Program Based Academic Standing
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy
2021-2022
Financial Assistance Services
St. Petersburg College

Purpose:

To adhere to Federal regulations which require all Title IV institutions to have a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy in place that ensures that financial aid recipients (students) are **moving through** their academic program of study at a **reasonable rate** and are **making progress toward their degree**. SPC believes that a Program Based SAP Policy provides a more equitable assessment of academic performance (for both native and transfer students).

Policy:

SAP is measured in three areas: Minimum Cumulative Financial Aid GPA, Completion Ratio (Pace), and Maximum Time Frame. Students must meet the requirements in **ALL THREE** areas each term to maintain eligibility for financial assistance. These three SAP measures will be based on all coursework that is applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study.

At the end of each term, an evaluation will occur to determine if a student is meeting SAP to receive financial assistance at SPC, regardless of program length. All financial aid applicants are evaluated whether they received financial assistance in prior terms or not.

Students who attended SPC in the past and re-enroll will be reviewed for SAP for financial aid purposes on all previously attempted courses and transfer credits that are applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study regardless of how long ago they attended SPC or whether or not aid was received.

Students may modify their initial course schedule up to the last day to drop with a refund. Classes that are dropped during this time period are not counted as part of the SAP evaluation process. If a student withdraws after the "Withdraw" with a 'W'" date, it may negatively affect the Completion Ratio and Maximum Time Frame requirements.

If a student changes degree or certificate programs, his/her SAP calculation will reset to only count those credit hours that are applicable to the student's new program of study. Grades that do not count toward the new program of study will **not** be included in the SAP calculation.

Financial aid does not pay for credit hours that are audited. Non-credit continuing education and non-credit Corporate Training classes are not eligible for financial aid funding and are not included in any SAP calculation.

2021-2022 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Remedial and English as a Second Language (ESL) credit hours

All Remedial and ESL credit hours attempted <u>are</u> included in the Financial Aid GPA.

Remedial and most ESL credit hours attempted are <u>NOT</u> included in the Completion Ratio (Pace) or Maximum Time Frame calculations. There are two exceptions: EAP 1500 (Advanced Listening/Speaking) and EAP 1695 (Advanced English as a Second Language II) are included in the Completion Ratio (Pace) and Maximum Time Frame calculations.

Please remember financial aid will only pay up to 30 remedial credit hours. Example: Student previously attempted 31 remedial credit hours in prior terms. Student is currently enrolled in 12 credits, of which 6 are remedial and 6 are college-level. The student's financial aid will be awarded based on the six college-level credit hours.

Please note that the following required prerequisites (MAT 1033, MAT 1033L, and MAT 1100) can be paid with financial aid and are treated as remedial courses when considering the 30 credit hour limit described above; however, unlike the typical remedial courses, these courses **will** be counted when calculating Completion Ratio and Maximum Timeframe for SAP purposes.

Transfer Credit Hours

The Registrar evaluates and posts transcripts from prior institutions that the student submits to the college; however, SPC does not require a student to submit all transcripts for admission to a degree program. All posted transfer credits that are applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study are subject to being counted for SAP purposes (GPA, Completion Ratio, and/or Maximum Timeframe).

If a transcript comes in after financial aid is awarded, those courses will be included when SAP is reviewed at the end of the currently enrolled term.

The Program Based FA SAP policy includes coursework that is directly counting towards degree requirements from previous degree work and/or transfer work towards "quantitative measure". SPC would count each attempt at coursework that could count towards a degree requirement from the current academic program in both (completion ratio\maximum timeframe) "quantitative" measures. When the number of elective courses exceeds the number required for a program, we will include the highest graded electives to fulfill elective program requirements

For the "qualitative" measure, a Program Based GPA is calculated which includes the most recent attempt of coursework used to complete or potentially complete degree requirements. The Program Based FA SAP policy selects which common pre-requisite courses (serving as electives only!) and remedial/ESL hours will be included in this GPA.

Repeated Credit Hours

- **Financial Aid Program GPA:** If a "Select" college level course and/or a college level course that is applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study is repeated, only the grade on the last (most recent) attempt will be included in the Financial Aid Program GPA. If a remedial course is repeated, the highest grade (in the most recent term) will be included in the Financial Aid Program GPA.

