

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Satisfactory progress means a student must be proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling certificate requirements in a specific length of time. Students must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress according to the institutional standards before receiving Title IV assistance. Good standing means that the student is capable of enrollment or continued enrollment. Initially this means that the student is admissible to an educational program as demonstrated by high school diploma or GED. Later this means that the student is performing well enough in terms of progress, grades, and the institutional attendance policy to continue enrollment.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To be considered making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), a student must attend at least 67% of the scheduled class hours on a cumulative basis during each payment period and to have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 65% by graduation. If the student's grade point average is below 65%, then the student will be issued an academic warning. Students who have been issued an academic warning are still eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid. If a student is issued a financial aid warning the student, campus director and the director of financial aid will develop an academic plan to insure that the student improves their academic standing. The student can continue to receive Title IV Aid while they are under financial aid warning. However, if a subsequent payment period evaluation reveals that the student is still not making satisfactory academic progress the student will be placed on financial aid suspension and will not be eligible for further Federal Financial Aid disbursements unless an appeal has been made and accepted.

A grade of "I" is regarded as unsatisfactory academic progress for the purpose of Title IV aid administration. The student is responsible for tuition and fees charged during a period of suspension.

The first disbursement of Title IV funds for first time entering students at Vantage College requires no progress check provided the first disbursement is issued during the pay period of training for a new student. At the end of their first payment period students must be making satisfactory progress according to the standards stated below. Students **with** previous course work at Vantage College must have maintained satisfactory progress for that previous course work in order to receive initial or further assistance.

Although it is expected the students complete their programs within the allotted time, it is understood that issues might arise that will cause students to take extra time to complete a program. Because of this, students may take up to 50% longer than the normal time of their program to complete that program and still be regarded as being in good standing. However, a student will **NOT BE ELIGIBLE** for additional Title IV federal financial aid once he/she has received aid for the scheduled number of quarter credits (or in the case of programs measured in clock hours – contact hours) in the program. In short, while one can take up to 150% of the allotted time to complete a program of study at Vantage College, this extra time does not increase the student's Title IV eligibility. **IN NO INSTANCE** can the student receive aid for more Quarter Credits or Clock hours than those for which the program is accredited, regardless of the amount of time that it takes the student to complete the program.

Furthermore, if it is determined that a student is progressing through the program at a rate at which they will take longer than 150% of the scheduled time to complete a program, then they are not to be considered as having made Satisfactory Academic Progress in that period of enrollment.

### Credit Hour Programs:

Satisfactory academic progress will be initially evaluated based on earned credits when the student has been scheduled to successfully complete the equivalent of 18 Department of Education Quarter Credits. For Daytime students in the Medical Assistant (MA) or the Network & Computer Systems Administrator (NCSA) programs this should occur at the start of their 14<sup>th</sup> week of instruction. At that time MA students should have successfully completed at least 26 Vantage College Credits, and NCSA student should have completed at least 29 Vantage College Credits. The second evaluation will occur at the start of the 28<sup>th</sup> week of instruction. The third evaluation will take place when the student is scheduled to be eligible for the first disbursement of their second year, and the fourth evaluation will take place when the student is scheduled to have been eligible for their fourth and final disbursement.

For evening students in credit hour programs the initial evaluation will occur at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> week of instruction, the second evaluation will take place at the start of their 36<sup>th</sup> week of instruction. As with Day students the third evaluation will take place when the student is scheduled to be eligible for the first disbursement of their second year, and the fourth evaluation will take place when the student is scheduled to have been eligible for their fourth and final disbursement.

Please note: because a student is allowed a maximum of 150% of the scheduled time to complete their program and still be considered to have made Satisfactory Academic Progress - it is entirely possible for a student to be making satisfactory academic progress but still not be eligible for a disbursement at the time of an evaluation. (Essentially, not being eligible for a disbursement at a particular time does not in and of itself mean that the student is not making SAP.)

In order to determine if a student is making SAP the school will need to compare the student's progress to the appropriate chart below:

#### MA Day

Weeks of Scheduled Instruction	14-21	28-42	32-48	36-54
EX Credits Earned	26	52	58	65
EX Credits Attempted	39	78	87	97.5

#### MA Evening

Weeks of Scheduled Instruction	18-27	36-54	40-61	46-69
EX Credits Earned	26	52	58	65
EX Credits Attempted	39	78	87	97.5

#### NCSA Day

Weeks of Scheduled Instruction	14-21	28-42	31-47	35-53
EX Credits Earned	29	58	65	73
EX Credits Attempted	43	86	97	109

#### NCSA Evening

Weeks of Scheduled Instruction	18-27	36-54	41-61	46-69
EX Credits Earned	29	58	65	73
EX Credits Attempted	43	86	97	109

Credit Hour Example 1: A student enrolled in the Daytime MA program will be considered to be making SAP as long as they successfully completed at least 26 Vantage College Quarter Credits between their 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> week of enrollment as long as they have not attempted more than 39 Credit hours in that same period of time. However, if a student were to have completed only 20 Credits in 28 weeks then they are not making SAP since they are not proceeding through the program at a rate that will insure that they can complete the program within 54 weeks (150% of the scheduled 36 weeks).

Credit Hour Example 2: An Evening NCSA student who has completed 61 weeks of instruction, earned 66 Vantage College Quarter Credits, but has attempted 102 Vantage College Quarter Credits is not making SAP because at this rate they are going to exceed the maximum 109 credits attempted for the program.

