

# WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Administrative Procedure

<b>TITLE:</b>	Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress
<b>DIVISION:</b>	Student Services
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	Student Financial Aid
<b>REFERENCE:</b>	BP-501, Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy
<b>NUMBER:</b>	AP-501
<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	August 31, 2021
<b>APPROVAL:</b>	John Marrin, Interim President

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### **Purpose**

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) establishes requirements for enforcing standards of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The ED allows each college to establish its own internal processes based upon the organizational structure at its institution.

### **Scope**

Applicable to all Western Nebraska Community College students.

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### ***Overview and Applicability***

SAP measures a student's performance in the following three areas: cumulative completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame. The Financial Aid Office is responsible for reviewing the cumulative academic progress of all enrolled degree-seeking students receiving financial aid at the end of each payment period. The purpose of this review process is to determine whether a student is making satisfactory progress towards their educational goal in both qualitative and quantitative measurements. The qualitative measurement consists of the cumulative grade point average of all credits transcribed, regardless of whether the student received financial aid for those credits.

The quantitative measurement contains two components: (1) the cumulative completion rate of credit hours completed versus credit hours attempted expressed as a percentage rate of completion and (2) the maximum time frame allowed for a student to complete their certificate or degree program expressed as a percentage of 150% of the total credit hours required.

The qualitative and quantitative standards of this policy are at least as strict as the academic policy applied to non-Title IV recipients.

Review of SAP will take place at the end of each payment period, including summer, for all enrolled degree-seeking students who received financial aid. A student's entire academic record will be

reviewed and evaluated for SAP whether or not financial aid was received. The process to review financial aid SAP eligibility will be the same for all students evaluated. All coursework, including coursework for which a college has offered academic amnesty must be included in the review process. The College will notify financial aid applicants of their SAP status. A student is considered to be a financial aid applicant if they complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or if they are offered funding to assist in educational costs through the Financial Aid Office.

The SAP standards apply to all applicable forms of financial assistance programs including Federal Pell Grant, Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Direct Loans, Direct PLUS loans, as well as assistance from the State of Nebraska. The College will determine what institutional funds will be affected by the student's SAP status.

All SAP-related notifications to students will be sent to their WNCC email address, the College's official means of student communication.

### ***Definitions of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Status***

Students who fail to meet either the quantitative or the qualitative criteria will be notified of their status in accordance with the definitions below:

#### **Satisfactory**

The student is eligible to receive all types of aid.

- Student has cumulative GPA at or above 2.0.
- Student has pace (cumulative completion rate) at or above 67%.
- The student has attempted less than 150% of required number of credit hours for enrolled degree or certificate program. All transcribed credits, including transfer credits, are included in the calculation for the maximum time frame.

#### **Warning**

The student was previously in satisfactory standing but failed to meet one or both of the SAP criteria stated below. The student will continue to receive aid while on warning status.

- Student has cumulative GPA below 2.0; and/or
- Has pace (cumulative completion rate) below 67%

#### **Suspension**

The student failed to comply with stated SAP criteria while on warning or probation. The student is not eligible to receive financial aid (federal, state or designated institutional financial aid).

- Student has under a 2.0 GPA and/or 67% pace (cumulative completion rate).
- Student has attempted 150% or more of required number of credit hours needed for degree or certificate program.

#### **Probation**

The student will be placed on probation, if the student was previously on suspension status, made an appeal, and the appeal was granted. The student will be eligible to receive financial aid for one term while on probation, unless an academic plan has been incorporated into the SAP appeal.

## **Academic Plan**

The student who has eligibility reinstated to probation under an approved academic plan and is successfully following that plan is eligible to receive financial aid and continues to be eligible for aid while following the approved academic plan. Financial aid eligibility will be reviewed at the end of each payment period, including summer, according to the approved academic plan.

## ***Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Criteria***

In order to meet SAP requirements, financial aid applicants and recipients must meet the qualitative and quantitative measurements outlined below:

### **Qualitative Measure**

#### *Cumulative GPA Requirement*

- Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all credit hours attempted.

### **Quantitative Measure**

#### *Pace (Cumulative Completion Rate)*

- Students must complete at least 67% of cumulative attempted credit hours.
- The completion rate is defined as the percentage of the total number of credit hours completed divided by the total number of credit hours attempted over the entirety of a student's academic record at the college performing the calculation. (Credit hours completed / credit hours attempted) x 100 = completion rate.
- Transfer credit hours on the student's record are included when computing the student's completion rate.
- Remedial credit hours and all repeated credit hours are included in the calculation of the cumulative completion rate.

#### *Maximum Time Frame*

- Federal regulations allow financial aid recipients to receive financial aid for a maximum number of attempted credit hours. Students attempting credit hours in excess of 150% of the required number of credit hours to complete their program of study will be placed on financial aid suspension status. If at any point in time it is determined that a student cannot complete their program of study within 150% of the program length, the student will be ineligible for aid. Students must progress through their program at a "pace" rate of 67% or higher each period of enrollment to ensure program completion within the maximum time frame.
- Transfer credit hours are included in the calculation of maximum time frame. WNCC requires submission of transcripts from all prior institutions prior to disbursement of federal and state aid to determine credits for maximum time frame calculation.
- Attempted credit hours under all courses of study are included in the calculation of attempted and earned credit hours.
- All remedial credit hours and repeated credit hours are included in the maximum time frame calculation.
- ESL courses are included in the maximum time frame calculation.

