

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy
Last Updated: July 2019
Effective Starting Summer II 2019

Regulations governing Federal student financial assistance programs require a student financial aid office to monitor the student progression towards the degree completion for students who are recipients of student aid. Regulation requires both a quantitative and qualitative component to an institution's satisfactory academic progress policy.

- **Qualitative Measure** – *Grade Point Average* – Measures the quality of a student's satisfactory academic progress by reviewing the student's cumulative College credit GPA. Students must earn a minimum 2.0 GPA. Specific federal and state aid programs may require a different GPA along with other standards for renewal and continued eligibility.
- **Quantitative Measure** – *Pace* – This component measures the pace at which the student must progress through their academic program of study to ensure program completion within the maximum time frame permitted. Pace is calculated by taking the cumulative number of college credit hours the student has successfully earned and dividing it by the number of attempted college credit hours. Credits accepted from other schools are included in the calculated as both attempted and earned credits. To meet this requirement, the student's completion pace must be 67% of or higher.
- **Maximum Time Frame** – A student cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the student's program of study while a recipient of Federal student aid. *Example:* if the student's program of study requires 66 credits for graduation, the student may not receive aid for more than 99 attempted credits ($66 \times 150\% = 99$ credits). This policy is true even if the student changes their major. When the student reaches or exceeds the maximum number of credits, the student is no longer eligible for student aid unless they successfully appeal. The student may appeal maximum time frame only if the student can complete their program of study within one semester or a maximum of eighteen (18) credits.

Eligibility

- Students must maintain at least a 2.0 college grade point average (GPA).
- Students must successfully complete at least 67% of all attempted college level credits (including transfer credits) during the semester.
- Students must complete their program of study within the published length of their major, which is 150% of the published length for the student's program of study.
- Students must register only for courses within their program of study.

Satisfactory academic progress is evaluated once a year for all students after the spring semester or the summer I semester (if the student attends this semester). Courses are considered successfully completed when the student earns the final course grade of either A, B, C, D, or P. Non-passing, unsatisfactory grades are any grade that pertains to a withdrawal (W, WU, WF), a grade that pertains to Incomplete (I), a failure (F), or an audit (AU). The remedial course grades

M and N are not calculated in the grade point average but are counted towards the thirty (30) credit remedial attempted count.

All college level and transfer credits will count in the attempted and earned calculation even if students paid for classes with their own resources. Remedial and English as a Second Language (ESL) credits will be excluded from the attempted credit calculation.

Registration Schedule and Enrollment Changes

- Remedial Credits – Remedial (O Level) and English as a Second Language (ESL) credits are excluded from the calculation of credits attempted (quantitative measure) and earned (qualitative measure) in the satisfactory academic progress requirements at the College. Although they are excluded the student who is enrolled in all remedial or ESL courses must maintain a 2.0 GPA for compliance with satisfactory academic progress for the semester.
- Maximum Number of Remedial Credits – Federal student aid will only pay for a maximum of thirty (30) remedial credits. ESL courses do not count against this limit. Once a student attempts 30 remedial credits, student aid will be paid only for college level courses.
- Withdrawals and Incomplete Grades – If a student withdraws from a course, or is withdrawn from a course by the College (in the absence of a formal withdrawal process initiated by the student), the course credits are included in the count of attempted credits. Withdrawn courses are calculated in the pace and maximum time frame calculations, Credits for Incomplete courses ("I" grades) are always counted as attempted for quantitative and maximum time frame measures but are not included in the grade point average or credits earned until the Incomplete grade changes to a final course passing or failing grade.
- Changes in Academic Major – If a student changes majors the credits the student earns at the College will be included in the qualitative, quantitative and maximum time frame calculations for the new major. Only two (2) changes in majors will be permitted in the satisfactory academic progress calculation.

Conditions under Which a Student Is No Longer Eligible for Aid

A student will no longer be eligible for student aid if any of the following conditions occur:

- Student fails to earn a cumulative College grade point average of at least 2.0;
- Student fails to complete 67% of the college level credits attempted during the semester;
- Student earns maximum number of credits allowed for the student's program of study;
- The student fails to make satisfactory academic progress during the Financial Aid Probation period;
- The student fails to maintain conditions of their academic plan;
- The student has completed all of the requirements for their degree or certificate program

Warning Status

Students unable to meet the qualitative standard (maintain a 2.0 college GPA) and quantitative standard (at least a 67% completion rate) will be automatically placed on financial aid warning status for one semester. The student must successfully meet the qualitative and quantitative standard for satisfactory academic progress during the one semester of financial aid warning period to continue to receive financial aid until they have met the financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. If the qualitative and quantitative standard is not achieved after the

financial aid warning period, the student will be denied financial aid. The financial aid warning status will not be granted in consecutive semester.

