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Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

The United States Department of Education mandates that students maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward completion of their degrees within a reasonable period of time to be eligible for Title IV financial aid programs, including Pell, Federal SEOG, Federal Work Study, and Federal Direct Student Loans. As such, federal guidelines require that each institution establish a satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy that includes a quantitative component, a qualitative component and a time frame; and that such policy be at least as strict as the policy the institution applies to a student who is not receiving Title IV assistance. The policy must also explain how a student can regain financial aid eligibility after having it revoked, through an appeal procedure or otherwise. Students must be made aware of the applicable SAP policy when aid is awarded.

To monitor the satisfactory academic progress (SAP) of students applying for or receiving Title IV funds, all colleges comprising the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) will use the following measures, effective with the SAP evaluations occurring at the end of fall 2017, but no later than the spring 2018 semester:

(1) Grade point average- Achieving and maintaining at least a 2.00 grade point average
(2) Pace of progression- Passing a required number of hours (67% of all hours attempted)
(3) Maximum timeframe- Total overall hours must not exceed 150% of the published length of a student's degree program.

In addition, effective with the SAP evaluations occurring at the end of fall 2017 (but no later than the spring 2018 semester), all LCTCS colleges will evaluate satisfactory academic progress for all students at the end of each payment period and communicate with students in writing, via email, applying for or receiving Title IV funds. A payment period is the period of enrollment established by a college for which tuition and fees are charged and financial aid is disbursed.

All calculations will be based upon the cumulative academic record as transcribed by the college at the time of SAP evaluation.

Qualitative Standard/Cumulative GPA

The qualitative standard is the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA). The qualitative standard requires that a student achieve no less than a cumulative GPA of 2.00 at the end of each payment period. The cumulative academic record as transcribed by the college (including grades received at the college as well as transfer grades transcribed by the institution for attempted coursework) will be included in the cumulative GPA calculation. A student's cumulative grade point average will be calculated based upon all courses on the student's transcript- passed, failed, courses from which the student withdrew (officially or unofficially), repeated, and non-credit remedial/developmental coursework. The cumulative GPA calculation will not be rounded.

Quantitative Standard/Pace of Progression

In calculating the quantitative standard, the college will measure the "pace" at which the student is progressing. This is calculated by dividing the cumulative hours completed by the total cumulative hours attempted then rounding, if necessary, to the nearest whole number (e.g. 0.667 would be rounded to 67%). All students not on an academic plan (see below) must pass 67 percent of all overall hours attempted. All courses passed, all courses failed, courses from which the student withdrew (officially or unofficially), repeated courses, course for which the student received an incomplete, and non-credit remedial/developmental coursework will be considered in the calculation, even if the student did not receive financial aid.

Maximum Allowable Attempted Hours

Students may receive financial aid if they have attempted no more than 150% of the hours required to complete their program of study. The maximum timeframe will be calculated by multiplying the total number of hours required for a given program of study by 1.50. For example, if 60 credit hours are required to complete the program, the maximum allowable attempted hours for the degree is 90 (60 hours x 1.50= 90).

For both native and transfer students, hours attempted includes all hours pursued, received, withdrawn, and failed. All of these hours are counted as attempted even if the student did not receive federal financial aid. All calculations will be based upon the cumulative academic record as transcribed by the college at the time of SAP evaluation.

Other Factors Which May Impact a SAP Determination

<u>"I" Grades</u>

"I" (incomplete) grades could have an adverse effect on the student's ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress. An "I" grade will be considered "attempted," but will not

be considered to have been "completed." It is the student's responsibility to inform the Financial Aid Office if an "I" grade changes during a payment period. If the change of the grade will affect the student's financial aid eligibility, the Financial Aid Office will perform a recalculation of aid eligibility during the payment period. Otherwise, the change of grade will not be factored into the cumulative pace rate until the next SAP evaluation.

Developmental/Remedial Courses

The maximum number of hours that a student may receive Title IV federal aid for developmental/remedial courses is 30 hours. For SAP purposes, development courses will count as attempted hours, completed hours, and grades received, even if federal financial aid is not received for these courses.

Withdrawals

"W" (withdrawn) grades could have an adverse effect on the student's ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress. A "W" grade will be considered "attempted," but will not be considered to have been "completed."

Academic Renewal

Academic renewal does not affect or alter the student's financial aid records for purposes of determining financial aid eligibility. All hours attempted and grades received will continue to be counted for purposes of federal financial aid and satisfactory academic progress.

Transfer Students

Transfer students are required to meet the same standards as native students in order to receive federal financial aid. All transfer students shall initially be coded "TRANS" until the end of the first payment period when they are evaluated for SAP. At the time of the SAP evaluation only transfer credits transcribed by the college will be counted (as both attempted and completed hours) in the cumulative GPA, pace of progression, and maximum allowable hours components of the SAP determination.

