

# **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy and Procedure**

## **Definition**

A policy that defines the academic progress a student must meet and maintain to be eligible for Title IV aid.

## **Consistency**

The policy must be as strict as the policy used for students who did not receive Title IV aid. The policy must be applied consistently to all students within identifiable categories.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy**

The Academic and Financial Aid SAP policies at Rochester College are one and the same. Students may be labeled with Financial Aid actions, regardless of whether or not they are financial aid recipients.

At the end of each semester (including summer), the Registrar and Student Financial Services offices will review the student's file to determine if the student is meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.

*Note: Students will be notified in writing that a financial aid action has been taken. Financial Aid action notices will be distributed after final grades are reported for the semester.*

The following minimum requirements are used to measure a student's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) towards the completion of a degree.

## **Qualitative Standards**

The policy includes a qualitative measure of the student's progress using the student's grade point average (GPA). A student must maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average in order to retain eligibility for financial aid at Rochester College.

*Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.0*

Failing to maintain the required minimum 2.0 CGPA will result in the actions described below.

**Incomplete (I's) grades effect on Qualitative Standards:** "I's do not count towards qualitative standards until a grade is posted to the transcript. Students are eligible for Incomplete grades only when they cannot complete a course for unavoidable reasons such as extended illness, which must be documented by a physician's note. To qualify for an incomplete, a student must fulfill the 70% attendance policy. An online application is available on the student portal. Applications are accepted no sooner than two weeks before the end of the session or term and no later than two weeks after the end of the session or term. The instructor will specify the requirements for completing the course, and the registrar will notify students regarding the approval or denial of their request, based on the recommendation of the school dean/director. An incomplete grade (I) is changed to the grade earned if the student does not complete the coursework within the timeline determined by the instructor, which cannot exceed three months past the end of the session or term, following approval.

## **Quantitative Standards**

The policy includes a quantitative measure of the student's progress. The policy specifies how hours taken in summer school will affect the quantitative measure of progress. The quantitative standards are cumulative and include periods of enrollment in which the student did not receive aid. In addition to maintaining the required minimum CGPA of 2.0, a student must also maintain a minimum cumulative completion rate (CCR) of hours attempted at 67%. At the end of each semester (including summer), the Student Financial Services office will determine the CCR for each student. Attempted credits are defined as credits the student is enrolled in at the end of the official drop/add period.

*Cumulative Completion Rate (CCR) of 67%*

### Cumulative Credits Completed

Cumulative Credits Attempted

Cumulative Credits Completed does not include: hours with "F" Failing, "W" Withdrawal, or "I" Incomplete grade reports.

Cumulative Attempted Hours includes: successfully completed hours, accepted transfer hours, courses previously taken and repeated, hours with "W's", "F's", or "I's" in grade reports.

Courses not considered hours attempted or completed when calculating SAP include: audited courses.

## **Duration of Eligibility (Maximum Timeframe)**

The policy sets a maximum time frame in which a student is expected to finish their program. The established maximum time frame for completion of an undergraduate and graduate program of study cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the program for a full-time student. This incremental assessment of progress compares the number of hours the student attempted to the number of hours the student successfully completed, to see if the student is progressing at a rate that will allow him/her to finish the program within the maximum time frame. A student's eligibility for financial aid is terminated when the total hours attempted equals 150% of the hours needed to complete a degree plan (i.e., for a degree plan requiring 128 hours, aid would be terminated at 192 hours attempted). Transfer hours are included in the "total hours attempted and earned". All hours attempted are included, regardless of whether the student received financial aid for the hours or not.

The maximum time frame process includes periods of enrollment in which the student did not receive aid.

## **Financial Aid Actions**

**Financial Aid Warning:** Students on Academic Alert and all other students who do not meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards after one semester are placed on Financial Aid Warning.

Traditional students on Financial Aid Warning are encouraged to spend an average of two hours per week in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) lab working with an ACE lab tutor on a designated assignment and may take no more than 12 credit hours.

To be reinstated to a status of "good standing," students must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards.

**Financial Aid Probation:** Students who do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards the semester after they were placed on Financial Aid Warning will be ineligible for financial aid. The student may appeal and if approved, go on an "academic plan" and be granted Financial Aid Probation. Traditional students on Financial Aid Probation are encouraged to spend an average of two hours per week in the ACE lab working with an ACE lab tutor. Students will be eligible for financial aid while on Financial Aid Probation.

**Financial Aid Suspension:** Students who do not meet the minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards the semester after being placed

on Financial Aid Warning or students who do not adhere to the “academic plan” set for them by their academic advisor the semester after being placed on Financial Aid Probation are placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

Students who are on Financial Aid Suspension may enroll for up to 6 hours of credits during the suspension semester; however, they are not eligible for financial aid from government, state, or college sources.

To be reinstated to “good standing” status, students must meet all three minimum requirements (GPA, CCR, Duration).

**Good Standing:** Student meets 2.0 CGPA, 67% CCR, 150% duration requirements.

### **Programs Affected**

Students on Financial Aid Suspension may not receive financial aid including, but not limited to, the following programs:

Federal Aid (Pell Grant, Supplemental Grant, Work study, Stafford Loans, Perkins Loan, Parent PLUS loan, Grad PLUS loan).

