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### Procedure 2.9.1 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

#### Part 1. Purpose

To establish consistent practices at colleges and universities for the effective and responsible management of federal and state student financial aid, and to ensure compliance with federal and state regulatory requirements.

#### Part 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure only, the following words and terms are defined as follows.

##### **Academic amnesty/renewal**

Attempted credits and grades earned that are not used in the calculation of a student's grade point average. Also known as academic renewal, academic forgiveness, and fresh start. Note: Academic amnesty does not apply to a student's financial aid eligibility.

##### **Academic Plan**

The plan developed by the college or university that stipulates the quantitative and qualitative standards a student must meet to ensure the student is able to meet the school's satisfactory progress standards by a specific time.

##### **Developmental coursework**

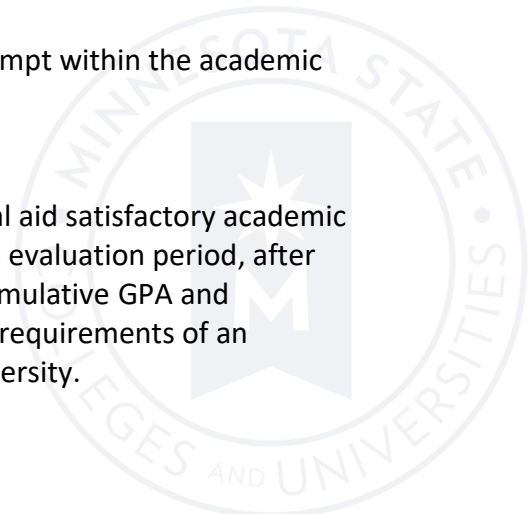
Noncredit or reduced credit remedial courses at the high school level or above designed to prepare students for study at the postsecondary level (as opposed to preparatory coursework, which prepares students for a given program). Note: Students enrolled solely in a remedial program are not considered to be in a program eligible for financial aid. If acceptance into an eligible program is contingent on completing remedial work, students cannot be considered enrolled in that program until they complete the remedial work.

##### **Maximum time frame**

The maximum number of cumulative credits a student may attempt within the academic program in which they are enrolled.

##### **Probation status**

The status of a student who has successfully appealed a financial aid satisfactory academic progress suspension and regained financial aid eligibility for one evaluation period, after which the student must either meet the college or university cumulative GPA and completion percentage standards, or successfully complete the requirements of an academic plan developed for that student by the college or university.



**Qualitative measure**

The Grade Point Average (GPA) a student must maintain in order to retain financial aid eligibility.

**Quantitative measure**

The pace at which a student must progress through a program in order to retain financial aid eligibility.

**Remedial/Developmental credits**

Credits earned from developmental courses that are numbered 0-999. Referred to as “remedial” credits in federal financial aid regulations.

**Required completion percentage**

The percentage of cumulative attempted credits that a student must successfully complete in order to retain financial aid eligibility.

**Warning status**

The status of a student who has been warned that financial aid eligibility is at risk and will continue for one evaluation period despite a determination that the student has not met the college or university grade point average standard, or completion percentage standard, or both.

**Part 3. College and University Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies**

Each college and university president shall be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of students’ satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Colleges and universities are required to use the Minnesota State student information system to monitor and record SAP. The senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs shall provide necessary training and ongoing support to the colleges and universities in their use of the Minnesota State student information systems.

Each college and university shall develop a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy that applies to students receiving financial aid under Title IV financial aid programs of the federal Higher Education Act or under programs of aid administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (MOHE).

The college or university policy must:

- a. Specify the department(s) responsible for ensuring implementation and monitoring in compliance with this procedure.
- b. Be publicized and made available to financial aid recipients as required by financial aid regulations. At a minimum, each college and university shall provide access to its policy through the financial aid section of its college or university website.

- c. Contain standards that are the same as or stricter than the college or university academic standards for a student who is enrolled in the same educational program and who is not receiving financial aid.
- d. Contain qualitative and quantitative standards that are cumulative and include all periods of enrollment at that college or university, whether or not a student received financial aid. See also Part 11, Subpart G for treatment of transfer credits.
- e. Include all components listed in the order shown below.

