

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards (SAP)

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) at Western Piedmont Community College (WPCC) is required by federal regulations to monitor the academic progress of students who apply for financial aid. Financial aid applicants must comply with the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards as a condition for eligibility for aid. These standards are used to determine eligibility for all Federal Title IV aid, state and institutional aid; and are applied to the student's entire academic history at WPCC.

The standards against which applicants for financial assistance are measured include completion of credit hours, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time limits to complete the program of study.

SAP will be monitored at the time of application for aid and at the end of each semester. Students must meet all of the standards listed below. Failure to meet any of the three standards will result in the loss of financial aid.

1. **Completion Rate:** Each semester, the student's academic progress will be measured by comparing the number of attempted credit hours with the credit hours earned. The student must successfully complete 67% of the total attempted credit hours to maintain SAP. Hours attempted are calculated as all hours enrolled per semester, minus any hours withdrawn or dropped during the 75 percent refund period. Hours attempted also include transfer credit hours accepted toward a student's educational program at WPCC. For example: a student who attempts 12 credit hours, and successfully completes 9 credit hours is making SAP ($9 \text{ credit hours} \div 12 \text{ credit hours} = 75\% \text{ completion rate}$).
2. **Cumulative Grade Point Average:** Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average at or above the minimum on the following chart:
 - 1.25 for 1-15 credit hours attempted
 - 1.50 for 16-23 credit hours attempted
 - 1.75 for 24-31 credit hours attempted
 - 2.00 for 32 or more credit hours attempted
3. **Maximum Time Frame:** The student's maximum time frame to complete a program of study is 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if 64 semester hours are required to complete a degree, the student may attempt a maximum of 96 credit hours before exceeding their eligibility for financial aid ($64 \times 1.5 = 96$). The student's entire enrollment history at WPCC and any transfer hours accepted from other institutions is considered when evaluating academic progress within the established time frame. Developmental classes are **excluded** from the MTF calculation.

At whatever point in time it is determined to be mathematically impossible for the student to complete their program of study **WITHIN** the established Maximum Time Frame, the student can no longer receive aid at WPCC and will receive a financial aid status of MTF (suspended).

Change of Majors – Students who change their major are still responsible for adhering to the 150% maximum time frame of the new program (all previously attempted credit hours will be

included in the calculation). Students who decide to change majors are advised to do so early in their academic program.

Double Major – Only the primary program of study will be eligible for financial aid funds, however, all classes taken will be used in calculating the 150% maximum time frame limit.

Additional Degrees – Students returning to WPCC to pursue another degree after graduation will be given a new maximum time frame. Only the successfully completed credit hours that apply to the additional degree will be counted towards the net maximum time frame.

Additional Elements of SAP:

- Letter grades of A, B, C, D, and SC are counted as completed credits.
- Letter grades of F, I (incomplete), NC (non-satisfactory completion), W (withdrawal), or IW (instructor-initiated withdrawal) are counted as credit hours attempted but not successfully completed.
- Letter grade of NS (No Show) is not counted as attempted or earned credit hours. Audited (AU) credit hours are not funded by financial aid and are excluded from all calculations.
- Developmental credit hours (courses below the 100 level) are included in the completion rate calculation but are excluded from the GPA calculation. Students may receive financial aid for developmental credits up to a maximum of 30 credit hours.
- Consortium credits are included in both the completion rate and maximum time frame calculations.
- All attempts of a course, including repeats, will be included in the calculation for GPA, Completion Rate, and Maximum Time Frame.
- Students may receive financial aid for repeating a passed course one time, regardless if the credit is provided again.
- Students may attempt a failed course a maximum of three times. Developmental courses are exempt from this policy.
- Transfer credit hours are excluded from the GPA calculation, but are included in both the completion rate and maximum time frame calculations. Students transferring from another institution will be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress at the time of enrollment.

Eligibility Status:

Satisfactory: Satisfactory status is achieved when the completion rate, GPA and maximum time frame requirements are met.

Warning: Warning status is assigned to students who fail to meet the eligibility standards for the completion rate and/or the GPA requirement. Students with a “warning” status may receive financial aid for one semester, provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

Suspension: There are several conditions that may place a student of financial aid suspension. These conditions are listed below:

Probation: This status is assigned to a student who fails to make SAP, and who has had their eligibility reinstated as the result of an appeal. While on “probation,” the student must successfully follow the conditions of the Academic Plan created during the appeal process. All Academic Plans will require a 2.0 minimum semester GPA, and a minimum 75% completion rate for subsequent periods of enrollment. The Director of Financial Aid or the Financial Aid Subcommittee may require a more rigorous Academic Plan for individual students based on the particular situation and content of the appeal on a case by case basis. The requirements of a more rigorous plan will be made in writing and signed by the student prior to the disbursing of financial aid. Academic Plans will be monitored by the Financial Aid Office.

Notification of SAP Status:

Eligibility status will be updated at the end of each semester. All applicants will be notified via email regarding satisfactory, warning, suspension or probation statuses. However, failure to receive notification will not change the student’s status. Not enrolling for one or more terms does not change the student’s status.

- A student, who fails to meet the cumulative completion rate and/or GPA requirements at the end of a “warning” period, will have their financial aid suspended.
- Students with a “probation” status who fail to meet the requirements of their Academic Plan will be placed on suspension.
- If at any point it is determined that a student cannot complete their program of study **within** the maximum time frame limit (150%), the student will immediately be placed on financial aid suspension.

Re-Establishing Eligibility: There are three avenues available for regaining eligibility for financial aid. These avenues consist of the following:

Paying on Your Own– To regain eligibility, the student must attend WPCC (without financial aid) until they meet the GPA and completion rate requirements.

Notification of a Grade Change– The student’s financial aid may be reinstated as result of a grade change, provided that as a result of the change, the student is meeting both the completion rate and GPA requirements.

The Appeal Process– Students who have faced mitigating circumstances may appeal the suspension of their financial aid. Mitigating circumstances are generally beyond the student’s control and may include a death in the family, injury or illness of student, or other special circumstances.

To appeal the suspension of financial aid, the student must submit to the FAO the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form, explaining their failure to make SAP, and what has changed to allow them now to regain SAP. The SAP Appeal form also includes the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Degree Evaluation form which must be completed by the student’s academic advisor.

SAP Appeal Forms are available in the FAO. All appeals must be accompanied by documentation supporting the reasons for the appeal. Appeals submitted without supporting documentation will not be reviewed.

The Director of Financial Aid will review the appeal and notify the student via the student's WPCC email account within 2 weeks from the receipt date of the completed appeal. If the student finds the Director's decision unsatisfactory, the student may appeal to the Financial Aid Subcommittee for further review.

The appeal to the subcommittee must be in writing and submitted to the Financial Aid Office.

The student will have the opportunity to present their case in person to the subcommittee. The decision of the Financial Aid Office Subcommittee is final.

Students may submit one appeal per academic year. Students appealing the loss of financial aid as a result of exceeding the maximum time frame are limited to one appeal.

Students seeking to regain eligibility for financial aid remain ineligible for assistance until the appeal process is completed and an affirmative decision has been made by either the Director of Financial Aid or the Financial Aid Subcommittee.

Students should be prepared to pay tuition, fees and other education expenses until notified that their aid has been reinstated.