### Clock Hour Programs

SAP for clock-hour programs is measured in a similar manner, but the students' progress in the program is based on the number of successfully completed clock hours rather than quarter credits. Students in the 300 Clock Hour Patient Technician (PCT) program are scheduled to complete the program in 12-weeks so they must complete the program in no more than 18 weeks total. This means that in order to satisfy the SAP requirements a student will need to complete at least 150 clock hours within the first nine weeks while not attempting more than 225 clock hours in that same time period.

Students in the 500 Clock Hour Medical Administrative and Health Information Assistant (MA&HIA) Program are scheduled to complete the program in 17 weeks so they must complete the program in no more than 26 weeks total and may not attempt more than 750 clock hours in that same time period.

Unlike the Certificate Programs – the short-term clock hour programs are usually only evaluated once. The evaluation should take place when the student is scheduled to have completed 50% of the required hours for the program. The following chart should be used to help evaluate if a student in a clock hour program is making SAP.

PCT - San Antonio	
Weeks of Instruction	6-9
Hours Earned	150
Hours Attempted	225
PCT - El Paso/Austin	
Weeks of Instruction	6-9
Hours Earned	182.5
Hours Attempted	273.75
MA&HIA - El Paso/Austin	
Weeks of Instruction	8.5-12.75
Hours Earned	250
Hours Attempted	375

Clock Hour Example 1: A student is enrolled in a 300 Clock Hour program that is scheduled to be completed in 12 weeks. That student can take up to 18 weeks to complete the program and still be

considered to have made Satisfactory Academic Progress assuming they maintained a 65% grade average. That student attended the program for six weeks and successfully completed 150 Clock Hours and maintained a grade average of 65%. At that point the student took a two week Leave of Absence and returned in week nine – completing another 25 clock hours in that week giving them a total of 175 Clock Hours at the end of week nine. Since this will still allow them to easily complete their program within 150% of the scheduled time of the program, they are considered to have made Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of week nine.

Please note that in all of the above calculations, the number of scheduled weeks only includes scheduled weeks of instruction. It does not include approved Leave of Absences or scheduled breaks. However, it does include both excused and unexcused absences.

### **STUDENT NOTIFICATION OF SAP ISSUES**

If a student is found to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress when they are evaluated and a disbursement is made, no notification of making SAP is required. However, if an evaluation is made and it is determined that SAP is not being made, then the school will inform the student of this finding and its ramifications. For example, the first time a student is found to not be making SAP they will be placed on Financial Aid Warning. At that time, they will be sent a notification letter that will inform them of this and the specific reasons for this warning, the length of time that the warning will be in effect, that they can continue to receive financial aid while on warning, and that failure to make SAP by the next evaluation will result in Financial Aid Suspension.

If a student fails to make SAP by the next payment period, they will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. At this time, they will be sent a letter informing them that they are on Financial Aid Suspension and the reasons for this suspension, as well as the steps that they need to take to appeal this decision. If the student appeals the decision and the appeal is accepted, then the school will send them a letter informing them that they are on Title IV Probation. In most cases the letter will also outline what steps will need to be taken to help that student improve their academic performance enough to achieve SAP. If the student's appeal is denied, then the student will be sent a letter informing of this and explaining to them that they are no longer eligible to receive Title IV funds until they are again making SAP. At this time, they will also be given a plan to help improve their academic performance.

It should be understood that the student can continue to receive Title IV funding while they are on Financial Aid Warning. They can also continue to receive Title IV Aid if they are on Title IV Probation, but they cannot receive Title IV Aid if they are on Title IV Suspension and their appeal has been denied – or they failed to file an appeal after being placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

A student who has been placed on financial aid suspension can appeal this suspension by submitting a written appeal to the Director of Financial Aid. The Director of Financial Aid and the Campus Director will review this appeal and decide if an appeal is warranted. If an appeal is granted the campus director and director of financial aid will place the student on academic probation and update the student's academic plan to insure that the student will achieve satisfactory progress by the next scheduled payment period or other benchmarked agreed upon in the plan. The student will remain eligible for federal financial aid while on academic probation as long as they adhere to the academic plan. All academic plans will include strict and clear attendance goals.

To appeal, a student must file a written request within 5 days of receiving written notification by the Financial Aid Officer of making unsatisfactory progress. The appeal should include a written statement of the student's timetable for completing the program in which he/she is enrolled and an explanation of any mitigating circumstance which contributed to the unsatisfactory progress status.

Mitigating circumstances may include but are not limited to serious illness experienced by the student, accident resulting in severe injury to the student, or death in the student's immediate family. Other circumstances may be classified as mitigating if they are serious in nature, prevent the student from attending classes, and are deemed to be so by the Financial Aid Director.

The written appeal will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Director. If the Director believes it necessary, they may require the student to provide further documentation (such as a letter from a doctor) to substantiate or explain the mitigating circumstance. The student will then either be denied aid on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress, or aid will be granted. If the student is allowed to retain aid, they must still complete all hours in the previous pay period before receiving additional aid.

If a student's appeal is denied, then the student will be placed on academic suspension and will not be eligible for federal financial aid.

While it is allowable for students to make multiple appeals – they cannot use a previously used basis for an appeal for subsequent appeals.

### **COURSE REPETITIONS**

Students wanting to repeat a specific program must have permission of the Campus Director to do so. A repeated class is NOT eligible for federal financial aid.