

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP)

Federal and State regulations require that all financial aid recipients maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to receive financial aid. In compliance with these regulations SAP will be checked for all students after every semester, regardless of whether financial aid was received. Progress is evaluated based on all courses taken at Merced College, plus transfer units and upper division units from prior colleges.

I. Academic Requirements

Students meeting ALL of the following requirements are considered to be SAP SATISFACTORY and can be considered for financial aid or reinstatement of financial aid:

- A. Be officially enrolled in and attending as an undergraduate, in an eligible program that leads to completion of an AA/AS/AAT/AST degree or an approved certificate program.
- B. Qualitative Measure: Maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0. (If all classes are taken on a Pass/Fail basis, the GPA requirement will not apply. Instead a percentage of passed to attempted units will be calculated). A, B, C, D, RD, and F grades are used to calculate a student's GPA. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Financial Aid Office when an Incomplete ("I" grade) is changed to a letter grade and credit has been awarded. Until that time "I" grades will be computed as attempted but not completed units. Transferable units from prior colleges are not included in the GPA calculation.
- C. Quantitative Measure (Pace of Progression): Receive credit for at least 67% of the total units attempted. Withdrawals (W), Incompletes (I or IP), No Credit (NC or NP), Report Delay (RD) and Failing (F or FW) grades are considered units attempted. Transferable units and all upper division units from prior colleges will be included when determining a student's pace of progression.
- D. Maximum Timeframe: Attempted less than 150% of the maximum cumulative units required for completion of their program, for example:
 - Certificate programs: if 30 units are needed to complete; the maximum timeframe allowed to complete the program would be 45 attempted units
 - Degree and Transfer Degree programs: 60 units or more are needed to graduate; the maximum timeframe to complete the program would be 90 attempted units

Students who have completed an AA/AS or higher will be considered to have exceeded the maximum timeframe.

Individual student calculations will be based on officially enrolled eligible program requirements.

- Up to 30 units of remedial and ESL coursework may be excluded from the student's cumulative units attempted.
- All repeated coursework and courses disregarded under Academic Renewal will be included in units attempted.
- All units accepted, as well as all upper division units from prior colleges will be included when determining a student's maximum timeframe. The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to require official academic transcripts from all prior colleges attended before determining a student's financial aid progress status.
- If at any point, it is determined that the student cannot complete their course of study within the maximum timeframe, the student will be immediately disqualified from future financial aid for the remainder of his or her program, even if he or she is meeting the current SAP standards outlined above.

NOTE: Students exceeding the Maximum Timeframe must re-appeal each academic year until their Special Program or Educational Plan ends.

II. Financial Aid Warning

If a student does not meet all cumulative academic requirements outlined in Section IB or IC at the end of a graded semester, the student will be placed on WARNING status. Students who are placed on WARNING status may continue to receive financial aid for one semester, after which the student must meet the requirements outlined in Section I. Students who complete a semester on WARNING must have their academic progress reviewed before their financial aid eligibility for the following semester is determined. Due to the short time period between semesters, there will be a delay in the notification of eligibility. If determined eligible, any disbursements of student aid will also be delayed. Student WARNING notifications will be sent to Merced College student e-mail accounts.

III. Financial Aid Disqualification

If a student does not meet all cumulative academic requirements outlined in Section IB or IC at the end of the WARNING semester, the student will be placed on financial aid DISQUALIFICATION. Generally, a student who is disqualified from financial aid may re-establish financial aid eligibility by meeting all cumulative SAP criteria outlined in Section I. Students placed on DISQUALIFICATION status are not eligible to receive financial aid except for a California College Promise Grant, if otherwise eligible. Students who complete a regular semester with at least 6 units while on DISQUALIFICATION must have their academic progress

reviewed before their financial aid eligibility is determined for the following semester. Due to the short time period between semesters, there will be a delay in the notification of eligibility. If eligible, any disbursements of student aid will also be delayed. Student DISQUALIFICATION notifications will be sent to Merced College student e-mail accounts.

Appealing Financial Aid Disqualification

Under certain conditions, students placed on DISQUALIFICATION may file an appeal for consideration of reinstatement of financial aid eligibility. The following are examples of reasons a student may file an appeal:

- Inability to complete their course of study within the maximum timeframe due to a change of academic major (Note: Change in degree objective/major more than once without extraordinary circumstances does not constitute sufficient reason for failing to meet SAP or exceeding the 150% of Academic Program, AA/AS/AAT/AST degree or Certificate).
- Documented serious injury, illness or medical condition requiring a doctor's care
- Death of an immediate family member (copy of death certificate is required)
- Other documented extenuating circumstances that were beyond the student's control

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT CONSIDERED EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND A STUDENT'S CONTROL:

- Personal problems not requiring professional intervention
- Poor time management
- Unaware of academic progress policies or other college requirements
- Not following an Academic Counselor's recommendations
- Transportation problems
- Child care problems

To file an appeal, the student must submit all of the following:

- Appeal for Reinstatement/Extension
- Educational Plan
- Merced College unofficial transcripts
- A typewritten statement to the Financial Aid Office. The typed statement must indicate the circumstance(s) that prevented the student from making SAP and what has changed to allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.
- Supporting documentation of the appeal reason that includes the semesters where there was a lack of progress.

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to limit the number of academic appeals a student may file to ONE APPEAL PER SEMESTER. Non-disclosure of information such as other colleges attended is a basis for denial. Once denied, the student may be prohibited from submitting another appeal until after the next semester. All decisions made by the Appeals Review Committee are FINAL. There is no higher appeal process. Appeal results will be sent via mail.

Appeals will be accepted for review until the published appeal deadline.

IV. Approved Appeals - Financial Aid Probation

Students with an approved appeal are considered to be on PROBATION. Students on PROBATION must meet ALL of the following requirements each semester to maintain financial aid eligibility:

- A. Be enrolled in and attending an eligible AA/AS/AAT/AST degree, transfer requirement, or certificate program,
- B. Receive credit for at least 67% of the total units attempted during a regular semester with at least 6 enrolled Academic units (excluding Academic recovery courses and Physical Education courses) AND
- C. Achieve a minimum GPA of 2.0.

(If all classes are taken on a credit/non-credit basis, the GPA requirement will not apply).

Appeals approved for students who have exceeded the maximum time frame will only be eligible for the specific coursed needed for their primary educational goal.

Students who complete a semester on PROBATION must have their academic progress reviewed before their financial aid eligibility for the following semester is determined. Due to the short time period between semesters, there will be delay in the notification of eligibility. If eligible, any disbursements of student aid will also be delayed. If a student meets all requirements outlined in Section V during the PROBATION semester, the PROBATION status will continue for the following semester.

V. Denied appeals-Regaining Eligibility

Students who are DISQUALIFIED from receiving aid can regain their eligibility by meeting the SAP standards which would be to complete the required 67% of the attempted units and raise the cumulative GPA to at least 2.0 with Academic classes, pass one regular semester with at least 6 units (completing all attempted classes with C or better) and be under the maximum time frame for their program.