

## 403.7 SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS

### General Requirements

Federal Regulations require institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress for students receiving financial aid. Each college must establish a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy that defines the academic standards a student must meet for continued federal financial aid eligibility. The SAP policy must include both qualitative and quantitative measures, taking into account both a student's GPA and the number of credits attempted in a degree program. An institution is allowed some flexibility in setting these standards as long as:

- a) The student does not attempt more than 150% of the credits for their degree program (for example, if a student is in a 60 credit degree program, they may only receive financial aid for up to 90 credits); and
- b) The student still is able to mathematically meet the College's graduation standards (i.e., achieve at least a 2.0 GPA).

The federal government requires institutions to check a student's progress not less than once a year. The College may allow students to appeal if they are not currently meeting SAP requirements and may allow students to receive financial aid during a probationary period. The policy must also discuss issues such as transfer credits and the treatment of remedial education credits. Finally, the policy may prescribe how the student can re-establish academic progress and re-gain eligibility for federal financial aid.

The SAP policy applies to federal grants, work-study assistance and loans. The State of New Jersey has established separate requirements for eligibility for various state programs.

### WCCC Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

At WCCC, the standards for maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) are as follows:

- **Qualitative Standard**

Federal regulations require students to attain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA). This GPA standard must be at least as stringent as the College's GPA requirements. The College has developed a graduated minimum GPA requirement, as shown on the next page, which increases along with the number of credit hours attempted.

- **Quantitative Standard**

Federal Regulations also limit receipt of federal financial aid to no more than 150% of the course work required for any particular degree or certificate. Transfer credits that are accepted towards a certificate or degree program will be included in the hourly limitation but are not included in a student's GPA.

Satisfactory completion is defined as a letter grade of A, B, C, D or P. Unsatisfactory completion is defined as a letter grade of F, I, W, WF, WP NF or XF.

**WCCC Qualitative and Quantitative Standards for SAP**

Below is a summary of the qualitative and quantitative standards that the College will follow for students in **A.A., A.S., A.F.A. and A.A.S. programs**:

<b>Credits Attempted</b>	<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Cumulative GPA</b>
0-11 credits	----	----
12-18 credits	50.0%	1.4
19-36 credits	66.6%	1.6
37-48 credits	66.6%	1.8
49 + credits	66.6%	2.0

WCCC does not include remedial credits in “credits attempted,” “% completed,” “maximum timeframe” or “GPA.” Additional progress standards exist for remedial classes (see below). Students must meet academic progress standards for both college level and remedial courses.

Federal regulations preclude the awarding of financial assistance to students who cannot mathematically meet their degree or certificate requirement. Should it be determined that a student cannot successfully complete a degree or certificate program within the 150% program timeframe, the student will be ineligible for any additional financial aid.

**Remedial Courses**

At WCCC, remedial Courses do not count in the calculation of a student’s GPA, % program completed or maximum timeframe because they are not college level courses. However, under federal guidelines, a student must meet college-determined qualitative standards in remedial courses to continue to receive financial aid. WCCC has established the qualitative standard for a remedial course as earning a “C” or better. The College has defined a student has successfully meeting this standard if they meet the following parameters:

**For students who first matriculated after July 1, 2016 (and need only a maximum of 3 remedial courses):**

Remedial Credits Attempted	Remedial Credits Successfully Earned (C or better grade)
>6	n/a
9	3
12	6
Over 12	9

Students cannot receive financial aid for any remedial courses attempted above 18 credits.

**For student who first matriculated before July 1, 2016 (and may have needed up to 5 remedial courses):**

Remedial Credits Attempted	Remedial Credits Successfully Earned (C or better grade)
>9	n/a
9-11	3
12-15	6
16-18	9
19 and above	12

Students cannot receive financial aid for any remedial courses attempted above 30 credits.

### **Repeat Grade Policy**

Any credit-bearing course taken at WCCC may be repeated by enrolling in the same course during a future semester.

When a course is repeated, the highest grade earned will be computed into the cumulative quality point average. The original grade(s) will continue to appear on the transcript marked as a repeated grade, but will not be included in QPA computations.

Students may retake a course more than once. However, if they have successfully completed the course with a passing grade, they are only eligible to repeat a course once using federal financial aid. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office to determine financial aid eligibility for repeated courses.

