

## **POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS – EFFECTIVE FALL 2019**

The Office of Student Financial Aid has established the following policies and procedures stated to fulfill the requirements expressed in the Higher Education Act (HEA). The Satisfactory Academic Progress policies and procedures of Washington College are reviewed when changes at the federal or institutional level require review to ensure compliance with Federal Regulations. All Washington College students applying for Title IV federal and selected other types of assistance must meet the criteria stated hereafter regardless of whether or not they previously received aid.

Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid eligibility should not be confused with the College's academic progress policy. These are two distinct and totally separate policies. It is entirely possible to fail to meet minimum standards of one policy and pass the minimum standards of the other.

***Policy Requirements*** – The HEA revised section 668 contains updated regulations concerning Satisfactory Academic Progress. Section 668 requires that an institution establish, publish and apply reasonable standards for measuring a student's ability to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Such standards must meet the following qualifications:

1. Contain standards that are the same as or stricter than the institution's standards for a student enrolled in the same educational program who is not receiving assistance under a Title IV, HEA program.
2. Include both a qualitative (grade-based) element and a quantitative (time-based) element.
3. Evaluate student progress in both elements annually, at a minimum.
4. Provide specific procedures under which a student may appeal a determination that the student is not making satisfactory progress including documentation of extenuating circumstances.
5. Provide specific procedures for a student to re-establish that he or she is maintaining "satisfactory progress."
6. Describe the pace at which a student must progress toward a degree to complete degree requirements within the allowed timeframe providing measurement at each evaluation.
7. Describe how GPA and pace of completion are affected by transfer credit.
8. Require that if the student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the student is no longer eligible to receive aid.
9. Notify students of the results of the evaluation at the end of the annual review as to whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components.
10. Define terms used in discussing the evaluation of satisfactory academic progress including the terms appeal, probation, academic plan, and maximum timeframe.
11. Provide for consistent application of standards to all students within categories of students, e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and graduate students and educational programs established by the institution.

The programs governed by these regulations are:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)

Satisfactory Academic Progress standards include three elements:

1. Maximum time frame within which a degree or certificate must be granted,
2. Minimum completion percentage, and
3. Minimum cumulative grade point average.

**SAP Definitions** – HEA section 668 requires that Washington College define various terms related to the evaluation of SAP.

**Maximum Timeframe (MTF)** – The required length of time it will take a student to complete a degree program or certificate based on the appropriate enrollment status. Federal regulations allow a student to be eligible to receive aid up to 150% of the time that it would normally take to complete a degree. All credit hours in which a student enrolls or transfers to Washington College are included in the maximum time frame calculation, regardless of the number of degrees a student chooses to obtain. Grades that are considered credit hours attempted and completed in the calculation of maximum time frame include: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, I, W.

**Minimum Completion Percentage (MCP)** – The percentage of coursework that a student must earn during enrollment. Washington College requires students to earn passing grades in 67% of the hours in which they enroll during the evaluation period. Grades that are considered hours earned include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, P.

**Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average** – The minimum GPA a student must have earned at the end of the evaluation period. A 2.0 CGPA is required. In addition, the HEA requires a specific qualitative review at the end of the student's second academic year. Students must have a 2.0 CPGA of at least a "C" or better.

**SAP Appeal** – The process by which a student who is not meeting the institution's standards petitions the institution for reconsideration of the student's eligibility. Students are evaluated at the close of spring semester annually. At this time, any student not meeting all SAP components will be ineligible for any further financial aid. Students may submit an appeal to be considered for reinstatement on a probationary status of no more than one semester to resolve all deficiencies. Students who appeal, but for whom it would be mathematically impossible to resolve all deficiencies in one semester, will be placed on an academic plan. Per Federal Regulations, Washington College can only consider appeals based on the death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstance. Appeals must include documentation of circumstances on which the appeal is based. Appeals must also specify why the student failed to satisfy SAP requirements and what has changed in the student's situation.

**SAP Probation** – A status assigned to a student who fails to satisfy SAP requirements, who has successfully appealed and had eligibility for aid reinstated. Reinstatement of aid during this probationary period may be no longer than one semester. Additional periods of probation are determined by performance during previously approved probationary periods.