Financial Aid Probation

If the student is ineligible after the Financial Aid Warning period, a student may appeal a final time to be placed on Financial Aid Probation. Students who lose eligibility for financial aid may submit a written Financial Aid Probation Appeal. The Financial Aid Probation appeal must be addressed to the Director of Financial Aid and must include documentation of any substantiation noted in the appeal and the student’s Financial Aid Academic Plan, as reviewed and approved by staff in the Student Development and Counseling Office. Appeals without substantiation of claims will be summarily denied. Correspondence from medical professionals, clergy, or social service agency personnel should state whether the issue(s) for which they write pertinent to the student are resolved and must provide a professional opinion regarding the student’s ability/potential ability to return to enrollment. ALL correspondence from professionals substantiating the appeal must be on professional letterhead, signed and dated. See the chart below for some examples:

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR APPEAL	
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE(S)	REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION
EMPLOYMENT-RELATED	
Required overtime and/or change in work schedule	Employer letter with effective dates(s) and whether the increase in hours was necessary
Reduced hours resulting in increased child care need, layoff, job loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer correspondence • Termination/separation letter
MEDICAL CONDITION	
Serious illness or change in health status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence stating medical advisory for recovery/home rest period • Record of medical appointments • Copies of medical bills documenting illness/injury • Correspondence stating medical advisory for recovery period
Surgery/hospitalization	
Mental Health issue	Doctor, therapist and/or counselor correspondence
Dental emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of dental visit(s) • Correspondence from dentist about issue and/or recovery period)
STUDENT/CHILD/CHILDREN	
Child’s medical condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records from daycare/school - why child required to be kept home. Please note reasons for which alternative daycare was not viable and what the specific plan would be if this would reoccur) • Medical provider apt records • Letter from medical provider advising period of recovery
Daycare issue	Correspondence from new and/or former daycare provider

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES	
Death of loved one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obituary and/or funeral program • Letter from counselor
Eviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eviction notice • Letter from transitional housing program
Assault/domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Enforcement report • Court documentation • Correspondence from clergy, social worker, counselor and/or medical provider

Note Regarding Previous Withdrawal: A student who has previously withdrawn from the College for medical reasons cannot use the medical withdrawal as a basis for submission of a financial aid probation appeal. In such a case, the student must demonstrate, with appropriate documentation, what changed since the withdrawal to permit the student to make satisfactory academic progress. If an appeal is approved, the student will be eligible for financial aid either via Probation or via the requirement for an Academic Plan.

A student with an approved appeal is placed on Financial Aid Probation. At the conclusion of the probationary status, academic progress will be checked again by the Financial Aid Office. The student on probation will need to meet the qualitative standard in order to continue to be eligible for student aid. The student must successfully pass all courses during the Financial Aid Probation period with a 2.0 GPA or better. The student may not receive the following grades during the financial probation semester/term: F, I, any Withdrawal-related grade or a No Show (NS). If a student earns any of these grades during the Financial Aid Probation period, the student will be denied student aid. At the end of the Financial Aid Probation period the student must meet satisfactory academic progress standards.

Financial Aid Academic Plan - A student with an approved Financial Aid Probation Appeal must meet with an academic advisor in the Student Development and Counseling Office in order to define the total number of semesters as well as the number of credits per semester which the student must successfully complete in order to regain financial aid eligibility. A review will be made every semester to ensure the students are fulfilling the requirements of the Financial Aid Academic Plan. A student who fails to meet the requirements of the Financial Aid Academic Plan will not be eligible to make an additional appeal and must meet the qualitative and quantitative standard without the benefit of financial aid.

*Professional judgment may be considered for a student whom displays unusual special/extenuating circumstances with supporting documentation.

Reinstatement to Financial Aid

If a student subsequently fails Financial Aid Probation or has exhausted all appeals a student may be reconsidered for financial aid after the student has completed all of the following:

- Earned a minimum of 6 credits; and
- Earned a semester GPA of 2.0 or better during that semester/term; and

- May not earn any of the following grades in any course taken during the semester/term: F, I, All N grades, any Withdrawal-related grade, or be reported as a No Show (NS) in any courses taken during this semester/term; and
- The student must pay for those courses from their own resources.

After completing these requirements the student, must submit a Reinstatement of Financial Aid Form to be reconsidered for student aid in the upcoming semester. A student who is approved for Reinstatement to Financial Aid is then placed on Reinstatement for one semester/term at a time. At the conclusion of each semester the students, academic progress will be checked again by the Financial Aid Office. A student on Reinstatement must:

- Successfully pass all courses during the Reinstatement period with a semester GPA of 2.0 or better; and
- The student may not receive the following grades during the reinstatement semester(s)/term(s): F, I, All N grades, Withdrawal-related grade, or a No Show (NS)) in any courses going forth; and
- The student must maintain the standards of the Academic Plan; or
- Meet the minimum standards of the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy established by Essex County College.

If a student earns any of these grades and does not meet the qualitative standard during the Reinstatement period, the student will be denied student aid. Subsequently the student will then be denied student aid for any upcoming enrollment periods until both the qualitative and quantitative standards for financial aid are met.

Maximum Time Frame Appeals

The maximum time frame for student degree completion at the College is 150% of the published length of the student's academic program. This is the time frame for which students must complete their degree program within eligibility for student aid.

Students who have lost eligibility for financial aid due to maximum time frame may submit Maximum Time Frame appeal. The Maximum Time Frame appeal must be addressed to the Director of Financial Aid. Substantiation of claims pertinent to the Maximum Time Frame Appeal must accompany the appeal, and appeals without substantiation of claims will be summarily dismissed.

Note on Degree Programs and Financial Aid

Financial aid will fund one associate degree at the College. Student aid for a second degree will be limited to only the courses required to complete a second degree based on the maximum time frame established for the second degree. Students who already have earned a bachelor's degree may only be eligible to pursue a private/alternative loan.

All decisions by the Financial Aid Office regarding satisfactory academic progress are final.

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