- **Completion Ratio & Maximum Time Frame:** If a course that is applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study is repeated, each attempt is included in the Completion Ratio (Pace) and Maximum Time Frame calculations. Remedial coursework is not included in the Completion Ratio (Pace) and Maximum Time Frame calculations.

Electives

All courses included as Program Electives are included for SAP purposes up to the maximum number of elective credits allowed by the specific program of study.

The following types of courses can be counted as electives for purposes of financial aid and will be included in SAP calculations up to the point in which the elective bucket is filled. At the point when the elective bucket is filled, financial aid is no longer eligible to be received for such courses.

- Courses that are considered to be prerequisites, but are not needed in order to take a required course for a specific program (SLS 1101, SLS 1126, EAP 1500, and EAP 1695)
- Coursework recommended by an advisor, dean or instructor
- Honors College or other type of extra coursework

Academic Grade Forgiveness

All courses attempted that are applicable to a student's current degree or certificate program of study are included in all SAP calculations, regardless of Academic Grade Forgiveness. If as a result of Academic Grade forgiveness, the classes are no longer applicable to your program of study, the attempts will be included in the Pace (completion ratio and maximum timeframe) calculations, but not the Program GPA calculation.

Treatment of Waivers, Exceptions, Course Substitutions, and Milestones

There are instances where individual courses or an entire requirement group (group of courses) in an academic program are designated as completed based on previous coursework, specific accomplishments, and/or previous degree completion. Such designations are referred to as waivers, exceptions, course substitutions, and/or milestones. In such cases, the designated amount of credit hour(s) are counted in the student's pace as both attempted and completed credits. In the case of course substitution that course would count instead of the typically required course.

Example: A student with a prior AA degree or higher comes to SPC or re-enrolls at SPC in a bachelors degree. The 36 hours of general education requirements are designated as completed. In this case, those 36 hours are counted as both attempted and completed for pace calculations. However, they will not count in the student GPA since the designation carries no grade compliment.

2021-2022 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Requirements Met for Graduation:

The Federal Financial Aid Handbook states that "students who <u>complete</u> the <u>academic requirements</u> for a <u>program</u>, but does not yet have the degree or certificate is not eligible for further additional FSA funds for that program." ***Volume 1 Student Eligibility: 1-10***

SPC students that have already taken (and completed) the course work required to graduate from a specific degree or certificate program of study, are no longer eligible to be considered for future financial aid as long as they remain in that specific program of study.

2021-2022 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Three Measurements:

1. Minimum Cumulative Financial Aid GPA

Students must adhere to **a Minimum Cumulative Financial Aid GPA of 2.0 in order** to maintain financial assistance eligibility. If a student's Financial Aid GPA falls below 2.0, then the student is not meeting SAP. A student's Financial Aid GPA will be the same GPA that is used for Academic Standing purposes.

The Minimum Cumulative Financial Aid GPA calculation includes the following coursework:

1. Courses with highest grades that satisfy General Education requirements for the specific program*
2. Courses with the highest grades that satisfy AS, BS, and CERT requirements in the plan, and/or subplan*
3. Elective Courses (if applicable) with highest grades up to the number of credits required for the program (i.e. AA requires 24 electives) *
4. Remedial courses (highest grade/most recent term)
5. Select College Level Courses*
   - MAT 1033
   - MAT 1033L
   - MAT 1100
   - SLS 1101
   - SLS 1126
   - EAP 1500
   - EAP 1695

   Only the most recent attempt of repeated college-level coursework is counted.

Grades of A, B, C, D, F, and WF are included in the Financial Aid GPA. Grades of W, X, I and P are not included in the Financial Aid GPA.

2. Completion Ratio (Pace) - Progress Toward Degree

Completion Ratio (Pace) is defined as the rate at which a student is progressing (moving) through their program of study. It is calculated by dividing the cumulative number of credit hours the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of credit hours the student has attempted.

Courses in which a grade of A, B, C, D, or P are received are counted as completed.

Students must successfully complete **67%** of hours attempted to maintain financial assistance eligibility. If a student's completion ratio falls below 67%, then the student is not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Please see graph below.

