

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

It is the student's responsibility to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Regulations imposed by the U.S. Department of Education require Hagerstown Community College to establish satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards for all financial aid recipients. All federal financial aid recipients must be enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program. Students must be making measurable academic progress toward completion of their degree or certificate program in order to be eligible to receive financial assistance from any of the following programs: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant, Federal Work-Study, Federal Stafford Loan, and the State Student Grant.

SAP standards measure a student's performance in three areas:

- GPA (Qualitative) Standards,
- Completion Rate (Pace Standards) and
- Maximum Time Frame

### **GPA (Qualitative Standards):**

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale. Both college level and developmental courses will be included in the cumulative calculation of GPA for SAP requirements.

The entire history for a student is used for this calculation. Courses under Academic Amnesty must count in the calculation for SAP requirements as mandated by federal law. Transfer credits are not used in calculating GPA for SAP but are counted as attempted and completed for completion rate. Classes dropped during the period for no-grade will not be considered when calculating SAP. Courses only count in the GPA calculation once, and the highest letter grade received is used. **Please see HCC's Student Financial Aid Office to request a recalculation appeal if you had a grade change after a SAP calculation.**

### **Completion Rate (Pace):**

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67% or 2/3rds of all classes attempted. Completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of credits completed by the number of credits attempted. Example: A new student with no prior academic history at HCC enrolls in two courses each for three-credit hours. The student receives an "F" in one class and a "B" in the other making the student's completion rate 50%. As all students must maintain a completion rate of 67% of all courses attempted (cumulative – not per semester), this student would not be meeting the SAP requirements. A 66.67% or higher completion rate will be considered a "67%" for rounding purposes.

The entire history for a student is used for this calculation, including developmental and credited ESL courses. Courses under Academic Amnesty must count in the calculation for SAP requirements as mandated by federal law. In addition to any credits attempted at HCC, all credits transferred into HCC will count as both completed and attempted credits.

The following grades count as attempted coursework but not completed coursework:

- D
- F – Failure
- W – Withdraw
- AU – Audit
- I - Incomplete Course - It is the student's responsibility to request re-evaluation of SAP status upon course completion

**Incompletes, Withdraws, and retakes:**

If a student receives an incomplete grade for a course, that counts as an attempted course but not as a completed course in regards to SAP. If a course is initially counted as an incomplete and then is changed to a passing grade, the student would need to notify the Student Financial Aid Office. At this point, SAP would be re-calculated with the new grade considered. If a student is on an academic plan and receives an incomplete grade, the student would be considered to not be honoring the plan.

Students who withdraw may receive a grade of “W” for the course. A withdraw grade of “W” counts as an attempted course but not as a completed course. If a student is on an academic plan and receives a “W” grade, then they are considered to not be honoring their plan.

Please note that coursework can only count as completed for one attempt and passing the same course twice will only increase the attempted credits, thus negatively impacting completion rate. Financial Aid can only be applied toward one repeated attempt at a previously passed course (D or better). It is the student’s responsibility to know and adhere to the Add/Drop dates published each semester in the Credit Class Schedules. Classes dropped during the period for no-grade will not be considered when calculating SAP. If the student fails the course after he/she passed it the first time, the passing grade will still count for fulfilling the requirement of the course; however, the failing grade will also count for an attempted course.

If a student fails a course on his/her first attempt, he/she is allowed to retake the course until a passing grade is received. Once the student passes, the previously mentioned rule goes into effect.

**Maximum Time Frame:**

Students must complete their program of study within 150% of the published length of the program. Maximum Time Frame is calculated based on the current active program of study with the greatest number of credits required for completion. For example, if a student is pursuing an associate degree program with 60 required credits **and** a certificate program that requires 16 credits, the student’s MTF status would be calculated only on the associate degree program. This student would reach MTF at 90 credits ( $60 \times 1.5 = 90$ ). A student who fails to complete his or her program of study within 150% of the published length of the program will lose eligibility for Financial Aid.

