

Policy No	400	Effective Date	August 19 th , 2026
Policy Title	Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy	Revisions Date(s)	
Policy Owner	Aaron Keeble	Classification	400

PURPOSE

Amended SAP Policy

Scope

Students at Sisseton Wahpeton College (SWC) are responsible for understanding and adhering to all elements of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy, SWC is required by federal law to use the SAP policy to determine if students are eligible to receive Title IV (federal) financial aid. The SAP policy has three elements:

1. Qualitative (GPA) - students must maintain the required SAP Grade Point Average (GPA); and
2. Quantitative (Pace) - students must complete their credits with a minimum number of F and W grades; and
3. Appeals - students are permitted to appeal their ineligibility if they experienced extenuating circumstances.

References: 34 CFR 668.34 (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Chapter VI, Part 668, Subpart C)

Policy Statement

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) P.L. 94-482, 20 U.S.C. 1088 (f)

Sisseton Wahpeton College (SWC), in compliance with The Education Amendment of 1976, P.L. 94-482, 20 U.S.C. 1088 (f), and CFR 34, Section 668.16, promulgated under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) has established the following policy and procedure to define and administer Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for those students who are recipients of Title IV (or Federal) and all other forms of financial aid funding that are administered by SWC. The SAP policy is in accordance with and references the language from regulations, CFR 34, Section 668.16, promulgated under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended. The SAP policy governs federal, state and institutional financial aid. All undergraduate students are governed by this policy. SWC adheres to federal policy, as set forth in the HEA in the administration of SAP for Title IV recipients, in all respects. Please be aware that the statutes, regulations and policies that govern SAP change from time-to-time. Sisseton Wahpeton College reserves the right to update the SAP policy as necessary and without prior notification. HEA requires that an institution evaluate SAP at least annually for programs that are longer than one year and every payment period (semester) for programs of one year or less. Students who fail to meet these standards of satisfactory academic progress will not be eligible to receive federal financial assistance until eligibility has been re-established.

The SAP policy applies to the following types of Title IV aid (grants and work study) at SWC:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work Study (FWS)

The SAP policy also applies to Institutional, State and Tribal financial aid at SWC:

- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Higher Education Grant Program
- Other In-House Scholarships
- Other Tribal College Financial Aid

SWC administers other types of financial assistance for which academic progress (and other) requirements are described in the eligibility criteria for those forms of assistance.

To be eligible to receive financial aid, students must meet the following minimum standards as established by the Sisseton Wahpeton College:

Components of SWC SAP Policy

The qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (pace) standards below are used to calculate the cumulative results of all periods of students' enrollment, including those semesters (or payment periods) during which they did not receive Title IV funds or other types of financial assistance. Thus, students who have not previously received any financial assistance during their enrollment may be ineligible to do so when they initially apply for financial aid.

Frequency of Evaluation

HEA requires that an institution evaluates SAP at least annually for programs that are longer than one year and every payment period (semester) for programs of one year or less. SWC evaluates all components of SAP at the conclusion of each semester. Students who fail to meet SWC academic progress policy are reviewed at any time during the academic year for financial aid eligibility.

All students who submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as well as those who receive any type of Title IV, state, tribal or institutional financial assistance are subject to being evaluated for SAP at the end of each semester. Transfer students and those who are returning to SWC after a hiatus are evaluated upon entry (or reentry), whether or not that point in time is at the end of a semester. Financial aid recipients and applicants (upon the submission of the FAFSA), who are found to be ineligible, will be notified.

When a change of grade is submitted subsequent to the SAP evaluation, SWC will recalculate the student's SAP status using that new information. A change of grade could either cause a student's SAP status to improve or to worsen.

Qualitative Academic Standards:

Qualitative component – Grade Point Average (GPA):

SWC uses the student's cumulative SAP GPA to measure qualitative progress. To meet this standard, financial aid recipients are required to achieve and maintain the following a minimum cumulative SAP GPA benchmarks:

1.50 GPA – student with 30 semester credits or less Students classified as Freshmen (30 credits or less) must maintain an average GPA of 1.5 or better (credits earned at another college that meet degree requirements are not included when calculating GPA).

1.75 GPA – student with 31-59 semester credits Students classified as Sophomores (31 credits or more) must maintain an average GPA of 1.75 or better (credits earned at another college that meet degree requirements are not included when calculating GPA).

2.00 GPA – student with 59 or more semester credits Students classified as a Junior or Senior (59 or more credits) must maintain an average GPA of 2.00 or better (credits earned at another college that meet degree requirements are not included when calculating GPA).

Achievement of a 2.00 GPA by the end of the student's sophomore status, which is consistent with SWC's graduation requirements for most programs. If the financial aid recipient is enrolled in a program that requires a higher GPA the student must meet the program GPA in order to maintain eligibility for financial aid. When the GPA required by the program is higher than the SAP GPA students will be considered to have met the SAP qualitative standard as long as they are eligible to continue in the program.

The number that results from the qualitative (GPA) calculation for SAP is not rounded, it is truncated at two decimal places. Thus, the student's GPA must be equal to or exceed the minimums cited above without rounding.