First-time Freshmen

All first-time freshmen are considered to be meeting SAP upon enrollment. For SAP purposes, students with no prior post-secondary experience who are enrolling for the first time at the undergraduate level are first-time freshmen. Prior post-secondary experience does NOT include (1) credit received before earning a high school diploma (or equivalent), (2) credit received for completing tests or assessments, or (3) credit for life

experience or military service. However, credit received prior to earning a high school diploma (or equivalent), credit received as the result of completing any tests or assessments, or credit for life experience or military service – that is transcribed by the college will be considered starting with the SAP calculation performed at the conclusion of the first payment period following enrollment as a first-time freshman.

Repeated Courses

A student who has received a failing grade in a required course at the college may repeat the course, pursuant to the college's policy on repeating courses. For the purposes of SAP, required courses that are failed and repeated multiple times will count toward a student's hours attempted, hours completed, and grades received. Also pursuant to federal regulations, a student may only receive federal financial aid for one repetition (repeat) of any previously passed course. All repeated courses will be included in the total attempted hours for SAP evaluation.

Change of Major

Students who change their major are still expected to complete the coursework for the new major within the maximum allowable hours. All attempted hours from a prior major will be included in the total attempted hours. If a change in major results in a student not meeting SAP, the student may submit a SAP appeal that, if granted, will allow the student to continue receiving aid while under an academic plan.

Second Degree

A student who completes his/her degree then pursues a second degree at the same level (i.e. a student with an Associate's Degree who begins a new program to earn a second Associate's Degree) is still expected to complete the coursework for the second degree within the maximum allowable hours. All attempted hours from the previous degree at the same level will be included in the total attempted hours. If pursuing a second degree at the same level results in a student not meeting SAP, the student may submit a SAP appeal that, if granted, will allow the student to continue receiving aid while under an academic plan.

Pass/Non-Pass Grades

Pass/Non-pass grades will not impact the cumulative GPA component of a SAP determination. However, they will be included in the pace of progression and maximum allowable hours components.

Re-Establishing Eligibility

A student who is not making satisfactory academic progress may choose not to submit an appeal. If this is the case, the student will not be eligible to receive federal financial aid until he or she is in compliance with all components of the SAP policy. Not enrolling in college for a period of time then re-enrolling will not bring the student into compliance with the SAP policy. The student will need to attend classes without federal financial aid at his/her own expense until he/she is once again in compliance with the policy. This may take several payment periods to accomplish, but it will be the responsibility of the student to improve his/her academic performance during this time. A student may request his/her academic record be reviewed by the Financial Aid Office. If the student is found to be in compliance, eligibility for federal financial aid can be re-established.

The SAP Review Process

Satisfactory academic progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period by the college's Financial Aid Department for all students, and students who received aid the previous semester (payment period) will be notified of their updated status, in writing, via email.

Status Codes

All LCTCS colleges will use the following codes to comply with this policy:

(1) NEW - student is attending college for the first time, this includes students who received credit (1) before earning a high school diploma (or equivalent), (2) for completing tests or assessments, or (3) for life experience or military service

(2) TRANS- student is enrolling in the college for the first time and has previously attended another postsecondary institution.

(3) GOOD - student meets all three standards and is eligible to receive federal financial aid

(4) WARN - student failed to meet at least one of the standards at the end of the previous payment period and the student was in "good" or "new" standing during that previous payment period

(5) APLAN – student failed to meet SAP, was granted an appeal, is placed on an Academic Plan

(6) BAD- student is not meeting SAP and is not eligible to receive federal financial aid for the next payment period of enrollment

Communications

LCTCS colleges have the autonomy to develop BANNER user defined fields that can be utilized to customize communications to students regarding SAP status and the SAP appeal process.

Appeals

Students who do not meet SAP standards have the right to submit an appeal to the college's Financial Aid Appeals Committee. Appeals must be submitted by the college's established deadlines, which should be published on the college's website. Appeals are typically based upon mitigating circumstances such as prolonged illness, accidents that required hospitalization of the student or a close family member, death of an immediate family member, or other extreme documented incidents. All appeals must include documentation that: (1) substantiates claims being made in the appeal and (2) demonstrates a change in current circumstances, making academic success likely if the appeal is granted. Appeals can only be made once per payment period.

If an appeal is approved, the student will be placed on an Academic Plan. The student will then be evaluated at the end of each payment period based on that plan.

SAP appeal decisions are final and cannot be overridden. If an appeal is denied, the student is not eligible for federal aid and must attend at their own expense until (1) the student meets the academic standards as outlined in the SAP policy or (2) the student successfully appeals and is approved to be placed on an academic plan in a future payment period.

Academic Plan

An Academic Plan is specifically designed for a student who does not meet at least one of the standards at the end of the previous payment period and who's Financial Aid Appeal has been granted. The requirements within the Academic Plan must be met to regain eligibility. Students will need to meet the standards of the Academic Plan each payment period until meeting the SAP standards. Not enrolling in college for a period of time then re-enrolling will not bring the student into compliance with the SAP policy, and may require the student's academic plan to be re-adjusted.
At minimum, the Academic Plan will require that the student do the following:

(1) Earn a GPA of 2.00 or greater each payment period
(2) Pass 75 percent of all hours attempted each payment period

Individual LCTCS colleges may require students to meet additional requirements, such as taking specific courses and/or meeting with academic advisors.

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