67% Completion Ratio (Pace):

Hours attempted:	6	12	15	30	45	60	75	90	150	175
Hours student must complete:	5	9	11	21	31	41	51	61	101	118

NOTE: Students may modify their initial course schedule up to the last day to drop with a refund. Classes that are dropped during this time period are not included as attempted hours.

This is a cumulative review of college-level credit hours attempted that are applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study.

The Completion Ratio calculation includes the following coursework:

1. Courses with highest grades that satisfy General Education requirements for the specific program
2. Courses with the highest grades that satisfy AS, BS, and CERT requirements in the plan, and/or sub plan*
3. Elective Courses (if applicable) with highest grades up to the number of credits required for the program (i.e. AA requires 24 electives) *
4. Any courses not in 1, 2, and/or 3 that **were attempted** to satisfy requirements*
5. Select College Level Courses*
   - MAT 1033
   - MAT 1033L
   - MAT 1100
   - SLS 1101
   - SLS 1126
   - EAP 1500
   - EAP 1695

   Repeated attempts are also counted in the completion ratio calculation

3. Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

Students must be on target to **complete** their current degree or certificate program of study before **attempting** more than 150% of the credit hours required for the program. If the student is not on target (**it is mathematically impossible**) to complete their current program of study before exceeding MTF, then the student is not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress.

2021-2022 Satisfactory Academic Progress

This is a cumulative review of college-level credit hours attempted that are applicable to the student's current degree or certificate program of study.

The Maximum Time Frame calculation includes the following coursework:

- EAP 1500, EAP 1695, MAT1033, MAT 1033L, MAT 1100, SLS 1101, and SLS 1126
- transfer credit hours that are applicable towards the current program of study
- repeated credit hours that are applicable towards the current program of study
- credit hours attempted for which the student did not receive financial aid that are applicable towards the current program of study
- incomplete credit hours that are applicable towards the current program of study
- withdrawn credit hours that are applicable towards the current program of study
- credit hours that are applicable towards the current program of study that may have been exempted from calculation of the academic GPA under the Academic Grade Forgiveness Policy

The following are two (2) scenarios that will affect a student's financial aid status as a result of MTF.

1. Student's **attempted** credit hours **exceed** the MTF (150%) for the current program of study.

   *A student has 91 credit hours that are counting or could have counted towards his current degree program. He is currently working on an AA degree which requires 60 credit hours. This student has already **exceeded** MTF.* **91 > (90 = 60 x 150%)**

2. Student's **attempted** credit hours **+** the number of credit hours **remaining** to complete the current degree program **exceeds** MTF (150%) for the current degree program.

   *A student **attempted** 41 credit hours, but has 50 credit hours left to complete current AA degree. This student is **not** on target because the number of credits **attempted +** the number of credits **remaining** exceed MTF for the AA degree.* **(41 + 50 = 91) > 90**

2021-2022 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Financial Aid Status

- **Not determined (Undetermined) –** Satisfactory Academic Progress has not been calculated at this time. Students must be in a financial aid eligible degree or certificate program of study in order for SAP to be determined. Degree seeking status includes all certificates, associate level, bachelorette level, and eligible clock hour programs.

- **Meets SAP** – A student is currently meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress in all three areas: Minimum Cumulative Financial Aid GPA, Completion Ratio (Pace) and Maximum Time Frame.

- **Warning** – A student is placed on *Warning* the very first-time they do not meet any one of the three SAP requirements OR the first time after getting back in good standing. Student will continue to be eligible for financial aid for one term only. Although there is no limit to the number of times a student can be placed in this status, a student cannot be on "warning" for consecutive terms of enrollment.

- **Suspended (Not Meet)** – A student is placed on *Suspension* when they fail to meet any of the requirements for the second consecutive time or more. This status is also for a student who has failed to meet the requirements of their assigned Financial Aid Student Success/Academic Plan. A student in this status is not eligible for financial aid. The student may submit a written appeal.

