

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR FINANCIAL AID

All students who have applied for federal financial aid through the Title IV assistance programs (Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study, and student loans under the William D. Ford Direct (DL) Loan Program) are required to make satisfactory progress in order to receive those funds. Additionally, satisfactory progress is a condition of the state financial aid programs as well. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is defined as passing a requisite number of hours (completion rate) and achieving a required Grade Point Average (GPA) during any semester or academic year and completing a program of study within maximum time limits. When a student fails to maintain SAP, he or she is no longer eligible to receive Title IV aid.

Evaluation of Academic Progress: There will be a full review of academic progress at the end of each fall, spring, and summer semester and/or during the application process. At that time, a student will be in good standing, be placed on financial aid warning, or denied financial assistance. The student must meet all three satisfactory academic progress requirements (completion rate, GPA, and maximum time frame) to be considered in good standing for financial aid. Students placed on warning or denial will be notified in writing.

Enrollment Status: Students may receive financial aid while enrolled full-time or for an approved part-time course of study. However, financial aid awards for less than full-time enrollment may be prorated. In general, all full-time students must be enrolled in at least twelve (12) semester credit hours each semester. Students enrolled in less than 12 semester credit hours will be evaluated as follows:

9 to 11 credit hours is three-quarter-time;
6 to 8 hours is half-time; and
1 to 5 hours is less-than-half-time.

Students receiving private or state financial assistance should refer to the specific program guidelines for enrollment definitions and requirements.

Grade Point Average Requirement: Students must maintain a minimum 2.00 grade point average (GPA) each term and cumulatively during all periods of enrollment. The financial aid GPA may be different from the academic GPA on grade reports and/or transcripts if remedial/developmental courses were taken because financial aid includes these courses in the calculation of GPA and the College Registrar does not. For students repeating courses, all grades recorded for the repeated course will be used in computing the student's grade point average.

Semester Completion Requirement: Students must successfully pass 67% of all hours attempted each semester and cumulatively for all periods of enrollment.

For example, a student enrolled in 15 hours must pass a minimum of 10 credit hours. (15 hours times 67% = 10 hours.)

Successful completion is defined as earning a final grade of A, B, C, or D. Grades of I, W, F and AU are not considered as successful completion. However, the courses that correspond to these grades will still be counted in the student's total number of attempted hours.

Maximum Time Limit Requirement: The maximum time frame for completion of a degree or certificate may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program. For example, an associate degree that requires 62 credit hours must be completed within 93 attempted credit hours. (62 hours X 150% = 93 hours) Similarly, an approved technical certificate program that requires 36 hours must be completed within 54 attempted credit hours. In other words, a student may only work on a degree for a certain period of time and receive student aid funds.

Attempted hours consist of any coursework for which a student enrolls including those with grades of F, W, I, and AU or repeated courses. A student's eligibility for aid will be terminated at the point when the maximum credit hours attempted reaches 150% of the total hours required for the program. If at any point it is clear the student will not be able to meet the quantitative standard by graduation, the student becomes ineligible for aid. For maximum time limit requirements, remedial and/or developmental coursework is counted.

Second Degree: In special circumstances, a student may request additional eligibility for a second associate degree. For example, a student who has successfully earned an Associate of Applied Science degree and wishes to pursue a bachelor's degree may ask for additional eligibility to complete courses for the Associate of Arts Degree. Additionally, a student who needs retraining due to extenuating circumstances such as a disability or company closing/downsizing may petition for additional eligibility. Other situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis. A student requesting a second degree must apply for an official transcript evaluation and/or degree audit through the Registrar's Office. This process will identify the completed courses that are common to the new course of study. The results must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office, along with a formal request for a second degree, prior to the approval of the change of program major and before aid is awarded or disbursed. All previous coursework applicable to the second degree must be counted in the maximum time limit for receiving aid, including developmental coursework.

Complete Withdrawal: Complete withdrawal from the College and/or receiving a **0.00 GPA** for a semester is considered as unsatisfactory progress and aid will be denied. (Hours associated with withdrawals will be included in maximum attempted hours.) Federal regulations require that a Return to Title IV Funds calculation be completed for a student receiving Title IV aid that does not complete any coursework during a period of enrollment. The results of the calculation may require the institution to return a portion of the funds received for a student's institutional fees (tuition, fees, and/or books). The student will be responsible for repaying these funds to the College.

Warning Status: There will be a full review of academic progress at the end of each semester. A letter of warning will be mailed to students failing to meet SAP requirements. Warning status does not prevent the student from receiving aid but is meant to inform the student of potential academic problems and provide time for corrective action. Any student that is receiving aid on a warning basis is encouraged to meet with his or her academic advisor or a counselor to develop a plan to improve academic standing. **Exception:** See paragraph above on Complete Withdrawal.

Students receiving a notice of warning will have until the end of the following semester of enrollment to meet all of the SAP requirements. If all SAP requirements are not met by the end of the term, the student's aid will be denied. This warning status is automatically assigned and no appeal is required. The duration of a warning is one semester only.

Repeating Classes: For students repeating courses, all grades recorded for the repeated course will be used in computing the student's grade point average. All courses will count towards the number of hours attempted, and all the points associated with each grade will be counted in the GPA calculation. Also, a student wishing to improve the grade of a previously-passed course (received letter grade of D or above) may repeat the course only once. A student may repeat a failed course until it is successfully completed.

Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility: After losing eligibility for financial aid, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office when he/she is again in compliance with the SAP policy.

Incomplete Coursework: Incomplete coursework will be evaluated as failing until courses are satisfactorily completed. These classes will also be included in the student's total attempted hours.

Remedial or Developmental Coursework: Remedial/Developmental coursework prepares the student for study at the postsecondary level. These courses may be considered for financial aid if the student is admitted into an eligible program. Because financial aid may be awarded for these courses, grades received for the courses will be counted in the calculation of GPA and required completion percentage for financial aid purposes (2.00 GPA and 67% completion). Title IV Federal Student Aid is not available to students enrolled solely in developmental courses unless they have been accepted into an eligible technical certificate or associate degree program.

Appeal and Reinstatement of Denied Aid: Probationary aid may be awarded when extenuating circumstances exist. Examples of extenuating circumstances include prolonged illness under a doctor's care, death of an immediate family member, or other extenuating circumstances.

To apply for probationary aid due to extenuating circumstances, the student must write a letter of appeal explaining why he or she failed to make SAP and what has changed in the student's situation to allow him or her to demonstrate satisfactory progress at the next evaluation. The appeal letter and all supporting documentation should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. If the appeal is approved, one semester of probationary aid may be awarded. Generally, only one appeal for a semester of probationary aid (due to extenuating circumstances) is approved per student. Students should allow a minimum of seven business days for the appeal to be processed. Processing an appeal may take longer during peak periods.

Students receiving probationary aid through the granting of an appeal may be asked to fulfill certain terms and conditions, such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific classes. At the end of the probationary semester, the student must meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress or satisfy the minimum requirements of the academic plan developed for the student by the Financial Aid Office. Otherwise, aid will be denied until the student is again in compliance with the satisfactory academic progress policy.

Transfer Students: For financial aid purposes, a transfer student is defined as a student who has attended any postsecondary institution previous to enrolling at SEARK College. All transfer students must submit official transcripts from all postsecondary institutions attended and formally request that the coursework be evaluated for transferability by the Registrar's Office. The maximum time limit will be reevaluated based on the student's new major and will include all attempted coursework that is shared between the student's previous and current course of study.

POLICIES FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- 1. Developmental Courses** - Enrollment in these courses will be considered in the total hour requirement for calculating financial aid awards. Developmental coursework is counted when determining maximum time limit. Loan applications will not be certified for students enrolled only in developmental courses unless those individuals have been accepted into an eligible technical certificate or associate degree program.
- 2. "I" (Incomplete) Grades** – Incomplete grades will be calculated as failing grades until the course has been satisfactorily completed according to provisions in the College catalog. These classes will also be included in the student's total attempted hours. See the Satisfactory Progress Appeal Procedures for information on extenuating circumstances.
- 3. "W" Withdrawals** – Students are responsible for completing all courses for which they are registered. Failure to complete courses is viewed as unsatisfactory progress. In addition, the hours associated with withdrawals will be included in maximum attempted hours. Completely withdrawing from a semester of enrollment will result in the denial of federal student aid funds. Students with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the Financial Aid Office for a probationary semester of financial aid. For additional information, refer to the following section entitled Satisfactory Progress Appeal Procedures.
- 4. Repeating Classes:** For students repeating courses, all grades recorded for the repeated course will be used in computing the student's grade point average. All courses will count towards the number of hours attempted, and all the points associated with each grade will be counted in the GPA calculation. Also, a student wishing to improve the grade of a previously-passed course (received letter grade of D or above) may repeat the course only once. A student may repeat a failed course until it is successfully completed.
- 5. Transfer Students** - For the purpose of awarding financial aid, transfer students must submit a transcript from all postsecondary institutions attended before the application of aid may be considered. Credit hours attempted at all postsecondary institutions applicable to the current course of study will be counted in the hours attempted and toward the maximum hours allowed for financial aid eligibility at Southeast Arkansas College, including developmental coursework.
- 6. Satisfactory Academic Progress** is required of all financial aid applicants at Southeast Arkansas College, **including those applicants who have not previously participated in federal aid programs.**

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS APPEAL PROCEDURES

1. Only students with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the Financial Aid Office for a probationary semester of aid. Examples of extenuating circumstances are death of an immediate family member or accidents/illnesses requiring extended doctor's care or hospitalization. Prolonged illness of a dependent may also be considered as grounds for an appeal. Official documentation must be presented with all appeals.

For financial aid purposes, an immediate family member is defined as father, mother, legal guardian, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent or grandchild.

2. Students should appeal no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the semester. No appeals will be accepted after the tenth (10th) class day.
3. Appeals must be in writing and **must** be accompanied by official documentation supporting the claim of extenuating circumstance. Forms are available from the SEARK College Financial Aid Office and the College's website to assist students with the appeal process. The appeal must state why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.
4. Students using summer grades and hours earned to appeal for aid reinstatement must submit a written appeal indicating a request that summer statistics be checked for appeal processing.
5. Students should allow a minimum of seven working days for the appeal to be processed. Appeals submitted during peak periods may take longer to process.