

## **Section 12: Satisfactory Academic Progress**

### **12.1 Process Overview and Responsibilities**

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education, Jefferson College is required by federal regulations (34CFR Parts 668.32 and CFR 668.34) to establish satisfactory academic progress standards for federal and state financial aid recipients enrolled in eligible degree and certificate programs. These minimum standards ensure that only those recipients demonstrating satisfactory progress toward the completion of their educational objective continue to receive financial assistance.

Students must meet minimum satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards in order to be eligible for the following types of financial aid, regardless if a student has previously received student financial aid: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study Program (FWS), Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Parental Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), Missouri A+, Access Missouri, and other Missouri state programs as required.

Jefferson College's SAP evaluation includes qualitative and quantitative measures, and the following three standards are measured after each term of enrollment:

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Completion Rate (Pace)
- Maximum Timeframe

### **12.2 Same As or Stricter Than**

Jefferson College's SAP policy is as strict as the school's standards for students who are not receiving Title IV aid and applies equally to all students regardless of the student previously receiving financial aid at Jefferson College or any other institution of higher education.

### **12.3 Categories of Students**

SAP standards are applied consistently across all categories of students (full-time, part-time) and academic programs.

### **12.4 Qualitative Measure (GPA)**

Jefferson College uses a fixed minimum cumulative GPA requirement of 2.0 consistent with the school's graduation requirements. Any coursework for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F is included in the student's cumulative GPA calculation. This includes remedial coursework. Transfer credit from other institutions is not included in the GPA component.

## 12.5 Quantitative Measure (Maximum Timeframe/Pace)

The quantitative measure of SAP includes two parts. The first part is a maximum time frame, measured by attempted credit hours, by which a student must complete an academic program. The second part includes determining whether a student is on pace to complete the academic program within the set maximum time frame. As soon as it becomes apparent a student will be unable to complete their academic program within the maximum time frame, either by falling below the pace standard or when it becomes mathematically impossible to complete the program within the maximum time frame, the student is ineligible for Title IV aid.

Attempted credit hours include all Jefferson College courses, remedial hours, repeated hours, and transfer credits, including credit hours for which the student did not receive financial aid, credit hours taken while under a different program of study, and those the school may waive under an academic amnesty program.

All credit hours with a grade of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "P" are included in attempted credit hours, as well as all withdrawals ("W" grades), failures ("F" grade), and incompletes ("I" grade).

Completed credit hours are those for which a letter grade of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "P" is earned.

Transfer credit accepted towards a student's program is included in both the hours completed and hours attempted categories.

### 12.5.1 Maximum Time Frame

Maximum timeframe is measured by attempted credit hours, and students must complete their academic program within 150% of the published length of the program.

*Example: A student in an academic program requiring 60 credit hours to graduate must complete the program within 150% of those hours, which is 90 credit hours.*

Once a student reaches or exceeds the 150% maximum timeframe, or is unable to complete the program requirements within the 150% timeframe, the student is placed on Financial Aid Exceeded Timeframe and no longer eligible for Title IV aid.

### 12.5.2 Pace

In order to remain on pace to complete an academic program within the 150% maximum timeframe, students must maintain a cumulative completion rate (pace) of 67% or higher. Pace refers to the percentage of cumulative hours successfully completed in relation to the cumulative hours attempted and is calculated by dividing the cumulative completed credit hours by the cumulative attempted credit hours.

*Example: To meet the minimum completion rate of 67%, a student who has attempted 30 cumulative credit hours must have successfully completed a minimum of 21 cumulative credit hours.*

Completion rate (pace) is calculated to two decimal points and is not rounded up.

## 12.6 Evaluation Periods

To ensure the student is making sufficient progress both quantitatively and qualitatively, SAP is evaluated regularly after each payment period. SAP evaluations coincide with the end of every term - fall, spring, and summer.

### **12.6.1 Financial Aid Warning**

New students or students previously making Satisfactory Academic Progress that do not meet the minimum GPA component, completion rate (pace) component, or both, will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one payment period (term). Students on warning status remain eligible to receive Title IV funds in their next term of enrollment. Students must meet SAP standards by the end of the warning period in order to continue to receive Title IV aid. If the GPA and/or completion rate remains below the minimum standards at the end of the warning period, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and no longer be eligible for Title IV aid.

There is no Financial Aid Warning status for maximum timeframe; however, students may appeal maximum timeframe and be placed on an academic plan, if the appeal is approved.

### **12.6.2 Financial Aid Probation**

If a student successfully files a SAP appeal for GPA and/or completion rate (pace), the student will be placed on financial aid probation for one payment period (term). Students on financial aid probation are eligible for Title IV aid. If the student will require more than one payment period to re-establish eligibility with SAP standards, the student may be placed on an academic plan. While on financial aid probation or academic plan, students must complete 100% of their attempted hours with a 2.0 term GPA or greater, every semester, until their GPA and completion rate meet the minimum standards. Once the student meets the minimum standards, they will return to Good Progress. If the student fails to complete 100% of attempted hours with a 2.0 term GPA or better while on financial aid probation or academic plan, they will be returned to Financial Aid Suspension status and no longer be eligible for financial aid until they return to Good Progress.

If a student successfully files a SAP appeal for maximum timeframe, the student will be placed on an academic plan, can enroll only in courses required to finish the degree for which they were granted an appeal, and must complete 100% of the courses they attempt every semester with a 2.0 GPA or better until their degree is complete. Students who change their major or fail to complete 100% of the courses they attempt with a 2.0 GPA or better will be returned to Financial Aid Exceeded Timeframe status and will no longer be eligible for financial aid at Jefferson College.

