

*SAP doesn't just come from Trees*

# Overview

- What is SAP?
- Institutional Policies for SAP
- SAP Requirements
  - Financial Aid Probation and Suspension
  - Appeal Procedures
  - Reinstatement Process
  - Notification and Policy Disclosures

# What is SAP?

1. Guidelines for students to successfully complete academic programs for which aid is received.
2. All Institutions that participate in the Title IV programs must develop, implement and disseminate a SAP policy for all Title IV recipients. There are three sets of compliance requirements that regulate SAP for Title IV programs.
  - Student Eligibility
  - Administrative Capability
  - Consumer Information

## *Institutional Policy*

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# **Institutional Policies for Satisfactory Progress--*Who should be Involved***

The objective is to establish a SAP standard that is:

- Consistent with the institutional goals
- Sensitive to needs of students
- Proper custodianship of US funds


The development of a SAP policy should not be done in isolation but include all parties affected and should result from a group selected by the chief administrative officer of the institution.

# Institutional Policy Considerations

In establishing standards of satisfactory academic progress, an institution should attempt to:

- Respond to the diversity of its students and academic programs.
- Attempt to strike a balance between leniency that would encourage abuse and stringency that would result in an excessive number of exceptions.
- Apply financial aid SAP standards in a consistent manner to all students receiving Title IV funds.

# *SAP Requirements*

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# SAP Requirements

## “Same As or Stricter Than” Criterion

- The SAP policy for students receiving federal aid must be the SAME or STRICTER than the policy used for students enrolled in the same educational program that do not receive federal aid.
- Institutions can develop two sets of academic standards, one general and one for Financial aid recipients. However, Title IV regulations require that SAP standards be applied consistently to all Title IV programs and to all Title IV recipients within identifiable categories of students.

# SAP Requirements – Policy Components

There are two, distinct components that need to be included in an institution's SAP measurements.

- **Qualitative (Quality)**

What is key indicator of a student's quality of work?

- **Quantitative (Quantity)**

How long does a student have to complete their program of study?

# SAP Requirements – Qualitative Component

Qualitative Component consists of work projects completed or comparable factors that are measured by a norm.

- GPA is often used as a key indicator of academic progress.
- Federal guidelines stipulate that at the end of the second academic year, a federal aid recipient must have a “C” grade point average or its equivalent, or have academic standing consistent with the institutions requirement for graduation (2.0 on a 4.0 scale).

## Qualitative Component—Course Repetitions

If a school allows course repetitions as part of the SAP determination it must include it in its written policy information.

- ✓ Course repetitions where only the most recent grade is counted; or
- ✓ Course repetitions where only the highest grade is counted.
- ✓ Course repetitions where all grades are counted.

# SAP Requirements – Quantitative Component

Quantitative Component is the **Maximum** time frame in which a student must complete their educational program.

**Must not exceed 150% of the published length of the program (undergraduate programs only)**

**Example 1:** A student in a four year program has a maximum of six years to complete the academic requirements.

**Example 2:** A student in a 12 month program has a maximum of 18 months to complete the academic requirements.

# Quantitative Component-Graduate Programs

The 150% maximum time frame does not apply to graduate programs. However....any school that offers graduate programs must develop, disseminate, and consistently apply a policy defining the maximum timeframe graduate students have to complete their programs This maximum timeframe is a period defined by the institution that is based on the length of the educational program.

# SAP Requirements – Frequency of Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy provides that a student's academic progress is evaluated—

- At the end of each payment period if the educational program is either one academic year in length or shorter than an academic year; or
- For all other educational programs, at the end of each payment period or at least annually to correspond with the end of a payment period

## Other Considerations

There are a number of other considerations which must be incorporated into an institution's SAP policy:

- Non-punitive Grades / Incompletes and Repeated Course Work
- Audited and Pass/Fail Course Work
- Withdrawals and Absences
- Remedial, Enrichment, and English as a Second Language Courses (ESL)
- Transfer Courses and Consortiums (Credit hours from another institution that are accepted toward the student's educational program must count as both attempted and completed hours)
- Changing a Program of Study or a Major

## *Definitions*

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## Financial Aid Warning

- *Financial aid warning* means 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.

