for the subsequent payment period. Financial aid will be terminated for students with less than a 2.00 cumulative GPA after four semesters of attendance. The Academic Standards Committee may place a student on academic suspension if their term GPA is less than a 1.00. If a student is suspended for this reason, their aid will be terminated as well. If a student repeatedly withdraws from classes, financial assistance is terminated immediately when it is determined to be mathematically impossible for the student to be able to complete their degree objective within 150 percent of the published length of the program. Aid is also terminated for students who are dismissed from FPCC.

Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility

Students whose financial aid has been terminated may regain eligibility for financial assistance by re-establishing the required GPA and/or completion ratios using their own resources. If a student regains satisfactory progress, they may receive financial assistance for the payment period in which they regain eligibility, but not for any payment period in which the student did not meet the standards. It is the responsibility of the student to notify financial aid personnel when he or she has re-established satisfactory academic progress.

Right to Appeal

Financial assistance terminations, like academic suspensions, may be appealed. Generally, appeals will be granted for extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's ability to control, such as those described below. Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the director of financial assistance. The Academic Appeals Committee must grant academic reinstatement to students on academic suspension before the Financial Aid Office will consider an appeal for financial aid eligibility reinstatement.

The appeal should include a personal statement that clearly details the circumstances that hindered the student's academic performance, how the circumstances have been resolved or managed to permit the student to meet the standards, and relevant documentation should accompany the appeal form. Acceptable reasons to appeal include, but are not limited to: illness or injury of the student, illness or death of an immediate relative of the student, divorce or separation of the student, etc. Relevant documentation may include a physician's letter, hospital records, death certificate, obituary, or court documents.

A student whose aid is terminated due to maximum time frame or credit limit must clearly detail what circumstances prevented their graduation within the applicable time frame or credit limit, what coursework is needed to complete the degree with their appeal, and how long it will take to complete the degree. Acceptable reasons to appeal maximum time frame include, but are not limited to: change of major, transfer credits that did not apply toward your degree/program, etc.

The appeal will be reviewed by the financial aid director and staff. All decisions of the SAP appeals by the financial aid director and staff are final. A written decision regarding the appeal will be sent to the student in a timely manner. If the appeal is approved and it is determined that the student should be able to make satisfactory progress during the subsequent payment period and meet the SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, the student will be placed on financial aid probation and will be eligible to receive financial assistance, with the exception of work study, for one payment period.

At the end of the probationary period, a student's satisfactory progress will be evaluated again to determine continuing eligibility. If the appeal is approved and it is determined that the student will not achieve the minimum SAP requirements within one payment period, they will be placed on financial aid probation and required to complete a graduation plan outlining how, if followed, the student will achieve the minimum academic standards, as well as a time frame in which the student expects to be back in compliance with the standards. Students approved on a graduation plan will complete and sign the plan with the Director of Financial Aid. The plan will be recorded in the Financial Aid Office and progress toward meeting the goals of the graduation plan will be monitored at the end of each term. If a student is not academically progressing as planned, financial aid will be terminated. The student's responsibilities during a probationary period include successfully completing the appropriate number of credits and earning cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 by the end of the probationary term.