- **Probation (Student Success/Academic Plan)** – A student is placed on *Probation* after submitting a written appeal and the appeal is approved. An individualized Financial Aid Student Success/Academic Plan (The Plan) is established for and agreed to by the student. The Plan will be reviewed at the end of each term. If a student does not adhere to the requirement(s) of The Plan and is not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress by the end of the next term, the student will be placed on Suspension. No other appeals will be accepted unless specific circumstances exist.

SAP Appeals

Students who have experienced extenuating circumstances beyond their control that prevented them from satisfying the requirements to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) may appeal their status. The process for filing an appeal is outlined on the FAS website in the *SAP Appeal* section. SAP appeal decisions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

General Appeal (GPA, Completion Ratio, Maximum Timeframe)
Extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control include, but are not limited to:

- Documented medical condition or serious illness
- Documented learning disability
- Death of a family member or friend
- Domestic violence
- Involuntary call to active military duty
- Documented change in conditions of employment
- Other extraordinary/emergency circumstances, such as natural disasters (i.e. hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flash flooding, etc.)
- **Maximum Time Frame** Appeals may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Dislocated workers having to change vocations
  - Lost job and had to enter a new career field
  - Prior degree(s) can be considered contingent upon the circumstances for having to pursue an additional degree(s)

Failed Financial Aid Student Success/Academic Plan
Extenuating circumstances occurring **during the term** in which the student failed their Financial Aid Student Success/Academic Plan:

- Death of an immediate family member (spouse, mother, father, guardian, sister, brother, son or daughter)
- Major medical issue (i.e. requires hospitalization) experienced by the student or an immediate family member of the student (as designated above)
- Domestic violence
- Involuntary call to active military duty
- Other extreme circumstances (case by case basis)

The following circumstances are not considered extenuating and beyond the student's control, but based on personal choices:

- Incarceration resulting from a guilty verdict
- Voluntary pause, lapse, or termination of employment
- Voluntary overtime
- Young and irresponsible

SAP Appeal Forms

There is one [Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form](#), which can be used for any of the SAP appeals listed below:

- **Initial General Appeal** (Program GPA, Completion Ration, Maximum Time Frame)
- **Failed** [Student Success Plan (formerly called Financial Aid Academic Plan)](#)
- **Previously Denied SAP Appeal** - NOTE: We strongly recommend speaking with a Financial Assistance Services Advisor or FAS Online Advisor before submitting your appeal to the denial. You are limited to one appeal to a denial per academic year.

To submit a SAP Appeal complete the E-Form or request a PDF version and submit it by coming into a campus Financial Assistance Services (FAS) office.

Students can request the PDF version via a campus FAS Office, through [AKFA](#) or by calling 727-791-2485. Additional supporting documentation can be submitted by completing the [SAP Appeal Additional Documentation](#) E-Form.

Verbal appeals are not acceptable.

My Learning Plan

As of Fall 2021, the My learning plan is no longer required as part of the Student Success Plan.

Explanation

Appeals must be typewritten, signed, and include a detailed explanation of how extenuating circumstances beyond your control prevented you from meeting the requirements. In addition, students must explain what has changed (or been put in place) that will allow them to maintain academic progress moving forward. *MAXIMUM TIME FRAME* appeals - Student must explain why he/she is not on target to complete their degree program within 150% of the credit/clock hours needed for their current degree program.

Documentation

Attach date-specific documentation from a disinterested third party. Keep supporting documentation to the minimum amount needed to provide sufficient proof of what is written in your appeal. FAS reserves the right to require a student to reduce the number of pages if there is an abundance of documentation not needed for an approval.

Documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- Letter from a physician or counselor on letterhead indicating the dates a student was under their care
- Copy of a death certificate, obituary or third-party documentation of death
- Accident reports, police records, court records, etc.

DO NOT submit original documents - they will not be returned. Make sure all copies are legible.

Letters from family, relatives, and friends are not recommended as the sole source of supporting documentation; however, if this is the ONLY information that can be provided, the student must meet with a Financial Assistance Services Counselor to determine what is acceptable. If the FAS Counselor approves submission of such letters, they must be returned to Financial Assistance Services.

Appeals submitted without documentation will be denied or returned without review.

Documents must be submitted according to the requirements listed above; however, this DOES NOT GUARANTEE approval.