The entire history for a student is used for this calculation, including developmental and credited ESL courses. Courses under Academic Amnesty must count in the calculation for SAP requirements as mandated by federal law. In addition to any credits attempted at HCC, all credits transferred into HCC will be included in this calculation. New students transferring into HCC could potentially be considered Maximum Time Frame. Classes dropped during the period for no- grade will not be considered when calculating SAP.

**Students’ SAP will be calculated each semester after all grades are submitted. After the calculation is completed, students will be notified via their student email address. Students may also view the SAP status online via Self Service (Student Portal). Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress will result in the following actions:**

***Financial Aid Warning Status:***

- Status assigned to a student who fails to meet the GPA, completion rate, and/or Maximum Time Frame requirements after SAP is calculated.
- Students assigned to this status will continue to receive aid for one semester for a chance to improve their completion rate and/or GPA.
- No appeal is necessary.
- Students who do not meet the SAP Requirements (2.00 GPA and 67% pace) after the warning semester will have their aid removed for the next semester, but are eligible to appeal this decision if extenuating circumstances warrant an appeal.

***Financial Aid Denial Status:***

- Status assigned to a student who fails to meet the GPA, completion rate, and/or Maximum Time Frame requirements after the warning semester has ended, or a student who reaches Maximum Time Frame for his/her program of study.
- All of the named federal and state financial aid will be removed from the student's account.
- Students on denial can regain eligibility for financial aid in one of two ways:

Method 1 - Pay until Satisfactory:

- Process by which student pays out-of-pocket until the student is meeting the pace and GPA requirements **and** has not yet reached or exceeded maximum time frame.
- **It is the student's responsibility to request a recalculation of SAP to determine if the student has regained eligibility. Please see HCC's Student Financial Aid Office to request a recalculation appeal if you had a grade change.**

Method 2 - Appeal Process:

- Process by which a student who is denied financial aid for failing to meet the SAP requirements appeals to HCC's Student Financial Aid Office for reconsideration of the student's eligibility for Financial Aid.
- Submission of an appeal does not guarantee that the appeal will be granted.
- Appeals must be submitted to the Student Financial Aid Office by the following deadlines in order to be considered for a particular semester. The deadlines are as follows: **November 1st for fall, April 1st for spring, and July 1st for summer.**
- A student can appeal by submitting a complete SAP Appeal Form or MTF Appeal Form (as applicable), a typed appeal statement, and all documentation supporting the student's claims.
- Extenuating circumstances (death of an immediate family member, personal injury or illness, or other undue hardship) affecting the student's ability to complete past coursework must be documented if applicable.
- Students must explain why they have not successfully completed courses in the past and document what has changed making them more likely to academically succeed in the future.
- If the student is meeting the pace and GPA requirements, but has exceeded MTF, the student must explain why they have not completed their degree within 150% of the published length of the program (based on attempted credits, not length of time). Students who are double-majoring will need to explain in their appeals how the two majors come together to help them achieve their overall career goals.
- If the student's appeal is denied, the student can resort to paying until he or she is satisfactory, see method one.
- Students whose appeals pass the first step will be placed on the following:
  - Academic Plan Probation – Students must meet with a SFAO counselor to the academic plan and contract form. Only coursework required for the student's active program(s) of study can be included on the academic plan. Additionally, students must complete all courses with a grade of "C" or better – grades of "D", "F", "I", "AU", and "W" are considered not passing. Students **cannot** pay out of pocket for additional coursework outside of their program of study while on the academic plan except in rare circumstances (please see the Student Financial Aid Office for further details). Students must adhere to the plan in its entirety.
  - Per the Federal Student Aid Handbook, "Students must also appeal to change their plan." If a student must update her plan (i.e. a change in major), the student must submit a statement (and documentation as necessary) detailing what has happened that has resulted in a need for the plan to be revised. If approved, the student will need to meet with a SFAO counselor to update the plan.
- Students placed on denial after failing to honor a contract/plan are eligible to appeal again; however, the committee is **much stricter** when considering second appeals.