### **Transfer Credits**

Credits earned at another institution and transferred into a WCCC degree program will count towards credits attempted and credits completed, although they will not be calculated into the GPA average. Students may appeal to remove from the quantitative standard any transfer credits that do not apply to their current degree program.

### **Withdrawal Grades**

Students who withdraw before the 10<sup>th</sup> week of class receive a "W" grade. Students who withdraw after the 10<sup>th</sup> week receive either a "WP" (Withdrawn Passing) or a "WF" (Withdrawn Failing) grade. Credits attempted in any course where a student receives a W, WP or a WF will count toward the quantitative credit standard. The W or WP grades do not affect the GPA and therefore will not count in the qualitative standard. However, a WF will be considered an "F" and calculated into a student's GPA.

### **Medical Withdrawal**

In rare instances, a student may need to withdraw from one or more classes due to a severe medical circumstance. Students seeking a medical withdrawal must submit a request in writing to the Special Considerations Committee along with appropriate documentation from a medical provider. Should a medical withdrawal be approved, a student will be assigned a Withdrawn Medical (WM) grade. WM grades will not count toward a student's academic progress. Students with medical issues should contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

### **Withdrawal for Active Duty**

Students who need to withdraw in order to participate in active duty in the military will receive a WA grade in their course upon the presentation of appropriate military paperwork. WA grades will not count toward a student's academic progress. Students who need to withdraw from classes due to a call to active duty should contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

### **Incomplete Grades**

A grade of incomplete (I) may be reported for a student who has carried a course with a passing grade until the end of the semester, but due to illness or other unusual and substantiated cause has been unable to complete the final examination or some limited amount of assigned work. An I grade is temporary and will be converted to an "F" at the end of the extension period if the course work is not completed. Students who receive an I grade who are in jeopardy of not meeting academic standards will be notified that their subsequent semester aid will not be determined until the status of the I grade is resolved.

### **Change of Academic Program/Major**

Federal regulations provide colleges with the ability to "re-set" the SAP quantitative standard when a student changes a major or program of study. At WCCC, students may appeal to remove from the quantitative standard any prior credits that do not apply to their current degree program. Removal of credits from the SAP calculation will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will consider factors such as the number of credits remaining for completion of degree, prior academic performance, any previous degree program changes, and any other extenuating circumstances. It is the expectation of the College that a re-set that will result in the removal of more than two or three courses from the SAP standards will only be done in rare circumstances.

### **Academic Forgiveness**

Under certain circumstances, readmitted students may apply for "Academic Forgiveness" to eliminate grades from one or more prior courses from their GPA calculation. Academic Forgiveness is only granted in cases where the course is not required and/or available for the student's current program of study. Courses granted Academic Forgiveness will not count in a student's GPA for purposes of the SAP calculation. Total credits attempted will continue to be counted in the SAP quantitative standard. However, a student may appeal to remove from the quantitative standard any prior credits in their academic history that do not apply to their current degree program.

### **Dropped Classes**

Classes dropped during the drop/add period at the beginning of each semester do not count toward the student's qualitative or quantitative standards. These courses do not appear on a student's official transcript.

### **XF and NF Grades**

A grade of XF is assigned in a case where a student has unofficially withdrawn (i.e., the student stopped attending). A grade of NF is assigned in a case where a student has never attended a class and has not officially withdrawn from the course. XF and NF grades are considered an earned "F" and counted in both qualitative and quantitative SAP standards.

### **Audit Grades**

Students cannot receive financial aid for audited courses.

### **Students with Unusual Enrollment History**

The federal government identifies students with "unusual enrollment history." These are students who have attended at least two other institutions within the preceding two years. WCCC is required to follow up with these students to ascertain whether they have earned credits at their prior institutions. Should the College determine that a student did not earn credits in accordance with federal requirements, the student will be required to appeal in writing to gain financial aid eligibility at WCCC.

### **Rules for Individual Financial Aid Programs**

The SAP requirements apply to both federal and state financial aid eligibility. This includes Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), NJ Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) and federal student loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) and the NJ Community College Opportunity Grants (CCOG) program. .

Additional eligibility or student progress standards may apply to the NJ STARS program the NJ Educational Opportunity Program and the CCOG Program.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which required students to make academic adjustments mid-way in spring 2020, the Federal Government has given institutions flexibility to exempt that semester for purposes of calculating SAP standing.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Review**

The College will evaluate students for academic progress after each fall and spring semester. Students who also attempt summer classes will have their academic progress reviewed after the end of the summer term.