### ***Evaluation of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress***

1. Review of SAP will take place at the end of each payment period, including summer. The student's academic history is reviewed for: 1) cumulative GPA requirement; 2) pace (cumulative completion rate); and 3) maximum time frame.
2. A student's entire academic record will be reviewed and evaluated for SAP, whether or not financial aid was received. Based on all academic history a student may be considered ineligible for aid.
3. The SAP evaluation process will occur at the end of each payment period of enrollment, including summer. When the student applies for financial aid (receipt of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the evaluation process will be completed based on the student's last term of enrollment and then updated at the end of each term for which the student is enrolled. All terms of enrollment will be considered in the SAP evaluation whether or not the student received financial aid during those terms.
4. All students who fail to meet SAP criteria will be placed on warning or suspension. Financial aid applicants will be notified of their status.
5. The Financial Aid Office will review GPA and credit hours attempted/completed through consortium agreements.

### **Treatment of Completion and Repeats**

1. Grades of D- or higher earned during all periods of enrollment will be considered acceptable for courses completed.
2. Grades of F, NP, I, E, W, CR, and AU earned during all periods of enrollment will not be considered acceptable for SAP. (In courses graded on a Pass/No Pass basis, students are assessed using either a competency-based rubric or a percentage converted to letter grade where a grade of C or higher is considered passing.)
3. Repeated courses are counted for all qualitative and quantitative measurements, as is coursework removed from the permanent transcript through an academic amnesty appeal. The grade from the last attempt of a repeated course is included in the student's cumulative GPA.

### **Treatment of Grade Changes**

1. Students are responsible for notifying the WNCC Financial Aid Office of all grade changes that might affect current or future financial aid eligibility. A reevaluation of the students' status will be performed by the Financial Aid Office once the grade change has been communicated to the Financial Aid Office.
2. The College reserves the right to notify students of this requirement based on the College's official means of communication.

### ***Student Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeals***

The College is required to have a primary and a secondary process for students to appeal their eligibility. The secondary process is meant to address appeals of denied appeals from the primary process. All decisions made at the secondary level are final.

The process for appeals at the primary and secondary level will be defined by the College. A student may appeal when they have been placed on suspension status. These appeals must be submitted to the

WNCC Financial Aid Office or designated location with supporting documentation. The student is responsible for presenting sufficient information and documentation to substantiate the existence of extenuating circumstances. The College may request additional documentation as student's extenuating circumstances warrant it.

### **Conditions of Appeal**

*Appeals must include the following information:*

- why the student failed to make SAP; and
- what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.

*Appeals may be submitted for extenuating circumstances, such as:*

- medical problems (family illness),
- family emergency (death of a family member), or
- other documented extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control.

Students may also appeal on the basis of:

- seeking approval for funding when a change in major or degree has occurred; or
- funding for an additional eligible degree or certificate.

Under all circumstances, all transcribed credits, including transfer credits, are included in the calculation of maximum time frame regardless of whether the student received financial aid for those credits.

### **Approval**

Western Nebraska Community College may approve an appeal if:

- the College has determined the student will be able to meet SAP standards at the end of the subsequent term given the merits of the appeal and reasonable resolution of a student's extenuating circumstance; or
- the College and the student develop a plan that ensures the student is able to meet the College's SAP standards by a specific time or that the plan takes the student to successful program completion.

### **Notification**

Students will be notified by the College of the outcome of their appeal. Under no circumstances can probation be assigned to a prior term.

The College may notify students prior to the end of the term or prior to official posting of the financial aid SAP status if the student's academic progress indicates they will be ineligible for aid at the end of the term. This includes students who withdraw from the term or fail to meet the terms of their conditional probation.

### **Deadlines and Delimitations**

The College will set deadlines for SAP appeal submissions to allow for processing of the appeal and, if successful, the processing of financial aid prior to the end of a term. The College may limit the number of SAP appeals that will be considered after review on a case-by-case basis of the student's academic and appeal history.

### ***Reinstatement of Aid***

1. Students who lose financial aid eligibility because they are not meeting the college's SAP standards will regain eligibility when they are again meeting the qualitative and quantitative standards as set previously in this policy.
2. Students may also regain eligibility through the appeal process.
3. Upon successful reestablishment of eligibility, the student will be awarded financial aid based on the availability of funds at the time of reestablishment. Reinstatement will not be retroactive to a prior term of ineligibility.

Students may, or may not, receive all funds awarded prior to the loss of eligibility.

### **Revising this Procedure**

This Administrative Procedure supersedes any prior WNCC policy, procedure, guideline, or handbook on this subject matter.

WNCC reserves the right to revise this procedure, as necessary, and for the changes to become effective immediately.

**Original Adoption Date:** August 13, 2018  
**Revision Date:** August 31, 2021  
**Sponsoring Division:** Student Services