Quantitative component – Pace of completion:

HEA requires a quantitative component that calculates the maximum time frame in which students must complete their educational program while remaining eligible for financial aid and a pace of completion that ensures they will complete the program within the timeframe. SWC requires that all financial aid recipients successfully complete a cumulative minimum of 67.00% of the credits that they attempt. Successful completion for this standard is defined as earning a grade of A, B, C, D, or P (**except the Nursing Program it is required a C grade or better**). Financial aid recipients must also complete their program within 150.00% of the published length required for their program of study. The SAP quantitative calculation is based upon all courses that students have attempted, excluding those that are developmental; the calculation also includes the grades for courses that have been repeated. A "W" (withdrawal) grade does count in the calculation of pace.

The number that results from the quantitative (pace of completion) calculation for SAP is not rounded, it is truncated at two decimal places. Thus, the student's rate of completion must be equal to or exceed the minimum cited without rounding.

Quantitative component – Mathematical impossibility to complete within maximum timeframe:

Students who are enrolled in SWC programs also become ineligible for financial aid when it becomes mathematically impossible to complete the program within 150.00% of the published length (as measured in the number of credits required for their program of study), even when the student has not yet reached 150.00%.

Students who are enrolled to complete an eligible baccalaureate degree, associate degree, and certificate program are eligible, but not guaranteed, to receive financial aid to attempt up to 150.00% of the published length to complete the degree.

Students must successfully pass the semester credit hours attempted each term and cumulatively complete 2/3 of attempted credits throughout his or her academic career.

If a Title IV financial aid recipient fails to satisfy the standard of academic progress he/she will be placed on Financial Aid Warning during the next semester attended.

Financial Aid Warning:

Students must meet all of the SAP standards to be considered in satisfactory academic standing. SWC issues a warning to students who began a semester in good standing, if at the end of a semester they failed to meet one or more of the SAP standards. During the warning semester students may receive financial aid if they meet all other eligibility criteria. Students who enroll during their warning semester and still have not met all the SAP standards at the end of their warning semester are immediately ineligible for financial aid for the next semester of enrollment. Students who have not met all of the SAP standards are ineligible for financial aid at the end of the warning semester whether or not they received any financial aid during the warning semester.

Students who have met all of the SAP standards at the end of their semester of warning are returned to satisfactory academic standing for financial aid. If a student who has returned to satisfactory standing subsequently completes a semester and has not met all of the SAP standards the student will again be placed on warning for the next semester of enrollment.

Students who fail to meet all of the SAP standards at the end of a warning semester and are therefore not academically in satisfactory standing are ineligible to receive (suspended from) further financial aid funding, unless they have submitted an appeal (as below) which is approved by SWC. Students who submit an appeal, which is approved, will be placed on probation* and required to follow an academic plan*.

Financial Aid Suspension:

Financial Aid Suspension means a student is not eligible for any federal financial aid or scholarships administered by SWC.

In order to regain satisfactory progress for not meeting the Satisfactory Academic Standards, a student must:

1. Satisfactorily complete a minimum of 6 credit hours at their expense of coursework with an acceptable GPA. During that semester the student is not eligible for financial aid. A student on Financial Aid Suspension cannot receive an I, F, or W (see p. 21 in the college catalog for description of these grade assignments) in any class for which they are registered.

2. A student who is placed on Financial Aid Suspension may appeal the cancellation of financial aid eligibility to the SWC Appeals Committee based on an extenuating circumstance. The student must complete the Academic & Financial Aid Appeal Form which can be picked up in the Financial Aid Office. Students who file an appeal must do so prior to the start of any given semester. The appeal must state why the student did not meet the standards and what steps they

will take to achieve their degree from SWC. All appeals will be handled in a case-by-case fashion. If Appeals Committee approves a student's appeal of his or her Financial Aid Suspension status, he or she will be placed on a Financial Aid Probation

Financial Aid Probation:

This is the status if a student's appeal of his or her Financial Aid Suspension status has been approved a student is eligible for federal aid. Once on a Financial Aid Probation status, a student will remain on probation as long as he or she continues to meet the requirements of the appeal approval or until he or she has improved his or her statistics to meet the standards of satisfactory academic progress as outlined above. In order to show continued improvement to meet the minimum standard or graduate from SWC the Appeals Committee may determine the student must meet an Academic Plan. This plan can include, but is not limited to: What classes a student needs to take to complete his or her program of study and the time frame for the student to complete his or her program of study. This plan can be produced by an advisor.

As required, SWC reviews academic progress at the end of the semester for those students on financial aid probation (or an appeal approved semester), to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan, the student is eligible to receive financial aid for the following semester. Students who experience new extenuating circumstances, which were reasonably unforeseeable at the beginning of the semester during which they were on probation, and that are beyond the student's control, may appeal. The circumstances that are cited in the appeal must be timely to the semester of enrollment during which the academic difficulty occurred. These extenuating circumstances must have been sufficiently disruptive that the student was prevented from continued enrollment and/or successful completion of the semester and meeting of the SAP standards. Students may appeal no more than three times under different circumstances. Circumstances such as difficulty adjusting to college, time management issues, failure to balance social life against academic workload requirements, lack of focus, prioritization of other activities above coursework and inability to afford enrollment expenses in the absence of financial aid are not alone sufficient to qualify as extenuating.

