

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements

The following information serves to clarify important aspects of the financial-aid program administered by Wallace State Community College.

To be eligible for FSA funds, a student must make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid purposes, and Wallace State Community College (WSCC) has a reasonable policy for monitoring student progress. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) considers a satisfactory academic progress policy to be reasonable if it meets both the qualitative and quantitative criteria explained in this section.

WSCC SAP POLICY must be at least as strict as that for students who are not receiving Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds at our school, and it must apply consistently to all educational programs and to all students within categories, e.g. full-time, part-time, and undergraduate students. WSCC's policy requires an academic progress evaluation at the end of each payment period for students in programs lasting one year or less. For all other programs, SAP requires each student that is enrolled in a term to receive a SAP evaluation at the end of the term once grades have been posted.

SAP will be measured each term at WSCC. Students are required under federal regulations to maintain certain standards of progress depending on the number of hours they have attempted in college and their program of study. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand all policies associated with financial aid funding. Students should regularly check their MyWallaceState account for the latest information regarding their account. Financial Aid Status can be found under the Financial Aid Tab. After accessing the Financial Aid Tab, click Financial Status to view any SAP status of good, warnings or suspension of financial aid. Click on the blue hyperlink of the SAP status from this page and personalized explanation will be available to the student to explain their SAP status.

Title IV financial assistance programs including Federal Pell Grant, Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Family Education Loans (Stafford and PLUS) are affected by SAP.

Grades and Pace of Completion

WSCC's SAP policy specifies that both the quantitative (time-based or pace) and qualitative (grade-based) standards are reviewed at each evaluation point. The SAP policy outlines the qualitative standard (grade point average or GPA) that a student must have at each evaluation or, if GPA is not an appropriate measure, a comparable measure against a norm. Students enrolled in a program of more than two academic years must have a GPA of at least "C" or its equivalent or must have an academic standing consistent with graduation requirements.

Transitional and Transfer Coursework must be included in the qualitative assessment of Satisfactory Academic Progress.

The SAP process will run at the end of the Fall 2024 term after fall grades are submitted. Effective with this process, SAP GPA will be calculated using the new repeat policy that was updated March 2024 to become effective Fall 2024.

GPA requirements for long-term certificate and degree seeking students

- If the student has attempted 1-21 hours they must maintain a 1.5 GPA.

- If the student has attempted 22-32 hours they must maintain a 1.75 GPA
- If the student has attempted 33 or more hours they must maintain a 2.0 GPA.

Completion rate (attempted class hours) required by long-term certificate and degree seeking students

- If the student has attempted 1-21 hours they must maintain a 58% completion rate.
- If the student has attempted 22-32 hours they must maintain a 62% completion rate.
- If the student has attempted 33 or more hours they must maintain a 67% completion rate.

GPA requirements for short-term certificate (24-29 credit hours) students

- If the student has attempted 12 hours they must maintain a 1.5 GPA.
- If the student has attempted 24 hours they must maintain a 2.0 GPA.

Completion rate (attempted class hours) required short-term certificate (24-29 credit hours) students

- If the student has attempted 12 hours they must maintain a 58% completion rate.
- If the student has attempted 24 hours they must maintain a 67% completion rate.

Maximum Time Frame

Maximum timeframe (MAX) for an undergraduate program measure in credit hours is a period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program and for a program measured in clock hours, a period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program as measured by the cumulative number of clock hours the student is required to complete and expressed in calendar time. (Note that a student in a clock hour program cannot receive aid for hours beyond those in the program; the maximum timeframe applies to the amount of calendar time the student takes to complete those hours.)

Example: Students are only allowed 150% of the programs length to complete the degree or certificate. General Studies is 64 credits. Students are allowed 150% or 96 attempted credits to complete the program successfully. If the student does not complete their program in the allotted timeframe their grant will be suspended. Every program is different, students should check the catalog or Degree Works for the number of hours required for completion of their program and multiply 1.5 x time number of hours for graduation = MAX timeframe on ATTEMPTED credit hours.

Students who submit an appeal for MAX should have completed a degree or certificate. We cannot approve a SAP appeal for MAX if the student has not graduated from a certificate or degree program. If they have graduated from a program, we can evaluate the appeal to determine if any hours can be excluded from the attempted hours that do not count in any way toward the new program of study.

Additional Regulations

ALL prior coursework at WSCC and transfer work that has been evaluated and added to the student's transcript is included in the SAP calculation. This includes all programs of student if the student has changed program while attending WSCC. If a student does not meet any of the requirements listed at the end of their first term,

the student will be given one warning semester in which he will be eligible to receive aid. At the end of the second term of enrollment a student not making SAP will have the financial aid suspended. They will not be eligible for Pell Grant, Direct Loans, SEOG or Federal Work Study until they are current on SAP.

