Satisfactory Academic Progress

ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

Title: *Satisfactory Academic Progress for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*
Subject: *Student Financial Aid*
Policy No: *SEM: 2017:02*
Applies: *Office of Student Financial Aid, Glassboro Campus programs*
Issuing Authority: *President*
Responsible Officer: *Senior Vice President, Student Enrollment Management*
Adopted: *06/01/2016*
Last Revision: *04/02/2016*
Last Reviewed: *01/25/2017*

I. PURPOSE

The purpose for this policy is to demonstrate the University's compliance with 34 CFR §668.34, which states for students to be eligible for FSA funds, a student must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP), and the institution must have a reasonable policy for monitoring that progress.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direction of the President, the Senior Vice President, Student Enrollment Management shall implement this policy and the Director for Financial Aid shall ensure compliance with the policy.

III. APPLICABILITY

The policy applies to both undergraduate and graduate financial aid applicants enrolled in programs administered by the Glassboro campus. Refer to the Cooper Medical School at Rowan University or Rowan Medicine/Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences for Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy specific to those students.

IV. DEFINITIONS

1. ***Attempted Credits*:** All transfer, remedial, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Rowan registered credits. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Drop/Add period. Audited courses are not considered credits attempted. Courses with W, WF, WP, F, IN (incomplete), NR and NC grades on the academic record at the time of the progress check are considered in this category. Repeat courses count in attempted hours for each attempt, regardless of grade outcome.

2. ***Earned Credits*:** Credits that were attempted and successfully completed; therefore, academic credit is earned toward degree completion. This includes transfer credits, and all courses, including repeated coursework, for which a grade of P, S, CR, A, B, C, D, (including all variations of +/-) has been received. Courses with W, WP, WF, F, IN, NR and NC grades on the academic record at the time of the progress check are not considered in this category.

3. ***Financial Aid Probation*:** A status assigned by an institution to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress and who has successfully appealed and has had eligibility for aid for one payment period reinstated.

4. ***Financial Aid Suspension*:** A status assigned to a student who fails to remediate their satisfactory academic progress after a period of Financial Aid Warning, or who has exceeded the Maximum Timeframe for the degree program; Students on Financial Aid Suspension may NOT continue to receive aid unless they successfully appeal.

5. ***Financial Aid Warning*:** A status assigned to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress at an institution that evaluates academic progress at the end of each payment period. Students on Financial Aid Warning status may continue to receive aid for that single payment term (enrollment term) with the goal to remediate their SAP during that term. If they fail to meet the SAP requirements at the next evaluation, the student is placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

6. ***Maximum Timeframe*:** Maximum timeframe means—
    a. For an undergraduate program measured in credit hours, a period that is no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program, as measured in credit hours;
    b. For an undergraduate program measured in clock hours, a period that is no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program, as measured by the cumulative number of clock hours the student is required to complete and expressed in calendar time; and
    c. For a graduate program, a period defined by the institution that is based on the length of the educational program.

7. ***Pace*:** The rate of completion of coursework at which a student must progress through his or her educational program that ensures the student will complete the program within the maximum timeframe. The University calculates the pace at which the student is progressing by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of hours the student has attempted.

8. ***Payment Period*:** The academic period or period of enrollment established by an institution for which financial aid is disbursed, generally referred to as the semester or module session. Payments for all federal student aid programs except FWS must be made on a payment period basis.

9. ***Repeated Coursework*:** The same course taken for the second or third, or more times in order to improve the grade of that course. Courses that are repeated to improve a grade are counted in attempted hours but only one passing grade is counted towards the earned credit rate. For example, if a student attempted a class 3 times, failed it once, withdrew once, and finally passed the class by earning a 'D,' all three times counts as attempted hours but only the passing grade counts as earned.

10. ***SAP Appeal*:** A process by which a student who is not meeting the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards petitions the institution for reconsideration of the student's eligibility for title IV, HEA program assistance.

11. ***Transferred Credit Hours*:** Credit hours from another institution that are accepted toward the student's educational program must count as both attempted and completed hours.

V. REFERENCES

1. Federal Regulations, 34 CFR §668.32, set forth the required elements of an adequate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

2. A student must meet the SAP standards or be approved for an appeal/probation in order to be considered eligible to receive title IV funds. 34 CFR 668.34

3. An institution's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy is one of the measures used by the Department in evaluating the institution's Administrative Capability 34 CFR 668.16(e):

4. Additional federal guidance is available in the QA website, and in the FSA Handbook, Volume 1: Student Eligibility. The FSA Handbook is available on the IFAP website.

5. The student's official academic record maintained by the Office of the University Registrar is reviewed to determine student compliance with this policy. Rowan University maintains information about academic regulations, grade definitions, and grade point average definitions at http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies/.

VI. POLICY

1. In accordance with 34 CFR §668.34, to be eligible for FSA funds, a student must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP), and the institution must have a reasonable policy for monitoring that progress. The Department considers a SAP policy to be reasonable if it meets both the qualitative and quantitative criteria explained in this policy. In addition, the SAP policy must be at least as strict as the academic progress policy for students enrolled in the same program of study who are not receiving FSA funds at the institution, and it must apply to all students within categories, e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and graduate students (different SAP policies may apply to different academic programs.

2. There are three distinct dimensions to the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards:
    a. Maintaining the minimum required GPA; and
    b. Attaining a completion rate that ensures the student completes their degree program within 150% of the published length of the program, measured in credit hours; and
    c. Completing the degree requirements within an established timeframe.