**Academic Plan** – Students may be placed on an academic plan upon submission of a successful appeal. If it is mathematically impossible for a student to resolve all deficiencies during one semester of attendance and the student's reason for appeal is appropriate according to federal regulations, the student may be placed on an academic plan with the end goal being to resolve all deficiencies. An academic plan can vary in length and is determined by the Office of the Associate Provost and Dean. The Academic Plan does not have to equate to the exact number of semesters it would take a student to resolve all deficiencies. Students granted aid eligibility through an academic plan may receive aid for up to one year before conducting a review of the student's performance. If the student is meeting the criteria identified in the SAP appeal approval at the annual review, the student's academic plan may be extended.

**Reinstatement** – The act of removing all SAP deficiencies reinstating aid eligibility. Reinstatement is defined as removing all deficiencies acquired during all period of enrollment or caused by transfer credits. Reinstatement is not a status granted in regard to an appeal.

**SAP Components** – The following provide detailed information regarding the evaluation of the three components required in the review of SAP.

**Maximum Time Frame (MTF)**

Undergraduate students receiving financial aid must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and make steady progress toward the completion of their degree as described below. The maximum time frame for program completion is defined as 150% of the credits required to complete the degree program as defined by Washington College. For example, a typical Bachelor’s degree requires 128 credits:  $128 \times 150\% = 192$  credits. 192 credits is the maximum that can be attempted with financial aid.

<b>Attempted Credits</b>	<b>Grade Point Average Requirements</b>	<b>Minimum Cumulative Credit Completion</b>
0 - 32	2.00*	67% of attempted credits
33 - 48	2.00	67% of attempted credits
49 - 64	2.00	67% of attempted credits
65 – 80	2.00	67% of attempted credits
81 or more	2.00	67% of attempted credits

\*This GPA requirement has been changed since this policy was originally enacted, and will not go in effect until the 2017-2018 academic year.

Transfer credits accepted by Washington College will be included in the progress completion requirement and minimum CGPA requirement (if the College transferred in the grade). Students who have not completed their undergraduate degree after 192 attempted hours (including transfer credits) will no longer be eligible for financial aid. Students must graduate with a cumulative 2.0 cumulative grade point average.

Undergraduate students must earn a minimum of a 2.00 cumulative grade point average by the end of all subsequent award years to be eligible for aid in addition to meeting a 2.00 cumulative grade point average at the end of their second academic year.

**SAP Notifications** – At a minimum, students will be notified of the results of the annual SAP review. All students will receive notification of their SAP standing regarding of their status. Students who comply with Federal Regulations will receive their financial aid award for the upcoming academic year. Correspondence will be sent to students via email. Academic Advisors will receive a copy of SAP notifications in the event that an advisee fails to meet the SAP standards.

**SAP Ineligible** – This letter is sent to students who have failed to meet, at least, one component of SAP. Students found to be deficient in GPA, MCP, and/or MTF after the annual review are considered ineligible for all forms of financial aid during the subsequent award year. Aid can only be reinstated through a successful, documented appeal or by resolving all deficiencies.

**SAP Probation Removed** – This letter is sent to students who were on a probationary status during their prior term of attendance and have now resolved all of their deficiencies. This status is approved at the end of the term of probation and is determined by successful removal of SAP deficiencies. To receive SAP Probation Removed, students must have achieved the minimum GPA required for their academic career and level and must reach, at least, 67% of accumulative course completion. Students who fail to meet these criteria will be ineligible for financial aid unless all deficiencies are satisfied.

**SAP Probation Denial** – This letter is sent to students who were on a probationary status during their prior term of attendance and did not resolve all deficiencies. Students who fail to resolve all deficiencies will be ineligible for financial aid. Students in this situation cannot have aid reinstated. They have already submitted an appeal during a prior term and, thus, have exhausted their right to appeal. Resolution of all deficiencies is the only mechanism that a student may again be considered eligible for financial aid.

