



# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

To remain eligible for financial aid at Piedmont Technical College, a student must make reasonable academic progress towards a degree, diploma or certificate. Piedmont Technical College (PTC) has adopted the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy adhering to federal and state mandates.

As a recipient of federal or state financial aid, you have certain rights and responsibilities. Failure to fulfill your part of the agreement, as described, may result in the cancellation of your award and you may have to repay any funds already received.

## Financial Aid Programs under the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

- Federal Pell Grant (PELL)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Work Study Program (FWS)
- South Carolina Need-Based Grant (SCNB)

## Requirements of the SAP Policy

The Financial Aid Office monitors the Satisfactory Academic Progress of all financial aid recipients by reviewing a student's total academic record after grades are posted at the end of each semester (fall, spring, and summer). Failure to meet any one of these standards may result in the cancellation of future financial aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress is a federal government requirement and is measured by the following:

### 1. Cumulative Completion Rate (Pace):

A student must successfully pass 67 percent of the cumulative credit hours attempted in the student's current program of study, including transfer credit hours accepted into the program.

Credit hours earned are those for which a student receives a grade of A, B, C, or D. Additionally, transfer credit hours accepted into the program are considered earned.

Credit hours attempted are hours for which a student registers at the beginning of the semester and is still enrolled after the Add/Drop period. Courses with grades of F, W, NC, CF and I are counted in the hours attempted but are not considered credit hours earned.

### 2. Cumulative Grade Point Average:

All financial aid recipients must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA in order to be considered to be meeting SAP.

### 3. Length of Eligibility (Maximum Timeframe):

Financial aid recipients may be eligible for assistance until they have attempted up to 150 percent of the semester hours required for the program of study in which they are enrolled. Attempted credit hours that do not count toward the current program of study will not be included in the maximum timeframe calculation.

## Academic Issues that will Affect Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

### Repeated Courses, Withdrawals, Incomplete Courses, Carry-Forwards, NC and F

Students who receive federal or state financial aid must be aware that repeated courses and courses with grades of W, I, CF, NC, and F will be considered in assessing their progress toward completion. Courses with these grades are considered not earned. When a 'CF' or 'I' is changed to a grade, the student will need to notify the Financial Aid Office for re-evaluation of his or her status if the student is on Financial Aid Probation or Financial Aid Suspension. When a course is repeated, the highest grade earned will be used in computing the cumulative GPA.

## Developmental Studies

Financial aid recipients may take a maximum of 30 credit hours in developmental (remedial) coursework, which consists of English, math and reading courses of 100 level or lower, or prerequisite courses that are not included in the program of study. These courses count towards credit hours attempted and will be considered in determining SAP. The grades for these courses are included in the cumulative GPA calculation.

## Prior College Coursework

The U.S. Department of Education requires the Financial Aid Office to track financial aid recipients' Satisfactory Academic Progress from the first date of enrollment, whether or not financial aid was received during prior terms. All prior courses completed at Piedmont Technical College that count toward the student's current program of study will be included in attempted credit hours, earned credit hours, and cumulative GPA for SAP calculation purposes. Any student not meeting a standard will be subject to suspension of all financial aid.

## Transfer Credits

All transfer credits accepted toward the student's current program of study will be included in cumulative attempted and cumulative earned credit hours for both the pace and maximum timeframe calculations. Grades received in transfer credit courses will not be considered in the cumulative GPA calculation.

## Fresh Start Program

Students approved for the Fresh Start Program are not exempt from the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements stated above. Students should be aware that financial aid requirements regarding prior attendance and cumulative eligibility must be considered from the first date of enrollment.

## Change of Major(s)

Only credits that count toward the student's current program will be used in the pace and maximum timeframe calculations.

## Maximum Timeframe for Subsequent Degrees

Students seeking a subsequent degree at the same level as first degree must complete the subsequent degree within the maximum time frame (150 percent) of the current program. If unable to do so, the student may



appeal for continued eligibility. In the appeal the student may need to explain the rationale for the pursuit of an additional degree.

For students who have reached the maximum timeframe (150 percent) of their current program, financial aid eligibility is limited to no more than two associate degrees. Students who wish to pursue additional degrees beyond this limit may do so, but without federal financial assistance.