3. The student must meet all three standards in order to remain eligible for federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

4. CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE
    a. Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.0, which is consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation. Grades of: W, WP, WF, INC, NC, NR, or P, are not calculated in the GPA.
    b. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.0.

5. COMPLETION RATE (PACE)
    a. In addition to maintaining a GPA that meets the University minimum requirement, students are expected to earn cumulatively University credit for at least 67% of the classes in which they enroll. The pace of progress toward the degree will be measured by the following calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Cumulative EARNED Credits}}{\text{Cumulative ATTEMPTED Credits}} = \text{Earned Percentage}$$

    b. Courses with a grade of F, W, WP, WF, NC, INC, are counted in the cumulative attempted credit calculation. All attempted credits count toward this limit, even if the student did not receive financial aid or have extenuating reasons for not completing the credits. Credit hours from another institution that are accepted toward the student's educational program must count as both attempted and completed hours.

6. MAXIMUM TIME FRAME
    a. Satisfactory Academic Progress also establishes a maximum time frame in which students must complete their program of study in order to remain eligible to receive financial aid. This requirement limits the number of credit hours students may attempt before earning their degree.
    b. The maximum time frame for degree completion at Rowan is 150% of the program's published length of academic program. All attempted credits count toward this limit, even if the student did not receive financial aid or had extenuating reasons for not completing the credits. All courses attempted are included in the calculation, even if the student changed majors while pursuing the degree. Transferred credits are included in the maximum timeframe.

c. The chart below provides the maximum number of credits a student may attempt for each degree type. The maximum is 150% of the required credits for degree completion.

Degree	Average Credits Needed to Complete Degree	Maximum Credits Attempted
Bachelor	**120**	**180**
Master	**36**	**54**
Doctoral	**72**	**108* includes Master degree coursework**

7. WITHDRAWALS, REPEATS, INCOMPLETES, REMEDIAL COURSEWORK:

a. Withdrawal from courses (W, WP, or WF): credits remain in the total number of attempted hours but are not added to the earned credits. The GPA is not affected by these grades.
b. Basic skills, remedial coursework, pass/fail courses (IN, NC, P): These courses will be counted when determining the number of credits attempted. When a passing grade is received, the grade will be added to the number of credits earned. NA (no attendance) means that the student has not attended the class. Credits do not figure in the GPA calculation, they are considered attempted but not completed.
c. IN (incomplete): Incomplete courses are counted as attempted but not completed. When a passing grade is received, the grade will be added to the number of credits earned.
d. Repeated Courses: These courses are counted each time the course is taken and will be included in the total number of attempted hours. When a course is completed and a grade is assigned, the credits are added to the total number of earned credits hours.
e. Transfer credits: Transfer credits will be added to the Rowan University attempted credits and also added to the Rowan University earned and used in the calculation of the student's completion rate or pace. Transfer credits are also counted toward the "timeframe" requirement. Transfer credits are not included in the GPA calculation.

8. SAP EVALUATION PROCESS

a. A student's academic progress is evaluated at the end of each payment period (semester). At the time of each evaluation, a student who has not achieved the required GPA, or who is not successfully completing his or her educational program at the required pace, is notified of their SAP Status.
b. If the student was previously meeting the SAP standards, and at the current evaluation point, fails either the GPA or Pace measurement, Rowan Financial Aid Office places the student on financial aid warning. A student on financial aid warning may continue to receive assistance for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress. Financial aid warning status may be assigned without an appeal or other action by the student.
c. If at the next evaluation point, the student has not remediated their SAP standing, so that they fail either the GPA or Pace requirement, the student is placed in Financial Aid Suspension status. A student on financial aid suspension may not continue to receive assistance until the student either successfully appeals or improves their GPA and/or Pace so that they pass the SAP evaluation at the next evaluation point. In addition, students who exceed the maximum timeframe measure are immediately placed on financial aid suspension – without a period of financial aid warning.

d. Students placed on financial aid suspension may appeal their status. Students who successfully appeal their SAP suspension status will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. A student on financial aid probation may receive financial aid, including title IV, HEA program funds, for one payment period. While a student is on financial aid probation, the institution may require the student to fulfill specific terms and conditions such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific courses. At the end of one payment period on financial aid probation, the student must meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards or meet the requirements of the academic plan developed by the institution and the student to qualify for further financial aid, including title IV, HEA program funds.

9. APPEALS

a. Students who are placed on Financial Aid Suspension may reestablish his or her eligibility to receive financial aid, including assistance under the title IV, HEA programs. Students may file an appeal based upon the death of a relative or roommate, an injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstances.
b. Students who wish to appeal their Financial Aid Suspension status must complete the SAP Appeal Form with a personal statement and supporting documentation; meet with their academic advisor and complete the Academic Advising SAP Improvement Plan. The personal statement must include information regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation. Students who fail to submit timely the documentation necessary to complete the appeal process may forfeit his or her financial aid (both federal and state).

10. NOTIFICATIONS - SAP EVALUATION STATUS

a. Students are notified whenever the result of an SAP evaluation impacts the student's eligibility for financial aid, including title IV, HEA program funds. A notification of Financial Aid Suspension is mailed to the student's home address. In addition, the SAPAPL requirement is placed on the tracking screen. This outstanding requirement will trigger email notifications and prevent the student from receiving financial aid.
b. If the student submits an appeal, and that appeal is approved, the student will be notified of the outcome and financial aid processing will resume. Students will also be notified of appeal denials. Notifications of appeal denial will describe how the student may reestablish his or her eligibility to receive financial aid, including assistance under the title IV, HEA programs.