Documented extenuating circumstances might include, but are not limited to:

- The student's major illness or injury
- Major illness or injury in the student's immediate family
- Student's spouse's major illness or injury
- Student's loss of employment
- Student's parent's loss of employment
- Student's spouse's loss of employment
- Student's separation or divorce
- Student's parent's separation or divorce
- Death in the student's immediate family
- Student's spouse's death
- The student's deployment to active duty
- The student's spouse's deployment to active duty

- The student's parent's deployment to active duty
- Natural disaster affecting the student
- Natural disaster affecting the student's parent(s)
- Natural disaster affecting the student's spouse

All SAP appeals will be evaluated by the Appeals Committee or its designee. As noted in the instructions that accompany the SAP appeal process, the student must document all extenuating circumstances, explain changes that will allow for academic success during future enrollment and must submit an advisor-approved academic plan.

Documentation typically consists of provider confirmation of injury or illness, an employer's separation letter, police incident or accident report, attorney's letter, divorce decree, deployment orders, obituary or death certificate as applicable; however, the Appeals Committee or its designee solely determines the sufficiency of documentation in accordance with the circumstance(s) presented. Student's will be allowed to appeal up to (3) times per degree. Exceptions will be determined by the Appeals Committee.

Course repetitions:

Under HEA regulations, Title IV recipients are permitted to repeat a course in which they previously earned only failing grades (F, I and W) without a limit, except as imposed by the SAP and College academic standards. Once a student has earned a grade of A, B, C, D or P one repeat of the course is permitted to be counted towards calculating financial aid eligibility for any payment period or semester. All subsequent attempts of that course, even those required by the College, are ineligible to be included in the calculation of eligibility for financial aid funding.

After a student has earned the first letter grade of A, B, C, D or P, subsequent sequential grades of W are not counted as repeated courses. In the sequence when the student's first grade is A, B, C, D or P followed by grades of W the next grade of A, B, C, D, F or W is considered to be the repeated course, after which the credits for that class cannot be included in the calculation of the student's financial aid eligibility. **Except Nursing Program requires a C grade or better.**

All course repetitions are counted in the evaluation of the quantitative SAP standards, whether or not they were used to calculate the student's financial aid eligibility.

Developmental (remedial) courses:

Students may attempt a maximum of 30 credits of developmental (or remedial) coursework, during which time they may be financial aid recipients, prior to becoming ineligible for federal funds during future attempts. Developmental courses are included in the qualitative assessment of SAP, which means that these courses are included in the GPA used to calculate the student's SAP status. Developmental courses are not included in the quantitative timeframe assessment of SAP, which means that these courses are not included when the student's maximum timeframe or pace is calculated. Students should be aware that all types of financial aid are limited and that they may consume some of their eligibility while enrolled in developmental courses. Students who consume some of their financial aid during their matriculation in developmental courses should plan carefully for their academic and financial enrollment to complete their desired undergraduate program(s).

Transfer Credits:

HEA regulations require that, at a minimum, transfer credits that are applicable toward the student's current program must count as both attempted and completed credits.

Changes of program (major):

Students are permitted to make changes to their program in accordance with their academic goals and College policies. As long as students are meeting all other SAP standards, changes of program alone will not disqualify them for financial aid eligibility. After a change of program, the student's next scheduled SAP evaluation will include only those previously attempted credits that apply to the new certificate or degree program. The student's cumulative credits for this standard are the total of all courses attempted at the College combined with all transfer credits that apply to the new certificate or degree being sought.

A change of major will reset the student's SAP status unless the previously attempted credits that apply to the new degree place the student in unsatisfactory standing.

The student's SAP status may be recalculated a maximum of (3) three times based upon a change of major.

Additional degrees:

Students who seek additional degrees are treated in the same way as those who change their majors (as above). After the completion of the first certificate or degree (at Sisseton Wahpeton College or elsewhere), the next scheduled SAP evaluation will include only those courses that are required for the new degree. The student's cumulative credits for this standard are the total of all courses attempted at SWC combined with all transfer credits that apply to the new certificate or degree. Financial aid eligibility for students who enroll in more than one certificate or associate degree (either simultaneously or sequentially) is calculated based upon the remaining credits, up to the 150% that are required for the certificate or degree that have not been previously attempted. Thus, students may be eligible for financial aid to complete more than one certificate and/or associate degree.

Students who plan to earn a baccalaureate degree should be mindful that using financial aid for multiple certificates and/or associate degrees may mean that they are not eligible for enough financial aid to complete a baccalaureate degree and should plan accordingly.

Once students have completed a first baccalaureate degree (or its equivalent) at SWC or elsewhere, they are no longer eligible for undergraduate financial aid such as Pell and FSEOG funding.

End of Policy