

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

### VCCS Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Federal regulations required that a student receiving federal financial aid make satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the standards set by the college and the federal government. These limitations include all terms of enrollment, whether or not aid was awarded or received. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards apply to state aid also.

The College Financial Aid Office will evaluate SAP before aid is awarded and after grades post for every term, beginning with the student's first term of enrollment. Some career studies certificate programs are ineligible for student financial aid, but those credits will be counted toward all SAP requirements (GPA, completion rate, maximum timeframe, and developmental maximum) if the student later enrolls in an eligible program.

#### I. Student Financial Aid Status

- A. **Financial Aid Good Standing (GS)** – Students who are meeting all aspects of the SAP policy or successfully following a designated academic progress plan.
- B. **Financial Aid Warning Status (WS)** – Students who fail to meet SAP for the first time (excluding students who have attempted 150% of the credits required for their program of study) will be automatically placed in a Warning Status for one (1) term and are expected to meet SAP requirements by the end of that term. Students who fail to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements at the end of the warning status term will be placed on financial aid suspension. However, with a successful SAP appeal, those students will be placed on financial aid probation and will retain financial aid eligibility.
- C. **Financial Aid Probation Status (PS)** – Students who have successfully appealed financial aid suspension are placed in Probation Status (PS). Students in Probation Status (PS) are eligible to receive financial aid for one (1) semester, after which they **MUST** be in Good Standing (GS) or meeting the requirements of an academic progress plan that was pre-approved by the College Financial Aid Office (see “IV. Appeals” for additional information.)
- D. **Financial Aid Suspension Status (SS)** – Students who do not meet the credit progression schedule and/or the cumulative grade point average standard, or who fails to meet the requirements of their pre-approved academic progress plan, will be placed in Suspension Status (SS). Students in Suspension Status (SS) are not eligible to receive financial aid.

#### II. Evaluating Progress

##### A. Quantitative Standards or Pace of Completion

**Completion Rate (67% Rule):** Students must, at a minimum, receive satisfactory grades in 67% of their cumulative credits attempted. This calculation is performed by dividing the cumulative total number of successfully completed credits by the cumulative total number of credits attempted. All credits attempted at PHCC are included. All credits accepted in transfer count as both attempted and successfully completed credits. Credits with satisfactory grades at PHCC are those for which a grade of A, B, C, D, S or P is earned.

**Example:** A student has attempted 25 credits at PHCC, but only successfully completed 12 credits at PHCC. They also have 12 transfer credits. Divide the successfully completed credits (12 PHCC + 12 transfer credits) by the attempted credits (25 PHCC + 12 transfer credits).  $24/37=.64$

This student has a completion rate of 64%, meaning that they are not meeting the 67% completion rate and their financial aid may be lost.

**Maximum Hours (150% Rule):** In order to continue receiving financial aid, a student must complete his/her program of study before attempting 150% of the credits required for that program. Developmental and ESL course work are excluded from this calculation. Attempted credits from all enrollment periods at PHCC plus all accepted transfer credits are counted; whether or not the student received financial aid for those terms is of no consequence.

**Example:** A student is enrolled in the Business Administration program, which requires a total of 63 credits to complete. 150% of this student's program equals 94 credits. If this student hasn't graduated after the 94 credits of coursework, their financial aid will be cancelled.

**Transfer Students:** Credits officially accepted in transfer will be counted in determining the maximum number of allowable semester credit hours for financial aid eligibility.

**ESL and Developmental Studies:** Students may receive financial aid for a maximum of 30 semester hours of developmental studies courses as long as the courses are required as a result of placement testing, the student is in an eligible program of study, and SAP requirements continue to be met. ESL credits are unlimited in number as long as they are taken as part of an eligible program and SAP requirements continue to be met.

**Additional Considerations for Qualitative or Pace of Completion Standards:**

- **Withdrawals (W grades):** Withdrawals that are recorded on the student's permanent academic transcript will be included as credits attempted and will have an adverse effect on the student's ability to meet the requirements of the completion rate for financial aid.
- **Incomplete (I grades):** Courses that are assigned an incomplete grade are included in cumulative credits attempted. These cannot be used as credits earned in the progress standard until a successful grade is assigned.
- **Repeated Courses:** Repeated courses enable the student to achieve a higher cumulative grade point average. Students' can repeat courses with financial aid until successfully completed, but repeating courses adversely affects the student's ability to meet completion rate requirements. Financial Aid can be considered for successfully completed classes that are repeated to achieve a higher grade but for only one additional attempt. Only the latest attempt will count toward the cumulative grade point average.

**B. Qualitative Standards**

**Cumulative GPA Requirements (GPA Rule):** In order to remain eligible for financial aid, students must meet minimum cumulative grade point average requirements based on a progressive scale. Only non-remedial courses with grades of **A, B, C, D and F** are included in this calculation. Transfer credits are excluded. **A minimum grade point average of 2.0 is required for graduation.**

Total Number of Credits Attempted	GPA Requirement
1 -15	1.5
16 -30	1.75
30 +	2.0

**III. Regaining Eligibility for Financial Aid**

Students who do not meet the credit progression requirements (quantitative or pace of completion) and/or cumulative grade point average requirements (qualitative) will be immediately ineligible for financial aid. Removal from financial aid does not prevent students from enrolling without financial aid if they are otherwise eligible to continue their enrollment.