There is no warning period for MAX timeframe as that situation cannot be improved. Example: New students who attend their first semester and do not meet the above criteria on GPA and completion rate will be given one warning semester to receive financial aid. Students who have attended multiple semesters in the past under the old SAP policy, who are currently not meeting SAP, are not given a warning semester as they have already received aid for one semester when they had not made SAP. If financial aid funds are suspended the student may file an appeal based on any mitigating circumstances that caused the student to be unsuccessful in their coursework.

GPA and course completion can be affected by course incompletes, withdrawals, repetitions and transfer credits from other schools. WSCC is not allowed to exclude courses in which a student remained past the add/drop period and earned a grade of "w" (or its equivalent), nor can we routinely exclude certain hours attempted, such as those taking during a summer session from the SAP calculation. Generally, all periods of the student's enrollment count when assessing progress, even periods in which the student is not receiving FSA funds.

A review of SAP is not complete until both the qualitative and quantitative measures have been reviewed. If a satisfactory progress check shows that a student does not have the required GPA or is not maintain the required pace, she becomes ineligible for FSA funds unless she is place on financial aid warning or plan (after a successful appeal), as explained below.

Satisfactory Progress Definitions

- **NEW**- Student is a new student and their SAP status has not been reviewed yet. Check status later for updates.
- **PASS**- Student is in good SAP standing to receive financial aid.
- **PLAN-R**- Student has been previously enrolled at WSCC and the student's status will have to be reviewed to determine their current standing.
- **FINANCIAL AID WARNING**- "Only schools that check SAP at the end of each payment period may place students on Financial Aid Warning a consequence of not making SAP. A school may use this status without appeal or any other action by the student. Warning status lasts for one payment period only, during which the student may continue to receive FSA funds. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress after the warning period lose their aid eligibility unless they successfully appeal and are placed on probation. Schools do not need to use the warning status; they can instead require students to immediately appeal to be placed on probation.
- **WRNALL**- Student is not currently meeting the terms of their Passage Rate and GPA. Student has been placed on warning semester for their next term of enrollment. If the students' progress does not meet SAP at the end of the second term of enrollment their financial aid will be suspended.
- **WRNGPA**- Student is not currently meeting the required GPA based on their program and the number of hours attempted. They have been placed on a warning semester for their next term of enrollment. If the student's progress does not meet SAP at the end of the second term of enrollment their financial aid will be suspended.
- **WRNPCE**- Student is not meeting the completion rate based on their program and the number of hours attempted. They have been placed on a warning semester for their next term of enrollment. If the student's progress does not meet SAP at the end of the second term of enrollment their financial aid will be suspended.
- **GPA**- Student is behind on their required GPA to be making SAP based on their program and the number of hours attempted. The student's financial aid has been suspended.
- **PACE**- Student is behind on the completion rate of hours attempted to hours earned. The student's financial aid has been suspended.

- **GPAPCE**- Student is behind on the percentage attempted/passed and GPA based on their program of study and number of hours attempted. The student's financial aid has been suspended.
- **CLSMAX**- Student is close to attempting 150% of hours required to complete their current program of study. The students' financial aid is in danger of being suspended.
- **MAX**- Student has attempted 150% of the number of hours required to complete their current program of study. The student's financial aid has been suspended.
- **APPEAL**- A process by which a student who is not meeting SAP standards petitions the school for reconsideration of his eligibility for FSA funds.
- **PLAN**- Student was approved on SAP appeal and is currently following a designated plan for graduation in the program of study and the terms of their appeal.
- **DEND**- SAP appeal was denied for this term. The student's financial aid has been suspended.
- **FAIL-P**- Student did not meet the terms of their Financial Aid Appeal and they voided the terms of the appeal. The student's financial aid has been suspended.

Appeals, Financial Aid Probation and Academic Plans

Financial Aid Warning - Only schools that check SAP at the end of each payment period may place students on Financial Aid Warning as a consequence of not making SAP. A school may use this status without or any other action by the student. Warning status lasts for one payment period only, during which the student may continue to receive FSA funds. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress after the warning period lose their aid eligibility unless they successfully appeal and are placed on probation. Schools do not need to use the warning status; they can instead require students to immediately appeal to be placed on probation.

When a student loses FSA eligibility because they failed to make satisfactory progress, he/she may submit a Financial Aid Appeal if they can provide documented proof of mitigating circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are those that are beyond the student's control. Examples could be student or family member's illness, death in the immediate family, divorce, etc. These circumstances should relate to the terms where the student had issues with grades. Lack of focus, lack of transportation or working too many hours are not considered mitigating circumstances. When students register for classes there is an understood expectation that attendance is required.

Students must submit the appeal form and all documentation pertaining to the appeal, by the published deadline. Submitting a Financial Aid Appeal is NOT an automatic approval. The Financial Aid Committee will meet each term to review the Financial Aid Appeals.

Students will be notified of the decision made by the committee by e-mail/letter. Students must follow the terms of their appeal if approved or their Financial Aid will be suspended. Students must follow the Academic Plan in the appeal to progress toward completion of their program that is approved in the appeal.