## **12.7 Appeals**

Students who have extenuating circumstances that led to their failure to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress may appeal their Financial Aid Suspension status, including GPA, completion rate, and Maximum Timeframe standards. Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, prolonged illness, severe accident or injury, death of a family member, extreme family emergency, or other unusual situation beyond the student's control for which documentation can be provided.

Additional appeals may be considered in instances where a new extenuating circumstance leads to the student's failure to successfully complete the probationary or academic plan period(s), or when a student's previous appeal(s) were denied and additional term(s) have been completed.

Students are informed about the appeal process on the college's website, in official letters indicating failure to meet SAP standards, and in meetings or communications with financial aid or academic advising personnel. Students who wish to appeal their SAP status are strongly encouraged to meet with a Financial Aid Advisor for a detailed explanation of their status and the appeals process.

To submit an appeal, students must complete an online Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal form available on the college's website. The student must indicate the term for which reinstatement is being requested, the reason for the exception, details describing the extenuating circumstances, and steps taken to resolve the extenuating circumstances. Documentation relevant to the student's appeal

must be uploaded, and the student must certify their understanding that (1) approval is not guaranteed and if the appeal is denied, the student is responsible for all charges on their Jefferson College account, even if the decision is received after the date to drop for a refund of tuition and fees; (2) all information contained in the SAP appeal form, supporting documentation and statements, is accurate and complete, and any false information is cause for the reduction, denial, and/or repayment of financial aid; and (3) if the appeal is approved and the student fails to meet the conditions of their Academic Plan, or fail to meet any other SAP standard, the student will become ineligible for federal and state financial aid. An electronic signature is required in order to submit the completed form.

All completed appeals are reviewed by the SAP Appeals Committee, which is made up of professionals from the Financial Aid and Academic Advising offices. If approved by the SAP Appeals Committee, the student is placed on Financial Aid Probation and/or academic plan, during which the student may continue to receive financial aid. Specific conditions will be detailed in a written response issued to the student via postal mail and are always more strict than the standard SAP policy.

The SAP Appeals Committee meets at least four times per semester and the appeal deadline is indicated on the SAP Appeal form. Written decisions will be issued to the student within 3 to 5 business days of the committee's review.

### **12.7.1 Documentation**

Adequate and supporting documentation is critical. A student who appeals must submit information explaining why they failed to meet SAP standards and what has changed in the situation which will allow the student to be successful in their future terms. Examples of acceptable documentation to support an appeal include but are not limited to:

- Newspaper obituaries or death certificates to substantiate deaths
- Physician's written statement or hospital records to substantiate illness or accident
- Written statement from clergy, family member, or other third party familiar with the student's situation
- Written statement from academic advisor or professor

### **12.7.2 Academic Plans**

Students who need more than one payment period (term) to increase GPA and/or completion rate to the minimum standards, or to reach degree completion, will be placed on an academic plan with specific requirements developed on a case-by-case basis. Student transcripts will be evaluated after each term of enrollment to ensure compliance with academic plan conditions and monitor progress towards degree completion.

## **12.8 Regaining Eligibility**

Students who have been placed on Financial Aid Suspension can regain eligibility by:

- (1) Appealing and being placed on Probation or Academic Plan; or
- (2) Successfully completing courses without financial aid resources to increase the student's GPA and/ or completion rate (pace) to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards (cumulative GPA of 2.0 and 67% completion rate).

## **12.9 Treatment of Nonpunitive Grades, Repeated Courses, Audited Courses, Pass/Fail Courses, Withdrawals and Incompletes**

A non-punitive grade is not factored into a student's cumulative GPA calculation. This includes withdrawals, pass/fail courses, and incompletes. When a student repeats a course, only the latest grade will be included in the GPA calculation; however, all attempts and only one completion will be included in the cumulative completion rate (pace).

## **12.10 Treatment of Remedial, Enrichment, and English as a Second Language Courses**

Remedial and ESL credit courses are included in both the quantitative and qualitative components.

Note: No more than one year's worth of remedial credit coursework may be included in a student's enrollment status or cost of attendance. ESL courses do not count against the one-year limitation.

## **12.11 Treatment of Consortium, Change of Major, Second Degree, and Second Major Courses**

Courses taken at Jefferson College under a written agreement (e.g., a consortium or contractual agreement) will be included in a student's SAP status, including GPA, completion rate (pace), and maximum timeframe.

## **12.12 Completion of Degree Requirements**

Students who complete all coursework required for a degree but have not yet received the degree cannot receive further aid for that program.

Once a student applies for graduation, the student's SAP status shall be updated to Graduated, and the student will be ineligible to receive financial aid in future terms. Should the student not qualify to graduate after the term, the student's status will be updated. If the student returns to the college to pursue a second degree, the student can submit an appeal for continued eligibility.

## **12.13 Notices**

Jefferson College's SAP policy is readily available to all current and prospective students. It is published on the Financial Aid website <https://www.jeffco.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap/> and in the college catalog. The policy is also mailed to students with financial aid offer letters and with all warning, suspension, and termination letters.

The Financial Aid Office is responsible for reviewing and updating the SAP policy on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance and consistency.

## **12.14 Treatment of High School Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment Courses**

SAP will not be calculated while students are enrolled in high school and taking dual credit or dual enrollment courses at Jefferson College. Once the student completes high school and continues enrollment at Jefferson College, SAP will be calculated after the first term of enrollment as a regular student, and all dual credit and dual enrollment courses will be included in GPA, completion rate (pace), and maximum timeframe calculations.