Any institutional scholarships

Any private/endowed scholarships with GPA or SAP requirement, if the student fails to meet the requirement

### **Appeal Process**

To be placed on Financial Aid Probation, students must appeal, explain their failure to meet SAP, and describe what has changed to allow them now to regain SAP standards. They must submit documentation from their academic advisor supporting the appeal. An academic plan must be agreed to by the student and an academic official. Students should be prepared to seek other options if the appeal is not approved. Students who have faced extraordinary circumstances may appeal if placed on Financial Aid Suspension. Extraordinary circumstances may include but are not limited to an illness or death in the student’s immediate family or an illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment process. Documentation of circumstances is required. The student must initiate the appeal procedure but completing an online form sent to them directly in the correspondence of notifying them of their academic action. Appeals will be sent to the SAP committee for review. Once a decision is made, a nominated member of the committee will communicate the decision to the student and the next steps for the student will be outlined. If the appeal was declined, the notification

will outline how many hours they may take with no financial assistance. If approved, the notification will outline steps to take for Probation.

### **Specific Appeal Process**

The student will receive an outline of how to appeal their academic action, a link to complete an appeal form, and a deadline for the appeal to be considered after any semester end date in which they are placed on academic action. Students' appeals are reviewed on the basis of injury, illness, death of a relative or other special circumstances. If the appeal is approved and the student is determined to be able to meet SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation without the need for an academic plan. The probation status and if required the academic plan is reviewed after each semester. Students must appeal to change their academic plan. All appeals are reviewed and approved/denied by the Satisfactory Academic Appeal Committee. The Satisfactory Academic Appeal Committee is made up of the following members:

Registrar  
Accelerated Learning Advisor  
Academic Center for Excellence Coordinator  
Discipline and Appeals Committee Member  
Director of Advising  
Director of Student Financial Services  
Dean of Students

The appeal form that students will submit to request an appeal for their academic action includes the following required submissions:

Term requesting appeal  
Category or Categories of SAP in which the student did meet the standard (GPA, CCR, 150% duration)  
Obstacles and/or special circumstances the student believes prevented them from meeting the standards  
Support resources used by the student  
Plan of action and explanation of what has changed in the student's situation that will allow them to make SAP at the next evaluation or meet their academic plan requirements

Once the student's appeal is received by the SAP committee, their academic advisor, their coach if they are an athlete and their resident director if they are a residential student, will submit their recommendation on the electronic appeal response form. All committee members will review the student's

appeal and recommendation(s) and make an approval or denial decision based on the submissions. The committee will notify the student of the appeal decision by 5pm on the Tuesday following the appeal deadline. Committee decisions are final. The appeal decision will outline the student's options of enrollment and payment for enrollment, based on their approval or denial.

### **Repeated Courses**

Courses that are repeated for which the student previously received a grade of "F" or "W" will count in the calculation of hours attempted. The grade from the first attempt will not be included in calculating the CGPA.

Courses that are repeated for which the student previously received a passing grade will count ONCE toward determining financial aid eligibility during the semester taken, and all repeated coursework will count toward cumulative attempted hours. Example 1: A student takes four 3-credit hour courses in a given semester (12 credit hours total). One course is a repeat (ONCE) of a successfully completed course. Subsequently, the financial aid determination for that semester will be based on 12 credit hours. Example 2: A student takes four 3-credit hour courses in a given semester (12 credit hours total). One course is a repeat of an already repeated successfully completed course. Subsequently, the financial aid determination for that semester will be based on 9 credit hours.

### **Change of Degree**

Students wishing to change their degree plan should notify the Academic Services Office and then notify the Student Financial Services office about making a determination of eligibility for the new program of study. The SAP determination for the new degree will include the grades and credits attempted/earned that can be transferred into the new degree.

### **Additional Degree**

Students wishing to seek an additional degree should receive degree approval from the Academic Services Office and then notify the Student Financial Services office to make a determination of eligibility for the additional program of study. The SAP determination for the degree will include the credits attempted/earned that can be transferred into the additional degree.

### **Transfer Credits**

Transfer credits earned at another institution that are accepted at RC toward the degree a student is currently pursuing shall be used in computing the total credits attempted and earned but will not be used in determining the CGPA.

Transfer credit may apply toward a traditional degree but is limited to no more than 34 semester hours toward the Associate's degree and 98 hours toward the Bachelor's degree. In the Center for Extended Learning, up to 47 semester hours may transfer toward an Associate's degree and up to 90 semester hours may be transferred toward the Bachelor's degree completion program. For any degree, at least 50% of a student's major core must be earned at Rochester College.

### **Re-establishing Eligibility**

The policy includes procedures for reinstatement of aid eligibility. A student may be paid for the semester in which he/she regains satisfactory academic standing, however, not for the periods when he/she was not making progress. Rochester College requires satisfactory progress toward a degree as an eligibility requirement for financial assistance.

Reinstatement is available automatically by earning additional hours at Rochester College or another accredited institution and meeting the total earned hours standard (an official transcript documenting the earned hours must be submitted), and the other SAP standards, or by approved appeal. The student must initiate the appeal procedure but completing an online form sent to them directly in the correspondence of notifying them of their satisfactory academic action.

### **Academic Alert**

Academic Alert applies only to students new to Rochester College who are admitted, but who do not meet the unconditional admission requirements due to high school GPA or ACT/SAT Scores. Traditional students on Academic Alert must participate in ACE lab workshops on study skills in the first weeks of the semester and take no more than 15 credit hours. Attendance at ACE lab workshops will be a significant factor in the outcome of appeals to remain eligible for financial aid.

To achieve a status of "good standing," students must earn a CGPA of 2.0 or higher. Students who do not meet the minimum CGPA requirement of 2.0 during the first semester after being admitted on Academic Alert are placed on Financial Aid Warning.