**Satisfactory Progress:** Students whose credits earned and cumulative GPA meet or exceed the SAP requirement are considered to be making satisfactory progress and are in "good academic standing."

Students who do not make SAP standards will be placed on Financial Aid Warning.

**Financial Aid Warning:** Students on Warning status will be allowed to receive financial aid for one semester (warning period). At the conclusion of the warning period, the student must either meet the SAP requirements or submit a formal appeal to continue to receive financial aid.

### **Appeal Process**

The Financial Aid Office will notify any student not making Satisfactory Academic Progress that he/she is placed on Warning status and will lose financial aid in the subsequent semester unless SAP standards are met by the end of the Warning period.

Students do not have to appeal a Warning status. However, if they want to receive financial aid for the following semester, they must either meet the SAP standards or submit a written appeal to formally appeal to retain financial aid eligibility. Those who successfully appeal will be placed on Probation.

Students must submit their appeal file at least 15 days prior to the start of the semester if they intend to have a determination made prior to the payment due date. Students who submit appeals after that time must make alternate financial arrangements for their semester charges (i.e. pay in full or enter a payment plan). The College will notify students whether their appeal has been approved or denied within 20 days of the appeal submission.

The written notification from the College shall include an SAP appeal form indicating the process necessary to file an appeal. To submit an appeal:

- A) Complete the SAP Appeal form and include any supporting documentation related to the appeal.
- B) Forward the appeal by the date listed in the notification letter to:

Financial Aid Eligibility Appeal  
Director of Financial Aid  
Warren County Community College  
475 Route 57 West  
Washington, NJ 07882

Any approval of an appeal will be based on judgment of the College's SAP Appeals Committee. This Committee will minimally include representatives from Financial Aid, Finance and Student Services offices. This Committee, will review each appeal and render a decision within one month of receipt of the appeal request. **The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.**

### **Appeal Requirements**

As part of this appeal, the student must:

- a) Submit a written statement explaining the extenuating circumstance such as illness, injury, death of a relative or other special situation. Students must submit all appropriate documentation related to their appeal, including medical documentation, death certificate or other official notices:
- b) Document what has or will change in the student's circumstance to enable the student to re-establish Satisfactory Progress. Indicate how the circumstance has been addressed so that it will no longer impede educational goals; and
- c) Attach advisor/student meeting notes along with a degree audit completed with an advisor.

As part of the appeals process, the College will work with the student to create an "Academic Plan". The Plan will include strategies the student should follow in order to be able to regain SAP status and may include the following:

- A limitation on the number of credits a student may attempt in a given semester;
- An agreed upon course complement for upcoming semester(s) to help improve the student's academic standing;
- A plan for supplemental educational support, including regular tutoring sessions;
- A plan for minimum course completion and/or grade expectations for a semester (s); and/or
- A limitation on college extracurricular activities that the student may participate in while on probationary status.

The Academic Plan is in force as long as the student is not meeting SAP standards. A student must appeal to make any deviations from the plan or will lose eligibility for financial aid until they meet SAP standards.

**Probation:** Students in warning status whose appeals are accepted will be placed on Probation for the upcoming semester. Any student who does not satisfy the requirements of their academic plan during the Probation period will lose eligibility for financial aid for subsequent semesters until they regain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Probation is on a semester basis. A student must successfully appeal probation each semester to retain aid eligibility.

**Restoration of Financial Aid:** Once financial aid eligibility is lost, it can only be regained if the student is able to meet the quantitative and qualitative SAP requirements.

**Termination:** Termination of financial aid eligibility will occur if the student meets one or more of the following circumstances:

1. The student has exceeded the maximum credits permitted for the degree program and therefore will no longer be eligible for financial aid.
2. The student has completed the degree program and therefore is no longer eligible for financial aid.
3. It has been determined that the student cannot mathematically meet the degree requirements within the prescribed federal financial aid time maximum of 150%.
4. After a semester on Warning status, the student does not meet SAP requirements and does not submit an appeal to reconsider the termination of federal financial aid.

5. The SAP Committee has determined that the student's appeal does not meet any mitigating circumstances to justify the continuation of financial aid.
6. A student is on Probation and fails to complete or make progress on an Academic Contract.

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