### **Order of Required Elements**

- 1. Qualitative Measure
  - a. Undergraduate Students GPA
  - b. Graduate Students GPA
- 2. Quantitative Measure
  - a. Required Completion Percentage
- 3. Maximum Time Frame
- 4. Evaluation Period
- 5. Failure to Meet Standards
  - a. Financial Aid Warning
    - 1. Warning status
    - 2. Reinstatement of students on warning status
  - b. Financial Aid Suspension of Students on Warning Status
  - c. Financial Aid Suspension of Students for Other Reasons
    - 1. Suspension for maximum timeframe failure
    - 2. Suspension for extraordinary circumstances
    - 3. Suspension for inability to meet program requirements within the maximum timeframe
- 6. Appeals and Probation
  - a. Appeals
  - b. Probationary Status
- 7. Notification of Status and Appeal Results
  - a. Status
    - 1. Notification of warning
    - 2. Notification of suspension
    - 3. Notification of probation
  - b. Appeals
- 8. Reinstatement
- 9. Treatment of Grades and Credits
  - a. Treatment of Grades
  - b. Academic Amnesty/Renewal
  - c. Audited Courses

- d. Consortium Credits
- e. Remedial/Developmental Credits
- f. Repeated Courses
- g. Transfer Credits
- h. Withdraws

#### **Part 4. Qualitative Measure of Progress (Grade Point Average)**

As a qualitative measure of a student's progress, college or university SAP policies must define either a "graduated" scale and/or a "flat" scale based on an acceptable cumulative grade point average (GPA).

##### **Subpart A. Undergraduate students**

Students at colleges and universities using a 4.0 A to F grade scale shall have either a minimum 2.0 C grade point average by the end of the second year or a grade point average consistent with the college or university requirements for graduation. Monitoring must begin with the first attempted credit. Colleges and universities may apply a 0.0 GPA standard only to the first five attempted credits, as long as this would not prevent a student from meeting that standard within the maximum time frame allowed for completing the program. Grades of A, B, C, D and F must be included in the GPA calculation.

If a college or university establishes a qualitative standard that allows an undergraduate student to continue past the second year with a GPA below 2.0, it shall document that the GPA used is consistent with graduation requirements.

If grades are used that are not listed in this procedure, the college or university shall specify in its SAP policy how these grades affect GPA calculation.

##### **Subpart B. Graduate students**

Beginning with the first attempted credit, graduate students at universities using a 4.0 A to F grade scale shall have a minimum 3.0 grade point average. See Part 11 for treatment of grades and credits.

#### **Part 5. Quantitative Measure of Progress (Completion Percentage and Maximum Time Frame)**

##### **Subpart A. Required completion percentage**

College or university SAP policies must include a quantitative measure consisting of an acceptable percentage of cumulative credits completed. This measure may be a graduated scale and/or a flat scale. Monitoring must begin with the first attempted credit. Colleges and universities may apply a 0% completion percentage standard only to the first five attempted credits, as long as this would not prevent a student from meeting that standard within the maximum time frame allowed for the completion of the student's program.

At the end of each evaluation period, the college or university shall compare the number of credits the student successfully completed to the number of credits the student attempted

to determine whether the student is progressing at a rate that will allow completion of the program within the maximum time frame (see Subpart B below). Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, S, and P are included in the calculation of the cumulative credit completion percentage as courses successfully completed.

Courses for which a student receives a letter grade of I, N, NC, W, F, and Z must be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted.

Unless the college or university has a specific policy indicating treatment of in progress (IP) grades as successful completion, they must be treated as credits attempted but not completed.

If grades are used that are not listed in this procedure, the college or university shall specify in its SAP policy how these grades affect the calculation of completion percentage.

#### **Subpart B. Maximum time frame**

College and university SAP policies must specify a maximum number of attempted credits (maximum time frame) within which students are expected to complete their programs.

Based on variability of program lengths, colleges and universities may establish either: (a) maximum credit limits (maximum time frames) for each individual program, or (b) a single maximum credit limit (maximum time frame) applicable to all programs. Colleges and universities requiring a single maximum credit limit shall choose the lowest individual program limit.

In no case will the maximum time frame exceed 150 percent of the published credit length or clock hour length of the program. Maximum time frames for graduate students, students pursuing double majors, students enrolled in consecutive programs, and students with a previous degree may be based on specific curricular requirements.

If grades are used that are not listed in this procedure, the college or university shall specify in its SAP policy how these grades affect maximum timeframe monitoring. See Part 11 for treatment of grades and credits.

#### **Part 6. Evaluation Period**

College and university SAP policies must divide the educational program, including summer terms, into equal increments or evaluation periods that must not be greater than one academic term.

Programs less than one year in length must be evaluated at the midpoint of the program.

