

Macon State College

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

For Students Receiving Financial Aid

(effective Fall 2011)

The U.S. Department of Education requires institutions of higher education to establish a standard of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) for students who receive financial aid. This standard must be applied to the student's entire academic record, whether Title IV financial aid was received or not. In order to remain eligible for financial aid at Macon State College, students must meet the SAP standards specified for academic performance and for degree progression. SAP determines the eligibility of students to receive aid through federal and state programs, such as the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-Study, Direct Loan Programs (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS), and the Georgia HOPE Scholarship. The financial aid satisfactory academic policy should not be confused with the academic standing policies at Macon State College.

SAP Components

The Macon State College definition of financial aid satisfactory academic progress includes the following components:

I. A Qualitative Standard

Students are expected to maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative financial aid grade point average (GPA). Since the financial aid GPA includes all hours attempted at Macon State College, including Learning Support classes, it may differ from your academic GPA.

II. A Quantitative Standard

Students must demonstrate measurable progress toward earning a degree by successfully completing at least 67% of the hours for which they enroll. The grades of A, B, C, D, S, or IP count as successful completion of a course. The grades of F, W, WF, FA, I, or U do not count as the successful completion of a course.

III. Maximum Time-Frame

In addition to maintaining academic standard (2.0 GPA) and making appropriate progress towards a degree objective, the SAP policy also limits the number of attempted credit hours for which student may receive financial aid. Financial aid is available for up to 150% of the number of attempted credit hours required to complete an associate or bachelor degree program. For example:

150% Time Frame Example

Associate Degree Program

64 total hours required in degree program X 150% = 96 hours of financial aid eligibility (calculated using attempted credit hours).

Bachelor Degree Program

124 total hours required in degree program X 150% = 186 hours of financial aid eligibility (calculated using attempted credit hours).

This means that students who change degree programs may lose financial aid eligibility before a degree is earned.

IV. No Progress

Any student that fails to make progress by receiving all Fs, FAs, Ws or WFs (or any combination) in any given semester will be on **SAP Warning** beginning the following semester regardless of the students' cumulative GPA, and their continued financial aid eligibility will be checked consistent with policy (the following term).

V. Students Seeking Second Degrees

Students who already have Bachelor's Degree and are seeking another degree must complete a Macon State College Appeal of Financial Aid Suspension for Graduates and/or Max Time Frame before financial aid eligibility can be determined. If appeal is approved student will be allowed up to 90 additional hours, or hours required to complete the second degree whichever one comes first. However, once requirements are met for the second degree, eligibility ends.

VI. Transfer Students

Transfer students will be on **Probation** during their first term of enrollment at MSC. All attempted hours will then be reviewed at the end of this first semester to determine continued eligibility based on requirements listed above for quantitative and max-time frame standards. This first term will be the same as current students on **Warning**.

Review Process

Each semester the Office of Financial Aid will determine whether the student has successfully completed the minimum expected number of hours with the required grade point average and shown progress toward their educational degree for all completed semesters. This review will include hours attempted during the students' attendance period at MSC, as well as transfer hours. SAP status is calculated at the end of each semester after grades are posted to academic history. If after this review a student is not making SAP according to qualitative or quantitative standards, their status will be changed to **Warning** and they will be allowed to receive financial aid the following term. Continued eligibility will be determined after this term. Should a student become ineligible due to max-time frame, their eligibility will be considered Suspension and they will not be eligible to receive additional financial aid unless an appeal is submitted and approved.

Financial Aid Suspension

A student will automatically be placed on financial aid suspension after grades are posted if a student fails to meet the qualitative or quantitative standards by the end of the semester review in which the SAP status is **Warning**; or they have reached their 150% point. Financial Aid Suspension means the termination of all financial aid until the student has returned to a satisfactory academic progress standing. Because student will not qualify for any financial aid, it is their responsibility to pay all tuition and fees by the payment deadline to prevent cancelation of registration. Students who have submitted an appeal are responsible for all tuition and fees that are due prior to decision being finalized.

Appeals Process

Student financial aid recipients who have lost eligibility for aid may appeal in writing to the Office of Student Financial Aid if there are extenuating circumstances. The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will review the appeal to determine whether the suspension/termination will be lifted. Written notification of the Committee's action will be provided, along with any special conditions which must be met in the event the suspension/termination is lifted. The Committee will only review one appeal per academic year. If an appeal is denied or student chooses not to appeal, student can regain eligibility only by reaching required standards per SAP Policy.

DEADLINE: Appeals with all appropriate documentation must be received no later than the 21st day of classes for the semester for which student financial aid is being requested. Appeals received after the deadline will be held for next semester. Incomplete appeals will result in automatic denial and student will have to wait until the next academic year to appeal again. A student may appeal their SAP Suspension only three times during their academic career at MSC.

Academic Circumstances that Affect Status:

- Failing grades, withdrawals and incompletes all reduce your completion ratio as well as counting against maximum hours.
- Repeated courses count as attempted hours each time you register for them. Also, each course is counted in your financial aid GPA requirement.
- Academic renewal hours count toward all components of the SAP policy.
- Students who are suspended academically or choose not to attend because of SAP Suspension will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon their return. Absence does not restore eligibility for financial aid. It remains the responsibility of the student to be knowledgeable of their SAP standard when returning to school after dismissal or choosing not to return because of SAP Suspension.
- Grade changes require students to submit a written request to have SAP recalculated after confirmation has been received that grade change has been posted to academic history.
- Summer Term Courses – all hours attempted and completed in the summer term are treated as any other semester hours in determining SAP status. SAP will be checked following the summer term as well.
- Audit Courses – students are not eligible to receive financial aid for audit courses. Audited courses are not included in hours attempted or earned for SAP determination.