Appeal Timeframe

All appeals are reviewed within 15 working days of receipt of all required documentation in Financial Assistance Services.

Notification

Results will be emailed to the student's SPC student email. Students can also view their status in MySPC.

If the student does not have a FAFSA on file for the academic year in which they are appealing, they cannot be notified via email. The student may call or visit his/her campus Financial Assistance Services office for results. You may also view your status in MySPC.

Reinstatement

Students with an approved SAP Appeal will have their financial aid reinstated and will be placed Financial Aid Probation for one term only.

Any student whose SAP Appeal has been denied or whose eligibility has been suspended for Satisfactory Academic Progress reasons will have financial assistance eligibility reinstated once the overall minimum SAP requirements are met, whether or not the student submitted an appeal.

Financial Aid Academic Plan is now referred to as the Student Success Plan

The Financial Aid Academic Plan is now referred to as the *Student Success Plan*. The Student Success Plan will be required for all students submitting a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal. If the SAP Appeal is approved, the requirements of the Student Success Plan will take effect immediately. If you are not currently enrolled, it will take effect for the next term of enrollment.

SPC's Student Success Plan will always consist of the following requirements:

- A minimum GPA requirement as established by your Academic Advisor. Note that if your current cumulative GPA is below 2.0, your Student Success Plan requirement **may** be greater than a 2.0 GPA of enrolled coursework **each** term
- A minimum Completion Ratio requirement as established by your Academic Advisor. Note that if your current Completion Ratio is below 67%, your Student Success Plan requirement **may** be greater than 67% of enrolled coursework **each** term

In addition to the above, the Student Success Plan, like the Financial Aid Academic Plan, may have a variety of supplemental interventions assigned (i.e., mandatory tutoring, reduced course load, less online coursework, etc.) and adherence to these requirements is a must in order for you to continue receiving financial aid. The Student Success Plan/Financial Aid Academic Plan are *individualized* plans designed to ensure that you will be meeting SAP and/or graduating by a specific point in time. Although each plan is reviewed at the end of every term, the plan itself may be in effect for multiple terms.

If a student does not adhere to the requirements of their Financial Aid Academic Plan/Student Success Plan, they will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. As a result, they will lose their financial aid eligibility. No other appeals will be accepted unless the following specific extenuating circumstances apply:

- Death of an immediate family member (spouse, mother, father, guardian, sister, brother, son, or daughter)
- Major medical issue (i.e. requires hospitalization) experienced by the student or an immediate family member (as designated above)
- Domestic violence
- Involuntary call to active military duty
- Other extreme circumstances (case by case basis)

Offices

Offices involved in the review, answering in-person questions and phone calls, and monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress are as follows:

- **Admissions and Records** - evaluation and posting of transcripts

- **Student Support Services** – Campus/Online Career and Academic Advisers – Academic Plan/Student Success Plan creation; evaluation of coursework towards degree

- **Financial Assistance Services** – Provide instructions concerning the SAP Appeal process; collection of documents; appeal evaluation and determination; running calculations; updating systems to reflect decisions rendered and notifying the students

Communications

Ongoing communication and Early Alerts (email, phone, and trainings) occur to ensure Satisfactory Academic Progress issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner. Point of Service surveys assess processing and student service concerns.

Annual Review of SAP Policy

The Satisfactory Academic Progress policy is reviewed by the Associate Vice President of Financial Assistance Services, Executive Director of Financial Assistance Services, and Executive Director of Financial Assistance Operations each year. Each year these positions attend financial aid training at the State, Regional, and National level to stay abreast of compliance issues and best practices.

Please Note: If you do not understand this policy or have questions, please schedule an appointment with an FAS Advisor, Officer, or Assistant Director on your home campus.

Addendum for 2021 – 2022

If a recent SSP (within 3 semesters) is already in place, there is no need for a student to complete another one.
- Student continues on the most recent SSP
- Unless the student recently graduated and is starting a new program

SAP recalculations due to grade changes
- Student must appeal and be approved if during a term (payment period) that has not ended
- Eligibility for Pell is only good during the current term of enrollment, not a prior term

Retroactive SAP Appeals
- Stafford loans only
- Only within the same academic year
- Must be requested by the student