Each college and university shall establish a deadline following the end of a term for submission of grades by faculty in order to ensure the completion of satisfactory academic progress reviews prior to the 10th day of the subsequent academic term.

Non-standard sessions must be evaluated with the payment period in which they are transcribed.

## **Part 7. Failure to Meet Standards**

### **Subpart A. Financial aid warning**

At the end of the evaluation period, if a student has not met either the college or university grade point average standard or required completion percentage standard, the college or university shall allow that student to retain financial aid eligibility under a warning status for one evaluation period.

At the end of the warning period, if a student on warning status has met both the college or university cumulative grade point average and completion percentage standards, the college or university shall end the student's warning status.

### **Subpart B. Financial aid suspension of students on warning status**

If at the end of the warning period a student who has been on warning status has not met both the college or university cumulative grade point average and completion percentage standards, the college or university shall suspend the student immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

### **Subpart C. Financial aid suspension of students for other reasons**

1. **Suspension for maximum time frame failure.** If at the end of the evaluation period a student has failed to meet the college or university standard for measurement of maximum time frame, the college or university shall suspend the student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.
2. **Suspension for extraordinary circumstances.** Colleges or universities may immediately suspend students from financial aid eligibility in the event of extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to: reinstated students whose academic performance falls below acceptable standards during a subsequent term of enrollment; students who register for courses and receive financial aid but do not attend any classes; and students whose attendance patterns provide evidence of abuse of the receipt of financial aid.
3. **Suspension for inability to meet program requirements within the maximum time frame.** If at the end of any evaluation period the college or university determines that it is not possible for a student to raise their GPA or course completion percentage to meet the college or university standards before the student would reach the end of the program for which they are receiving financial aid, the college or university shall suspend the student from financial aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

## **Part 8. Appeals and Probation**

### **Subpart A. Appeals**

College and university policies must include a provision to permit students to appeal their financial aid suspension status based on unusual or extenuating circumstances. The policies must clearly define what types of unusual or extenuating circumstances may be considered, including but not limited to death of a relative, illness, hospitalization, or injury of the student.

The student shall submit information as requested regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next evaluation period.

An appeal may be approved only if the college or university:

1. Has determined that the student should be able to meet SAP standards at the end of the next evaluation period; or
2. Develops an academic plan with the student that, if followed, will ensure the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time. An academic plan may extend for more than one term. If the academic plan includes term standards of GPA and percent of completion, they must be higher than the college or university cumulative standards.

The initial consideration of appeals must be undertaken by the Director of Financial Aid or a designee. Each college or university shall establish a secondary appeal process to consider appeals of adverse decisions. Results of all appeals must be communicated to students in writing. Notification of approved appeals must include the standards that the student is expected to meet or the academic plan that the student is expected to complete in order to retain financial aid eligibility at the end of the next evaluation period.

### **Subpart B. Probationary status**

A student who has successfully appealed must be placed on financial aid probation for one evaluation period. If at the end of the next evaluation period a student on financial aid probation status:

1. Has met the college or university cumulative grade point average and completion percentage standards, the student will regain financial aid eligibility, or
2. Has not met the college or university cumulative grade point average and completion percentage standards, but has met the conditions specified in the

student's academic plan, the student will regain financial aid eligibility subject to the terms of the student's academic plan for a subsequent evaluation period, or

3. Has not met the college or university cumulative grade point average and completion percentage standards and has also not met the conditions specified in the student's academic plan, the student must be resuspended immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

## **Part 9. Notification of Status and Appeal Results**

### **Subpart A. Status**

Colleges and universities shall notify a student in writing any time the student is placed in a warning, suspension, or probation status.

1. **Notification of warning.** The college or university shall also notify a student in writing of the conditions of that student's warning status.
2. **Notification of suspension.** The college or university shall also notify a student of the right to appeal the suspension.
3. **Notification of probation.** The college or university shall also notify a student in writing of the standards the student is expected to meet or the academic plan the student is expected to complete in order to retain financial aid eligibility at the end of the next evaluation period.

### **Subpart B. Appeal results**

Colleges and universities shall notify a student in writing of the results of all appeals.

Notification of approved appeals must include the standards the student is expected to meet or the academic plan that the student is expected to complete in order to be removed from the academic probation or suspension status and retain financial aid eligibility at the end of the next evaluation period.

Notification of denied appeals must describe the reason(s) for the denial and the college or university process for appealing that denial.

