



**FAYETTEVILLE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients**  
**(Effective Spring 2019)**  
**Revised 5/14/21**

### **Purpose**

Federal and state regulations require an institution to establish a reasonable satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy to determine whether an eligible student is progressing satisfactorily in his or her academic program to receive assistance under the Title IV, Higher Education Act programs. A student is expected to maintain a minimum level of progress towards completion of a degree, diploma, or certificate program that is eligible for financial aid.

### **Procedure Statement**

In order to be eligible for financial aid, you must meet the following minimum guidelines:

1. **Qualitative Standard** – Must not be suspended according to the College’s academic suspension procedure. In addition, a student must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0.
  
2. **Quantitative Standard** (financial aid pace) - Completion of a minimum percentage of work is measured to ensure that a student completes his or her program of study within the maximum timeframe allowed based on the published length of the student’s academic program. The number of hours attempted is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which you were enrolled at the generic 10% point of each term. The total number of hours earned is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which the student received a passing grade as noted on the student’s academic transcript.  
  
Must earn 67% of the total cumulative credit hours attempted (including all transfer credits). **For example, if the student attempted 30 credits, he or she must earn at least 20 credits of the 30 credits attempted (30 x 67% = 20).**
  
3. **Maximum Time Frame** – Must complete a program of study in a timeframe not to exceed 150% of the published length of the program, excluding the first 30 attempted credit hours of developmental education. This will be measured in credit hours (e.g., if the academic program length requires 60 credit hours, then the maximum time frame cannot exceed 90 credit hours attempted). Transfer credits accepted by FTCC from other institutions are included in the maximum timeframe calculation. Your total attempted credits are cumulative for financial aid purposes and do not reset to zero when pursuing a subsequent degree.
  
4. **Monitoring** - The Financial Aid Office will monitor satisfactory academic progress every semester (including summer).
  
5. **Change of Major** - Students who change their major are still responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic progress according to the policy as outlined. A review of satisfactory academic progress will be based on the student's program of study. Changing from an associate degree program to a diploma or a certificate program may result in a student losing their federal and state eligibility.

## **APPEAL PROCESS**

When your financial aid is suspended for not meeting SAP or because you are near or have reached the maximum timeframe to complete your program of study, you may appeal your status to the Financial Aid Office. The following special circumstances will be considered when processing an appeal (but are not limited to):

1. A significant medical illness or injury that directly affected the student's ability to meet academic standards.
2. The death of a close relative during the time period that directly affected the student's ability to meet the academic standards.
3. The student experienced a significant personal tragedy or event that affected the student's ability to meet academic standards.
4. The student received an incorrectly reported grade that has been changed and is requesting that the Satisfactory Academic Progress should be re-evaluated.
5. Pregnancy with extenuating circumstances.
6. Maximum timeframe – must provide a signed program evaluation by your academic advisor for the program you intend to graduate, number of credits needed to graduate, and expected graduation date. The SAP committee will review to determine if the student can mathematically complete the remaining required courses within 150% of the published length of the program.
7. Maximum timeframe for students wishing to pursue a subsequent degree must complete the maximum timeframe appeal, submit a signed program evaluation by your academic advisor to include the number of credits needed to graduate and your expected graduation date, and provide proof of successfully completing the "Key Components to the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Financial Aid Appeal Process for Maximum Time Frame Student Counseling Session".
8. Another significant situation that affected the student's ability to meet academic standards.

Failing to make SAP after returning to school after an extended period of absence or changing an academic program are not special circumstances that were beyond your control. An appeal may not be based on a student's financial need or lack of understanding of actions that put a student's financial aid eligibility in jeopardy.

The following reasons do not warrant an appeal (but are not limited to):

1. Immaturity
2. Pregnancy unless medical complications
3. Exceeding Developmental credit limit
4. Exceeding Pell Lifetime Limit
5. Exceeding Subsidized Loan Limit
6. Exceeding Aggregate Loan Limit (Undergrad)
7. Returning to school after an extended absence

## **Appeal Review Process**

1. All appeals must be submitted by completing the Satisfactory Academic Progress appeal E-Form along with supporting documentation. All 3<sup>rd</sup> party documents should be on letterhead or an official form (i.e. police report/death certificate) and must include an official signature.
2. Students should be prepared to pay for their semester expenses out of pocket pending an appeal decision. On the form, the student must state the special circumstances that prevented him/her from achieving the minimum SAP standards and the course(s) of action the student will take to maintain SAP.
3. The SAP appeal e-form will be routed electronically to the SAP committee.
4. Incomplete appeals will not be considered. The student must address the reasons for failing SAP and the steps they now have in place to make satisfactory academic progress.

