



## Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedures Chapter 2 – Students

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### Procedure 2.9.1 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

**Part 1. Institutional Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies.** Each institution shall develop a satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy that shall apply to all students receiving financial aid under federal Title IV financial aid programs or under programs of aid authorized under Minnesota Statutes 136 A. Institutional policies shall be organized according to Appendix “A.”

The qualitative and quantitative standards contained in the institution’s policy must be cumulative and include all periods of enrollment, whether or not a student received financial aid.

Each institution’s president shall be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of SAP, and shall specify in the institutional policy the department(s) responsible for ensuring that implementation and monitoring occur in compliance with this procedure. Institutions are required to use the MnSCU student data system (currently ISRS) to monitor and record SAP. The Office of the Chancellor shall provide necessary training and on-going support to the institutions in their use of the MnSCU student data systems.

The SAP policy standards shall be the same as or stricter than the institution’s academic standards for a student enrolled in the same educational program who is not receiving financial aid.

Each institution’s policy shall include all components listed in the order shown in Appendix “A” and shall be publicized and made available to financial aid recipients as required by financial aid regulations. At a minimum, all institutions must provide access to their policy through the financial aid section of their institutional website.

**Part 2. Qualitative Measure of Progress.** As a qualitative measure of a student's progress, each institution’s SAP policy shall define either a “graduated” scale and/or a “flat” scale based on an acceptable cumulative grade point average (GPA).

**Subpart A. Undergraduate Students.** Students at institutions using a 4.0 A to F grade scale must have either a minimum 2.0 (C) grade point average by the end of the second year or a grade point average consistent with the institution’s requirements for graduation. Monitoring must begin with the first attempted credit. Institutions may apply a 0.0 GPA standard only to the first five attempted credits, unless this would prevent a student from meeting the standards by the time of her or his completion of the program. Grades of A, B, C, D and F shall be included in the GPA calculation.

If an institution establishes a qualitative standard that allows an undergraduate student to continue past the second year with a GPA below 2.0, it must document that the GPA it uses is consistent with graduation requirements.

If an institution chooses to use grades that are not listed in this procedure, the institution must specify in its institutional SAP policy how these grades affect GPA calculation.

**Subpart B. Graduate Students.** Beginning with the first attempted credit, graduate students at institutions using a 4.0 “A” to “F” grade scale must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average.

### **Part 3. Quantitative Measure of Progress.**

**Subpart A. Required completion percentage.** Each institution’s policy shall include a quantitative measure consisting of an acceptable percentage of credits completed. This measure may be a “graduated” scale and/or a “flat” scale. Monitoring must begin with the first attempted credit. Institutions may apply a “0%” completion percentage standard only to the first five attempted credits, unless this would prevent a student from meeting the standards by the time of her or his completion of the program.

At the end of each increment, or evaluation period, the institution shall compare the number of credits the student successfully completed to the number of credits the student attempted to determine whether the student is progressing at a rate that will allow completion of the program within the maximum time frame. Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, S and P are included in the calculation of cumulative credit completion percentage as courses successfully completed.

Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of I, N, NC, W, and F shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Blank (“Z”) grades shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted.

Unless the institution has a specific policy indicating treatment of IP (in progress) grades as successful completion, they shall be treated as credits attempted but not completed.

If an institution chooses to use grades that are not listed in this procedure, the institution must specify in its institutional SAP policy how these grades affect calculation of completion percentage.

**Subpart B. Maximum time frame.** The policy of an institution must specify a maximum number of attempted credits (maximum time frame) within which students are expected to complete their programs.

Based on variability of institutional program lengths, institutions may establish either: (a) a maximum credit limits (maximum time frames) for each individual programs, or (b) a single maximum credit limit (maximum time frame) applicable to all programs. Institutions choosing to require single maximum credit limit must choose the lowest individual program limit.

In no case shall the maximum time frame exceed 150 percent of the published credit length of the curricular program.

Maximum time frames for graduate students, students pursuing double majors, students enrolled in consecutive programs, or for students with previous degree may be based on specific curricular requirements.

If an institution chooses to use grades that are not listed in this procedure, the institution must specify in its institutional SAP policy how these grades affect maximum timeframe monitoring.

**Part 4. Evaluation period.** The SAP policy of an institution must divide the educational program, including summer terms into equal increments, or evaluation periods, that shall not be greater than one academic term.

Programs less than one year in length must be evaluated at the midpoint of the program.

Each institution shall establish a deadline, following the end of a term, for submission of grades by faculty, in order to ensure the completion of satisfactory academic progress reviews prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the subsequent academic term.

Non-standard sessions shall be evaluated with the term or evaluation period in which they are transcribed.

#### **Part 5. Failure to Meet Standards.**

##### **Subpart A. Financial aid suspension and probation.**

- 1. Maximum Time-Frame Failure.** If at the end of the evaluation period a student has failed to meet an institution's standard for measurement of maximum time-frame, the institution shall suspend that student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.
- 2. Qualitative Standard or Completion Percentage Failure.** If at the end of the evaluation period a student has failed to meet an institution's qualitative standard or required completion percentage, institutions may suspend that student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation, or may allow that student to retain her or his financial aid eligibility under a probationary status for one evaluation period.
- 3. Reinstatement of Students on Probationary Status.** If at the end of the probationary period a student who has been on probationary status has met the institution's cumulative qualitative and quantitative standards, the institution shall reinstate the student's eligibility for financial aid.
- 4. Suspension of Students on Probationary Status.** If at the end of the probationary period a student who has been on probationary status has not met the institution's

cumulative qualitative or quantitative standards, the institution will suspend the student immediately upon completion of the evaluation; UNLESS:

5. **Continuation of Students on Probationary Status.** If at the end of the probationary period a student who has been on probationary status has met the institution's qualitative and quantitative standards for all courses in which she or he was enrolled during the probationary period but has not met the institution's cumulative standards, the institution shall permit the student to retain her or his financial aid eligibility under a "continued probation" status, until such time as:
  - (a) the student has met the institution's cumulative qualitative and quantitative standards, at which time the student's financial aid eligibility shall be reinstated, or
  - (b) the student fails to meet the institution's qualitative or quantitative standards for the courses in which he or she was enrolled during the probationary period, at which time the institution shall suspend the student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the review, or
  - (c) the institution determines that it is not possible for a student to raise her or his GPA or course completion percentage to meet the institution's standards before the student would reach the end of the program for which he or she is receiving financial aid, at which time the institution shall suspend the student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.
  
6. **Continuation of students who successfully appeal suspension.** Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress and are suspended from financial aid eligibility have the right to appeal based on unusual or extenuating circumstances. If an appeal is approved, the institution shall permit the student to retain financial aid eligibility under an appeal status for an additional period of time. The length of that period and the specific minimum academic standards that the student must meet during that period shall be determined by the institution and communicated to the student as part of the appeal resolution process. At the end of the appeal period, a student who has met the minimum agreed upon academic standards for that period shall have his/her appeal status extended for an additional period. A student who fails to meet the minimum agreed upon academic standards during the appeal period shall be removed from appeal status and his/her financial aid eligibility shall be suspended.

**Subpart B. Suspension of Students for Extraordinary Circumstances.** Institutions may immediately suspend students from financial aid eligibility in the event of extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to previously suspended (and reinstated) students whose academic performance falls below acceptable standards during a subsequent term of enrollment; students who register for courses, receive financial aid, and do not attend any classes; and students whose attendance patterns appear to abuse the receipt of financial aid.

**Part 6. Notification.** Institutions must notify a student in writing any time the student is placed in a probationary status. The notice shall inform the student of the conditions of that probationary status. An institution must also notify a student in writing when a student has been suspended from eligibility, and the process by which a student may appeal for reinstatement.

**Part 7. Appeals.** Institutional policies must include a provision to permit students to appeal a decision regarding their financial aid probation/suspension status. A student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress and is suspended from financial aid eligibility has the right to appeal based on unusual or extenuating circumstances.

The institutional policy should clearly define what types of unusual or extenuating circumstances may be considered, including but not limited to death of a relative, illness, hospitalization, or injury of the student.

The initial consideration of appeals shall be undertaken by the Director of Financial Aid or a designee. Appeals of adverse decisions shall be considered by an Appeals Committee. Results of all appeals must be communicated to students in writing.

**Part 8. Reinstatement.** Institutional policies must describe the process students must follow to have their financial aid eligibility reinstated. Neither paying for their own classes nor sitting out a period of time is sufficient in and of itself to re-establish a student's financial aid eligibility. Students whose financial aid eligibility has been suspended may regain their eligibility only through the institution's appeal process or when they are again meeting the institution's financial aid satisfactory academic progress qualitative and quantitative standards.

### **Part 9. Additional elements.**

**Subpart A. Treatment of grades.** Each SAP policy must state how the institution treats course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, and noncredit remedial, enrichment, and ESL course work in the determination of satisfactory progress.

Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, S and P are included in the calculation of cumulative credit completion percentage as courses successfully completed.

Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of I, N, NC, W, and F shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Blank ("Z") grades shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted.

Unless the institution has a specific policy indicating treatment of IP (in progress) grades as successful completion, they shall be treated as credits attempted but not completed.

If an institution chooses to use grades that are not listed in this procedure, the institution must specify in its institutional SAP policy how these grades affect GPA calculation, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame monitoring.

**Subpart B. Academic Amnesty.** Credits for which students have been granted academic amnesty ("academic forgiveness," "fresh start," etc.) shall be recorded and retained in the Student Data System in such a way that they will be included in both the qualitative and quantitative measurement of financial aid satisfactory academic progress.

**Subpart C. Audited Courses.** Audited courses shall not be funded by financial aid and are not included in any financial aid satisfactory academic progress measurements.

**Subpart D. Consortium Credits.** Credits for which financial aid is received under a consortium agreement will be recorded in the Student Data System to be included in cumulative GPA, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame calculations.

**Subpart E. Remedial/Developmental Credits.** Remedial/developmental credits shall be included in the qualitative and completion percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress. Up to 30 remedial/developmental credits shall be excluded from maximum time-frame calculation. Institutional policies must define how remedial/developmental credits will be used in maximum time-frame calculations.

**Subpart F. Repeated Courses.** Institutional policies must include a statement of the institution's treatment of repeated courses in the cumulative GPA and completion percentage calculation for financial aid satisfactory academic progress, including the number of times a course may be repeated and the total number of course repetitions allowed. This must conform to the institution's academic policy on repeated courses.

**Subpart G. Transfer Credits.** Transfer credits accepted by the institution shall not be counted as credits attempted for calculation of cumulative completion percentage, and grades associated with these credits shall not be used in calculating cumulative GPA.

Transfer credits accepted by the institution and applied by the institution toward a student's general education, program, or degree requirements shall apply toward the maximum time-frame calculation.

**Subpart H. Withdrawals.** Credits for which a grade of "W" is received are considered attempted credits but not successfully completed credits for the purpose of monitoring satisfactory academic progress. Thus, a "W" does not impact GPA but does negatively impact the cumulative completion percentage.

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