## **Part 10. Reinstatement**

College and university policies must describe the process students are required to follow to have their financial aid eligibility reinstated. Neither paying for their own classes nor sitting out a period of time is sufficient in and of itself to re-establish a student's financial aid eligibility.

Students whose financial aid eligibility has been suspended may regain their eligibility only through the college or university appeal process or when they are again meeting the college or



university financial aid satisfactory academic progress grade point average and completion percentage standards.

## **Part 11. Treatment of Grades and Credits**

### **Subpart A. Treatment of grades**

College and university Academic Standing Policies and SAP policies must state how the college or university treats course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, remedial/developmental courses, noncredit, enrichment, and ESL course work in the determination of satisfactory progress.

Grades of A, B, C, D and F must be included in the GPA calculation. Grades of A, B, C, D, S and P must be included in the calculation of cumulative credit completion percentage as courses successfully completed.

Grades of I, N, NC, W, F, and Z must be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted.

Unless the college or university has a specific policy indicating treatment of IP grades as successful completion, such grades must be treated as credits attempted but not completed.

If grades are used that are not listed in this procedure, the college or university shall specify in its SAP policy how these grades affect GPA calculation, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame monitoring.

### **Subpart B. Academic amnesty/renewal**

Credits for which students have been granted academic amnesty/renewal must be recorded and retained in the student data system in such a way that they will be included in both the grade point average and completion percentage measurement of financial aid satisfactory academic progress.

### **Subpart C. Audited courses**

Audited courses must not be funded by financial aid and are not included in any financial aid satisfactory academic progress measurements.

### **Subpart D. Consortium credits**

Credits for which financial aid is received under a consortium agreement must be recorded in the student information system to be included in cumulative GPA, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame calculations.

### **Subpart E. Remedial/Developmental credits**

Remedial/developmental credits must be included in the GPA and effective Fall 2021 excluded from the completion percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress.

The exclusion is not retroactive and only applies to developmental credits taken in the Fall 2021 and thereafter. Up to 30 remedial/developmental credits must be excluded from the maximum time-frame calculation. Students taking only remedial/developmental courses, including ESL Dev Ed courses, in a semester are excluded from the completion percentage measurement.

**Subpart F. Repeated courses**

College or university policies must include a statement on the treatment of repeated courses in the GPA and completion percentage calculation for financial aid satisfactory academic progress, including the number of times a course may be repeated and the total number of course repetitions allowed. This statement must conform to the college or university academic policy on repeated courses. However, a student will not be permitted to receive financial aid for more than one repetition of a previously passed course.

**Subpart G. Transfer credits**

Transfer credits accepted by the college or university and applied to the student’s program requirements must be counted as credits attempted and completed for the calculation of the cumulative completion percentage. Grades associated with these credits must not be used in calculating a cumulative GPA.

Transfer credits accepted and applied by the college or university toward a student’s general education, program, or degree requirements must apply toward the maximum time-frame calculation.

**Subpart H. Withdrawals**

Credits for which a grade of W is received are considered attempted credits but not successfully completed credits for the purpose of monitoring satisfactory academic progress. Thus, a W does not impact the GPA but does negatively impact the cumulative completion percentage.

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Date of Adoption: 04/23/04  
Date of Implementation: 04/23/04  
Date of Last Review: 02/04/21

**Date and Subject of Revision:**

01/24/22 – In Part 11, Subp. E, added implementation date “effective Fall 2021” and “The exclusion requirement does not apply to developmental credits taken prior to Fall 2021.”

02/04/21 – The definitions for “academic amnesty/renewal”, “remedial/developmental credits”, and “developmental coursework” were added to the definition section in Part 2. In Part 3, College and University Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies was reorganized to present the information more effectively. “Student information

system” replaced “student data system”. In Part 7, C, 2 Suspension for extraordinary circumstances, the phrase “whose attendance patterns appear to abuse the receipt of financial aid” was modified to read “whose attendance patterns provide evidence of abuse of the receipt of financial aid”. Gender specific pronouns were replaced with “their” and “they”. In Part 11, E, Developmental credits, the words “and excluded from” were added so developmental credits would be excluded from the completion percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress.

04/06/17 – Added new Part 1. Purpose and new Part 2. Definitions. Removed Appendix A. Order of Required Elements and Definitions. All technical changes consisting of the new formatting and writing standards being applied and the reorganization of the information into a more user friendly sequence.

Additional HISTORY.