# Payment Period Subsequent to Warning

For the payment period following a payment period during which a student was on financial aid warning, the institution may place the student on financial aid probation, and disburse title IV, HEA program funds to the student if--

- The institution evaluates the student's progress and determines that student did not make satisfactory academic progress during the payment period the student was on financial aid warning;
- The student appeals the determination; AND
- The institution determines that the student should be able to meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards by the end of the subsequent payment period; OR
- The institution develops an academic plan for the student that, if followed, will ensure that the student is able to meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards by a specific point in time.

# Financial Aid Probation

*Financial aid probation* means a status assigned by an institution to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress and who has appealed and has had eligibility for aid reinstated.

## Payment Period Subsequent to Probation

- A student on financial aid probation for a payment period may not receive title IV, HEA program funds for the subsequent payment period unless the student makes satisfactory academic progress or the institution determines that the student met the requirements specified by the institution in the academic plan for the student.

## *Financial Aid Probation and Suspension*

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# Financial Aid Suspension - Warning / Probationary Period

In the development of your school's SAP policy you will need to determine the actions required should the student fail to meet the quantitative and qualitative requirements:

- The institution can terminate the student's aid eligibility for subsequent periods of enrollment *immediately*.

OR...

- The student can be provided with a warning (only schools who evaluate each payment period) or probationary period (only after the student has made an appeal) during which the student remains eligible for aid while they work on correcting their SAP deficiencies.

## *Appeal and Reinstatement*

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# Appeal Procedures for Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility

An Institution's SAP policy should clearly define what types of unusual circumstances may be considered in the appeal process.

- Death of a relative
- Personal injury or illness of the student
- Special circumstances as determined by the school

It also must include:

Information the student must submit 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.

## Well Defined Terms and Conditions

Terms and conditions of the appeal process must be well defined within the SAP policy and communicated to the student.

- If the institution does not permit a student to appeal a determination by the institution that he or she is not making satisfactory academic progress, the policy must describe how the student may reestablish his or her eligibility to receive assistance under the title IV, HEA programs; and
- The policy provides for notification to students of the results of an evaluation that impacts the student's eligibility for title IV, HEA program funds.

# What Information Do You Want the Student To Provide?

- A written appeal form?
- A letter detailing a specific plan for academic recovery?
- A statement or contract signed by an academic advisor supporting the plan for academic recovery?
- Will the appeal process require the student to participate in additional academic counseling, course tutoring, remedial course work, etc.?
- How will the unusual circumstance leading up to the appeal be documented?
- Will the student be required to meet face-to-face with a committee?

# Reinstatement Process

- Students regain eligibility when the institution determines that they are again meeting the SAP standards, or the institution determines that the student met the requirements specified by the institution in the academic plan for the student.

## *Notification and Policy Disclosures*

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# SAP Status Notification To the Student

- All communication to a student regarding the status of his or her academic progress should be individual, confidential, timely, and precise.
- The communication procedure should be outlined within the institution's established SAP policy.

## Remember Disclosure of Information

1. Every Institution is required to establish, publish and apply reasonable standards for measuring whether a student is maintaining satisfactory academic progress in his/her program
2. Notification of the SAP standards for continued receipt of student aid must be given to each Title IV recipient and anyone who may be affected by the SAP policy

That could include:

Prospective Students

Current Students

Faculty and staff who advise and counsel

## Evaluation of SAP Policy

- Your institution's SAP policy should be reviewed annually.
- Institutions should maintain data, statistics, and policy.
- This information can be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the SAP policy and to suggest changes where appropriate.

*Questions*

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American Student Assistance®



American Student Assistance  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1600  
Boston, MA 02114

800.999.9080  
617.728.4265 F A X  
800.999.0923 T D D

[www.asa.org](http://www.asa.org)