5. Financial Aid Advisors and/or the SAP Committee (Senior Financial Aid Management) will review appeals by date order.
6. Appeals without supporting documentation will be automatically denied.
7. Students must complete at least one FATV GetSAP Video Module with a score of 80% or greater. Other modules may be assigned based on the reviewer's discretion. Students must attach proof of completion (of their assigned modules) with their appeal.
8. Students who have an unsatisfactory SAP status and exceeded maximum timeframe must submit (both) Max Time Frame appeal and Satisfactory Academic Progress appeal, complete counseling sessions and provide supporting documentation.
9. Appeals will not be retroactive for prior semesters.
10. Appeals must be submitted no later than the midpoint of the semester to be considered for the current term (October 15<sup>th</sup> for fall, March 15 for spring, and June 15<sup>th</sup> for summer). The SAP appeal e-forms will only be available for each semester during the dates listed below:
  - Fall: July 15<sup>th</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Spring: November 15<sup>th</sup> – March 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Summer: April 15<sup>th</sup> – June 15<sup>th</sup>
 If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, the appeal e-forms will be available through the next business day.
11. An email notification of the appeal decision will be sent to the student.
12. If your appeal is approved, you will be placed on "Probation on Appeal". You must complete 75% of your attempted credits for the term and have a 2.0 term GPA for the semester to regain SAP eligibility. Failure to meet these conditions will result in the immediate suspension of any pending federal and/or state financial aid.
13. Students who are mathematically unable to regain SAP in one semester may be placed on "Probation on Appeal" with an academic plan. You will be evaluated every semester. If you do not meet the conditions of your academic plan, your financial aid will be suspended.
14. If your aid is suspended, you may submit another appeal for review, however, the second appeal cannot be for the same issue(s) that led to the first appeal approval (such as the same medical condition). A student must have very unusual circumstances to warrant a second appeal approval. As a result, very few second appeals are approved.
15. The Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Services and/or the Associate Vice President for Student Services may make professional judgment calls regarding all appeals.

### **Approved Appeals**

If your appeal is approved, you will be placed on "Probation on Appeal" and notified how many credit hours you need to complete in order to regain satisfactory academic progress. You may be placed on an academic plan if you are not able to regain satisfactory academic progress within one semester. To successfully complete these credit hours, you must earn a 2.0 GPA each term and earn passing credits in 75% of your attempted classes each term until you regain satisfactory academic progress or graduate. If you fail to meet these requirements, your aid will be suspended.

In the case of a maximum timeframe appeal approval, you may be placed on MX1, MX2, MX3, or MX4 and notified the number of semesters you were allotted. (See glossary for term definitions). To successfully complete the extended semester(s), you must earn a 2.0 GPA and complete at least 75% of your attempted credit hours each allotted term. Failure to meet these requirements will result in suspension/max time frame.

**Denied Appeals**

If your appeal is denied or if you do not meet the conditions of an approved appeal, you will be expected to attend at your own expense and correct the deficiency--either by the completion rate (pace), GPA, or both. You cannot make up a deficiency if your appeal was due to exceeding the maximum timeframe to earn a degree). If you did not maintain SAP due to a deficiency in completion rate, GPA, or both, you may take courses at another institution as long as FTCC accepts the transfer hours or attend FTCC at your own expense. You must then submit a Financial Aid SAP appeal e-form for review.

If your appeal is denied because you did not provide supporting documentation, you may submit another appeal for the extenuating circumstance with supporting documentation. A second appeal may be considered.

**NOTE:** All notices regarding your academic progress for financial aid purposes will be sent to your FTCC Gmail account. You are responsible for monitoring this mailbox. Your SAP status and calculations are also available in Self-Service.

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## Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Glossary of Terms and Definitions

**Audit Grades** - Credit hours taken for a grade of “audit” (AU) do not apply toward an associate degree, diploma, or certificate program for financial aid purposes.

**Course Withdrawals** - Students who withdraw from classes officially or unofficially should understand the effects of their eligibility for financial aid as determined by this Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. A withdrawn grade, “W,” will count as attempted (pace), but not completed. Financial Aid recipients should contact a Financial Aid Advisor before withdrawing from a class to discuss how their financial aid eligibility will be impacted.