Unless extenuating circumstances exist and an appeal is granted (see “Appeals” for additional information), a student on financial aid suspension should expect to continue classes at his/her own expense until SAP requirements are again met.

#### **IV. Appeals**

Appeals may be approved by majority rule by the Student Success Committee. **To appeal, the student must complete a SAP appeal form (available online at [www.patrickhenry.edu](http://www.patrickhenry.edu) under Whats Hot/Financial Aid/Satisfactory academic appeal form).** If supporting documentation exists, it must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office within 48 hours of submitting the appeal online. Appeals received after census date (see the PHCC academic calendar) of each term will NOT be considered. Once a student’s appeal is declined they must complete a semester (3 credit non-developmental course minimum) without financial assistance before other appeals will be considered. **All decisions are final. In addition, the appeal does not apply to the Federal Work-Study Program.**

The goal of the Student Success Committee is to assist the student with getting back on track for their academic plan and graduation. The reasonableness of the student’s ability for improvement to again meet SAP standards and complete the student’s program of study will be carefully considered. Students who have appeals approved will be in a probationary status (PS) for the coming term. During the probationary status (PS), the student must meet the conditions of the appeal as communicated to him or her by the Financial Aid Office, or the student will return to suspension. Failure to meet the requirements of the academic plan will result in Financial Aid Suspension until the student returns to good standing on their own. If an academic progress plan has been pre-approved by financial aid, continuing to meet the requirements of that plan will put the student back into good standing.

### **Additional Policies Governing Satisfactory Academic Progress at PHCC**

**Prior Periods of Enrollment** – Federal regulations require that a student must be in compliance with the school’s satisfactory academic progress policy before receiving a financial aid award. These guidelines must be applied to any student requesting financial aid, even if the student did not receive financial aid in the past.

**Late Add of Courses** – The student must enroll in **ALL** courses (including dynamic/mini sessions) by the last day to register as established for standard sessions (see academic calendar). Financial Aid can not include any late added courses as part of the student’s enrollment when determining financial aid eligibility.

**Unsatisfactory (U) Grade** – A grade of “U” (unsatisfactory) in developmental courses is calculated as an “F” for determining grade point average and percentage of credits completed each semester.

**Audit (X) Grade** – Financial Aid is not awarded to students who initially enroll in classes for audit purposes. “X” grades are considered as “W” grades for determining percentage of credits completed each semester.

**Re-Enroll (R) Grade** – A grade of “R” is considered a failing grade for purposes of Satisfactory Academic Progress.

**Withdrawal (W) Grade** – Students who audit or completely withdraw before their grant check(s) are written are ineligible to receive a cash disbursement for that semester. *Refer to the Refund/Repayment Policy in section IV.*

**Change of Enrollment Status**- Students altering their enrollment status by auditing, dropping or withdrawing from classes should remember that they must meet the requirements as published in section II part B of this policy.

**Ineligible Curricula** – Students must be enrolled in a degree, diploma or certificate program requiring at least 16 credit hours for completion to be eligible for aid. Students who have not completed all of the requirements for admission into eligible curricula are not eligible for federal/state financial aid.

**Developmental Classes**-Students taking developmental classes necessary for completion of their degrees, certificates or diplomas are eligible for financial aid. **Students are limited to one year (30 credits) of enrollment in developmental classes.** Developmental classes will be included in the total number of credit hours “attempted” in calculating the minimum percentage of credits completed for purposes of maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress.

**Repetitions**- Students who receive an F, X, U or W in any course can receive financial aid until such time that they receive a passing grade in the course. In addition, financial aid will pay for a student to repeat a passed class one time.

**Financial Aid will ONLY pay for courses required for the program of study in which the student is enrolled.** Students who enroll in courses outside of their curriculum will have their aid reduced accordingly.

**Financial Aid Suspension**- Students who do not maintain the appropriate cumulative grade point average and /or have not successfully completed the required minimum percentage of credits per semester are not eligible for payment under Title IV Regulations. Students who receive financial aid and subsequently withdraw from all classes after the first (10) days of classes will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension until SAP requirements are met. Students have the option of appealing the suspension status; however, this option does not apply to the Federal Work-Study Program (FWS).

**Treatment of Transfer Credits**- Transfer credits which apply to a student’s major program will be included on the maximum time frame standards as explained in section II.

**Repayment Policy** – The amount of Title IV aid that a student must repay is determined by the Federal Formula for Return of Title IV funds as specified in Section 484B of the Higher Education Act. The student is responsible for repayment of funds they did not earn. This amount of Title IV aid earned is determined by multiplying the total Title IV aid (other than FWS) for which the student qualified by the percentage of time during the term that the student attended/participated. If less aid was disbursed than was earned, the student may receive a late disbursement for the difference. If more aid was disbursed than was earned, the amount of Title IV aid that must be returned (i.e., that was unearned) is determined by subtracting the earned amount from the amount actually disbursed. The student will receive a bill for the amount (s) he owes and the funds repaid by the student will be receipted into the appropriate Title IV program account.