Program changes are not allowed while a student is currently on an appeal. Students who fail to pass all attempted hours while on an appeal, withdraw from a class or fail a class will void their appeal. These terms are outlined on the appeal form and in the e-mail/letter the student receives if approved for an appeal. Students in this situation will not be eligible to receive aid until their progress is current by their own means. Student cannot be paid financial aid for prior semesters when they were not meeting SAP. Students do not regain SAP eligibility at WSCC by sitting out a semester or by paying cash alone for their next term of enrollment. SAP eligibility can only be regained after a student is meeting the current SAP for the number of attempted hours at WSCC for their program of study. Grades and attempts on coursework made while the student was still enrolled in high school as a dual enrollment class, still counts in the SAP. Students who receive an 'I' for a grade in a course will be considered as not completing the course and it will be calculated in the SAP process and an F until it is complete.

Financial Aid Appeal

- Students may submit a Financial Aid Appeal if they can provide documented proof of mitigating circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are those that are beyond the student's control. Examples could be student or family member's illness, death in the immediate family, divorce, etc. These circumstances should relate to the terms where the student had issues with grades.
- Students must submit the appeal form and all documentation pertaining to the appeal, by the published appeal deadline. Submitting a Financial Aid Appeal is NOT an automatic approval.
- The Financial Aid Committee will meet each term to review the Financial Aid Appeals.
- Students will be notified of the decision made by the committee by e-mail/letter.
- Students must follow the terms of their appeal if approved or their Financial Aid will be suspended. Students must follow the Academic Plan in the appeal to progress toward completion of their program that is approved in the appeal.
- Program changes are not allowed while a student is currently on a Financial Aid Appeal
- If a student is approved on a Financial Aid Appeal and fails to follow the terms of the appeal, a second appeal is not accepted. Students in this situation will not be eligible to receive aid until their progress is current by their own means. Those terms are outlined on the appeal form and in the e-mail/letter of their approval.
- Students who have exceeded their 600% Pell Grant Lifetime Eligibility are not eligible to file an appeal to receive a Pell Grant. Their appeal will be considered for Direct Loans only.
- Students who have met the 150% Direct Loan Sub limit are not allowed to appeal the rule. SAP appeals are only for grades/progress only. Financial Aid Appeals are not to challenge a rule in the administration of Federal Student Aid.
- Students who receive an 'I' for a grade in a course will be considered as not completing the course and it will be calculated in the SAP process and an F until it is complete.

Academic Progress Evaluation- A financial aid recipient's satisfactory academic progress is evaluated at the beginning of each academic year (prior to Fall Semester), at the time of enrollment. At that time, a student will either be in good standing or denied financial assistance for future enrollment periods. The student must meet all three progress requirements (completion rate, GPA, and be within the maximum time frame) to remain in good standing. Students must appeal to be considered for financial aid if they are behind in any part of SAP. Students will be notified by the Financial Aid Office if they are denied financial aid due to progress.

Appeal - Students may appeal their denial status by submitting an Appeal Form to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. Appeal Forms may be picked up in the Financial Aid Office or by going to the Financial Aid web page under forms.

To appeal the financial aid denial, a student must, within 15 calendar days of notification, submit to the Financial Aid Office a signed Appeal Form explaining why he or she should not be suspended. A student may appeal due to mitigating circumstances (medical problems, illness, or death in the family, or employment changes). Documentation verifying the situation may be requested. The Appeal Committee will consider the appeal and render a decision, which the Director of Financial Aid will convey in writing to the student within two weeks of the student's appeal. Students who are approved on appeal must earn grades of "C" or better in each class, with no withdrawals (grades of W, WP, WF, I and IP calculate as hours attempted in Financial Aid SAP Policy). Appeals are continued on a semester-by-semester basis until the student is current with SAP. Students who fail to complete the terms of the appeal will be expected to catch up on their SAP using their own means before they will be considered eligible to receive financial aid.

Decisions made by the Appeal Committee are final. The appeal committee is not required to give a specific reason for the denial. If the information presented by the student is not sufficient to override the rules set forth by the USDE, then the appeal must be denied.

Deadlines for appeal are found on at www.wallacestate.edu by looking on the Financial Aid page. Click on forms and choose the Financial Aid Appeal. The packet contains the forms, instructions and deadlines.

Lifetime Financial Aid Limits and Appeals

Students who have exceeded their 600% Lifetime Pell Eligibility (LEU) are not allowed to appeal for Pell Grant. SAP appeals granted for a student in these circumstances are only approved for student loans. Students who have met their Subsidized Direct Loan Eligibility aggregate loan amount for their program at WSCC would only be eligible for unsubsidized loan eligibility if approved on appeal. These two federal limits are not items that can be appealed. Financial Aid appeals cannot challenge the rules in the administration of Financial Aid that are mandated by the USDE. Students who are at MAX time frame can only appeal if they have completed another degree or certificate. Those situations will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine which coursework may be excluded from the prior completed degree or certificate. Students approved on appeal will be required to follow their graduation plan on MAX. Failure to follow the plan will result in voiding the appeal.