**Credit for Prior Learning** - Credits for prior learning are excluded from the SAP calculation.

**Cumulative Credit Hours Attempted** - Cumulative credit hours attempted are defined as all curriculum credit hours attempted at FTCC as well as all credit hours **transferred** in from other institutions.

**Cumulative Credit Hours Completed** – Curriculum credit hours successfully completed at FTCC and credit hours transferred in from other institutions.

**Developmental (Remedial) Credit Hours** - Developmental Education courses (designated by course numbers below 100, ex., MAT-070) beyond the first 30 credit hours attempted **are included** in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress. However, there is a limit on the amount of non-credit remedial coursework that can be included in your enrollment status. Developmental credit hours attempted in excess of 30 total semester credit hours cannot be counted towards enrollment status.

**ENGLISH as a Second Language** - English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are excluded from the curriculum SAP calculation.

**Full-time enrollment** is defined as 12 credit hours each semester (for financial aid purposes) including the summer semester.

**Grade Changes** - Student must submit an appeal for a grade change along with supporting documentation. If the grade change was due to an administrative error, SAP will be re-evaluated (recalculated) for the term for which the grade was given. If the grade was changed for a reason other than an administrative error, SAP will be calculated in the next evaluation period for which the student is enrolled.

**Grade Forgiveness** - Grade forgiveness is not applicable for financial aid purposes.

**Incomplete Grades** - Courses with a grade of “I” (Incomplete) or “I\*” will be considered as credit hours attempted.

**Maximum Time Frame** - Students who have exceeded 150% of their published program length of their program are not eligible for aid. Their SAP status will be “Maximum Time Frame”. Students are also ineligible for aid when it becomes mathematically impossible for him/her to complete their program within 150% timeframe. Students may submit a SAP appeal Eform for consideration to complete their program of study. Appeals approved for an extension will have one of the following SAP statuses:

- MX1 (one semester)
- MX2 (two semesters)
- MX3 (three semesters)
- MX4 (four semesters)

Students must maintain SAP GPA and Pace during each evaluation period for the additional terms granted. Failure to maintain a term GPA of 2.0 and or completion rate of 75% will result in suspension of all federal and state aid. The SAP status will be "Violated Max Timeframe".

**Probation on Appeal** - A SAP appeal that has been approved for a student whose aid has been suspended because he/she failed to maintain SAP for Pace and/or GPA, their SAP status will be "Probation on Appeal". The date the appeal was submitted will determine the effective date of the term approval. Appeals will not be retroactive for prior semesters.

**Repeated Courses** - If you have already earned a passing grade ("D" or better) for the course, you may only repeat the course once for financial aid purposes. Both grades (new and old) will be used to determine eligibility in accordance with this procedure (cumulative GPA, pace, and maximum timeframe).

**SAP Regained** - If you are able to regain satisfactory academic progress during the next evaluation period (at the end of the term), your SAP status will be "Sap Regained". You can only regain satisfactory academic progress by earning or transferring in enough credit hours and grades to bring up your cumulative average. *Paying for a semester or sitting out a semester does NOT permit you to regain satisfactory academic progress.*

If you have not regained satisfactory academic progress during the evaluation period (at the end of the term), you will remain on Suspension.

**Satisfactory** - Your cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher, your completion rate (pace) is 67% or higher, and you have not exceeded 150% of your program of study (major).

**Suspension** - Your cumulative GPA is below 2.0 and/or your pace is below 67% and/or you have exceeded the maximum time frame to complete your program of study (major). You are no longer eligible for financial aid at FTCC. If you have extenuating circumstances for not meeting SAP requirements, you may submit a SAP appeal e-form (along with supporting documentation) to be considered for financial aid eligibility for the next term of enrollment.

**Test-Based Credit** - The grades for these credits are not applicable for financial aid purposes.

**Transfer Students** - Transfer credit hours and grades accepted from other institutions are included in the calculation of SAP. Credits taken at other institutions under a consortium agreement will be considered as transfer credits.

**Warning** - Following the first term of failure to maintain **cumulative** (GPA and/or Pace) satisfactory academic progress, you will be granted **one term** to regain satisfactory academic progress. This term is known as your "Warning" term. During your Warning term, you may continue to receive financial aid provided you are otherwise eligible. Students must complete the SAP Assessment In Blackboard.

**Warning Near Maximum Time Frame** - Students who have completed 80% of the maximum time frame permitted for the program (published program length x 150%). Their SAP status will be "Warning Near Max".