**SAP Academic Plan Extension** – This letter is sent to students who were on an academic plan during their prior term of attendance and met all requirements of their plan and/or resolved all deficiencies. This status is granted upon specified review of the academic plan or during the annual review. Unless otherwise specified, students must maintain the minimum GPA required for the academic career for the term and must complete, at least, 67% of courses attempted. Students who fail to meet these criteria or those communicated specifically in the SAP correspondence will be ineligible for financial aid unless all deficiencies are satisfied.

**SAP Academic Plan Denial** – This letter is sent to students who were on an academic plan during their prior term of attendance and did not meet all requirements of that plan or resolve all SAP deficiencies. Students who fail to meet these criteria or those communicated specifically in the SAP correspondence will be ineligible for financial aid. Students in this situation cannot have aid reinstated. They have already submitted an appeal during a prior term and, thus, have exhausted their right to appeal. Resolution of all deficiencies is the only mechanism that a student may again be considered eligible for financial aid.

***SAP Appeal Procedures*** - Beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, significant changes were made to the appeal process. Federal regulations do not require that a school allow students an opportunity to appeal an unsatisfactory status. Washington College has chosen to exercise the ability to use professional judgment and entertain appeals for reinstatement of aid for no more than one term of probation. Students for whom it would be mathematically impossible to resolve all deficiencies during one term may be placed on an academic plan, which gives much more flexibility in financial aid reinstatement. However, per federal regulations, only appeals documenting specific circumstances will be considered for approval. The Admission and Student Aid Committee overseeing SAP will review the content of the appeal. Only appeals that document the following reasons will be considered:

- Serious physical or mental illness of the student
- Serious physical or mental illness of the student's immediate family member
- Death of the student's immediate family member
- Other extreme circumstances

If the appeal is not submitted for one of these reasons, it will automatically be denied by the Director of Student Aid and will not be heard by the SAP Appeal Committee. If the appeal is submitted based on an approved circumstance, but does not provide documentation of said circumstance(s), the Director will contact the student and request the documentation. If the appeal is complete and all necessary documentation is provided, the Director will prepare to present the appeal to the SAP Appeal Committee.

Students may only submit one appeal per academic career. For example, students may appeal once as an undergraduate and once as a graduate. Exceptions may be made for students who have not attended Washington College for, at least, three full academic years.

For students who have exceeded the maximum timeframe, consideration for reinstatement may be given up to 175% of the normal time it takes to complete a degree in the student's academic career. Appeals for students who have exceeded 175% of the normal time it would take to complete the degree they are pursuing will not be considered. Students who have exceeded this cap may only pursue alternative loan funding. They will no longer be considered for financial aid during their academic career.

There is no secondary appeal process. If an appeal is denied, students can only be reinstated for aid eligibility if they satisfy all deficiencies. If an appeal is approved and the student does not fulfill the conditions of his or her probation or academic plan, the student will not be eligible for aid for any future semesters during their academic career unless the student satisfies all deficiencies.

***SAP Probation*** – In cases where the appeal is approved, the student may only be permitted one semester of aid. During this semester, the student is considered to be on SAP Probation. Unless otherwise specified, students must maintain the minimum GPA required for the academic career for the semester and must complete, at least, 67% of courses attempted to be extended for the subsequent semester. Students on SAP Probation for timeframe will be

reviewed to determine if the academic plan (timetable) is currently being followed and future enrollment is following this plan.

At the end of each semester, all students on SAP Probation will be reviewed to determine whether the student maintained the minimum GPA and MCP and/or the MTF academic plan is being followed. If a student fails to meet these criteria, the student loses aid eligibility. It will not be reinstated unless the student satisfies all SAP deficiencies at the end of the evaluation period. Notification of the semester probation review will be sent to students.

At the SAP annual review, students who were on probation or an academic plan during their most recent semester of attendance will be reviewed for an additional probationary term or continuation of the academic plan in the next academic year.

***Eligibility for Reinstatement*** – A student may be reinstated for federal and selected other types of financial assistance by successfully satisfying all deficiencies. Students who regain eligibility by resolving all deficiencies will be identified during the annual SAP review.

**Merit scholarship recipients** will be reviewed by the Student Aid Committee under individual merit program GPA requirements.