## Results of Not Meeting SAP

Students who do not meet the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress will be sanctioned according to federal mandate and may lose eligibility for their financial aid award.

### 1. Financial Aid Warning:

Students are evaluated on Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of each term (fall, spring, and summer). Students who are not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress for the first consecutive semester will be placed on **Financial Aid Warning**. Students under Financial Aid Warning can receive student financial aid for one term without submitting an appeal. At the end of the term, the student must meet the criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

### 2. Financial Aid Suspension:

Students who fail to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards after a term of Financial Aid Warning are placed on Financial Aid Suspension. Financial aid awards will be canceled when a student is placed on **Financial Aid Suspension**. Returning students who did not meet the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress in their previous enrollment with Piedmont will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension upon their return to the college.

Students on Financial Aid Suspension are ineligible for student financial aid unless they submit an appeal, along with an Academic Plan created by an advisor, and the appeal is granted. An Academic Plan must allow the student to complete his or her program within a reasonable timeframe. Approval of all appeals is at the discretion of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

### 3. Financial Aid Probation:

**Financial Aid Probation** status is assigned to a student who fails to meet SAP (following Financial Aid Warning status) and who has successfully appealed and has had eligibility for financial aid reinstated. A student may only be considered on Financial Aid Probation for one semester; however, he or she may be able to continue receiving financial aid if the student is meeting the requirements of an approved Academic Plan.

## Appeal of Financial Aid Ineligibility

A student on Financial Aid Suspension may appeal loss of financial aid eligibility due to a failure to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards by submitting a Financial Aid Appeal Form, an Academic Plan and all requested documents to the Financial Aid Office. The student must indicate why he or she did not achieve minimum academic standards in the most recently measured term. Acceptable reasons for an appeal are personal injury or illness, death or serious illness of an immediate family member, employment changes, divorce/separation in the student's immediate family, or other verifiable circumstances causing hardship and significantly contributing to poor academic performance.

In addition, the appeal must explain what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to make Satisfactory Academic Progress at the next evaluation. Students may only appeal the same situation once. Previously cited medical issues cannot be used as an acceptable reason for ongoing semesters unless the student can explain what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to make Satisfactory Academic Progress at the next evaluation. The student must provide supporting documentation for the appeal.

If it is not mathematically possible for a student who is appealing to reach Satisfactory Academic Progress by the end of the next term, the student can be placed on an Academic Plan for a specific number of terms. The Academic Plan, which must be signed by the student and an advisor, will be used to evaluate the student's Satisfactory Academic Progress until it expires. Continuing to meet the stipulations of the Academic Plan will eventually result in the student meeting the SAP policy overall or completing his or her program of study.

Students who have failed to meet any of the stipulations of the Academic Plan will be placed on Repeat Financial Aid Suspension status where any federal financial aid will be suspended. A second appeal will only be allowed for new documented extenuating circumstances that occur during the probationary period. A maximum of two (2) appeals will be accepted during a student's time at Piedmont Technical College.

All appeals received must be submitted by the published deadline for each semester, as indicated in the PTC Student Calendar and on the PTC Home Page. Appeals received after that date will not be reviewed until the next semester.

Upon review by the Financial Aid Committee, the student will be advised by Pathway notification of the Committee's decision. Simply submitting an appeal and an Academic Plan does not automatically guarantee approval, and appeals without supporting documentation will be denied. The determination of whether an appeal is accepted and the student can receive financial aid is at the discretion of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

## Notification

Students will be notified of their SAP status via the student portal (Pathway). Additionally, emails will be sent at the end of each semester to notify students who have failed to meet SAP standards during the prior semester.

## Re-establishing Eligibility

Other than having financial aid eligibility restored through filing a successful appeal, a student on Financial Aid Suspension may regain eligibility only by taking action that brings him or her into compliance with the appropriate Satisfactory Academic Progress standard. Students who choose to remain enrolled without receiving financial aid may request a review of their academic record after any term in which they were on Financial Aid Suspension to determine if they are now meeting the appropriate standards.