



Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients

Purpose

Federal and state regulations require that students receiving financial aid maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). GTCC applies these standards to all federal and state financial aid funds to maintain a consistent procedure for all students receiving assistance.

Procedure Statement

To be eligible for financial aid, you must meet the following minimum guidelines:

- 1. GPA Requirement (Qualitative Standard)** - Must not be suspended according to the College's academic suspension procedure. In addition, a student must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0.
- 2. Completion Ratio Requirement (Quantitative Standard)** - Must earn 67% of the total cumulative credit hours attempted (e.g., if the student has attempted 50 credit hours, the student must have earned credit for at least 34 hours). The number of hours attempted is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which you were enrolled at the generic 10% point of each term. The total number of hours earned is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which the student received a passing grade as noted on the student's academic transcript.
- 3. Maximum Time Frame** - Must complete program of study in a time frame not to exceed 150 percent of the published length of the program, excluding the first 30 attempted credit hours of developmental education. This will be measured in credit hours (e.g., if the academic program length requires 60 credit hours, maximum time frame cannot exceed 90 credit hours attempted). Once students have earned an associate degree from GTCC, they may not be eligible for additional financial aid.

Special Notes

- 1. Withdrawal** – An excessive number of withdrawals (either official or unofficial) will affect your ability to meet the completion ratio requirement as described above. We encourage you to discuss any plans to withdraw from one or more courses with a Financial Aid Advisor before you do so to see how this will affect your future financial aid eligibility.
- 2. Grades of Incomplete** - Students will not be affected by grades of incomplete (I or X) at the time of review. Should the grade become final before the review, the actual grade, credits attempted, and credits earned will be used to determine if the student is making SAP.
- 3. Repeated Courses** - In accordance with GTCC procedure, a student is permitted to retake courses. If you have already earned a passing grade ("D" or better) for the course, you may only repeat the course once for financial aid purposes.

The new grade earned from a repeated course will be used to determine eligibility in accordance with this procedure. For GPA calculation, previous grades are zeroed out in accordance with the procedure for repeating a course. However, the previous hours attempted and earned will continue to be counted in the total hours attempted and earned.

4. Developmental (Non-Credit) Coursework – Developmental Education courses (designated by course numbers below 100, ex., MAT-043) beyond the first 30 credit hours attempted are included in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress. However, there is a limit on the amount of non-credit remedial coursework that can be included in your enrollment status. Developmental credit hours attempted in excess of 30 total semester credit hours cannot be counted towards enrollment status.

5. Summer Session - Credit hours attempted and earned during a summer session will be included in the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress, just as for any other term of study.

6. Transfer Credit – Transfer credit hours and grades accepted from other institutions are included in the calculation of SAP. Credits taken at other institutions under a consortium agreement will be considered as transfer credits.

7. Test-Based Credit – Grades for these credits count in the student’s GPA.

8. Forgiveness of Grades – There is no provision in the federal regulations for the concept of forgiveness of grades. Therefore, GTCC must always include all courses when evaluating satisfactory academic progress.

9. Incomplete Emergency and Withdraw Emergency (COVID-19) – In response to the national emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, GTCC has added two new grades to the curriculum grading schemes, the Incomplete Emergency (IE) and Withdraw Emergency (WE) grades, which are only applied to students in response to COVID-19. IE and WE grades are not included in the quantitative component of the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculation. If a student receives a final grade (not a grade of IE, I, or X) for a class, the new grade and number of credits attempted will be used to determine if the student is making SAP.

10. Aviation Grade of X – A grade of X is given in Aviation courses in which a student has not yet completed the course up to FAA standards. For Satisfactory Academic Progress evaluations, this grade will be treated like an F grade, not a grade of Incomplete.

Warning Status and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

To determine your academic progress status and eligibility for financial aid, your academic record will be evaluated at the end of each term. Following the first term of failure to maintain cumulative satisfactory academic progress, you will be granted one term to regain satisfactory academic progress. This term is known as your “Warning” term. During your Warning term, you may continue to receive financial aid provided you are otherwise eligible. If you can regain satisfactory academic progress with the courses completed successfully during your Warning term, the Warning status is lifted. If you have not regained satisfactory academic progress, you are placed in “unsatisfactory academic status” (USAP) and you are no longer eligible for financial aid at GTCC until your cumulative progress is again satisfactory. You can only regain satisfactory academic progress by earning or transferring in enough credit hours and grades to bring up your cumulative average. Paying for a semester or sitting out a semester does NOT permit you to regain satisfactory academic progress.

Appeal Process

If you become ineligible for financial aid due to a failure to meet the minimum guidelines for satisfactory academic progress or because you have reached your maximum time frame to earn a degree, you may appeal your status to the Financial Aid Office. Appeals will be considered for various circumstances.

Examples of circumstances that were outside of your control:

1. Extended student/family illness or injury
2. Death of a relative

Examples of circumstances that were under your control:

1. Return to school after an extended leave
2. Change of degree program

All appeals must be made in writing to document the unusual circumstance AND to explain and document that these situations are resolved. In the case of circumstances that were under your control, you must document what has changed in your situation that will now enable you to meet SAP requirements. You may obtain the Appeal form from Enrollment Services or print a copy from the GTCC Financial Aid website. Submit the appeal and non-returnable documentation to a financial aid advisor in Enrollment Services by the end of the add/drop period of the semester for which you are trying to establish eligibility. Student appealing after this time frame should be prepared to pay for the semester expenses. Your appeal will be reviewed by the SAP Appeals committee and your approval or denial notice will be sent to your GTCC email address.

Approved Appeals

If your appeal is approved, you will be placed on “Probation” and notified how many credit hours you need to complete to regain satisfactory academic progress or how many terms you are allotted to complete your graduation requirements in the case of a maximum timeframe appeal. To successfully complete these credit hours, you must earn a 2.0 GPA each term and earn passing credits in 75% of your attempted classes each term until you regain satisfactory academic progress or graduate. If you fail to meet these requirements, your aid will be terminated. A second appeal may be considered but you will not be allowed to submit it for the same issue that led to the first appeal, such as the same medical condition. A student must have very unusual circumstances to warrant a second appeal. As a result, very few second appeals are approved.

Denied Appeals

If your appeal is denied or if you do not meet the conditions of an approved appeal, you will be asked to attend at your own expense and earn the deficiency either in the hours, GPA or both (you cannot make up a deficiency if your appeal was due to exceeding the maximum timeframe to earn a degree). If you did not maintain SAP due to a deficiency in credit hours, you may take the credit hours at another institution as long as GTCC accepts the transfer hours. After you complete this semester (or semesters), you must submit an appeal form to the Financial Aid Office so your progress can be reevaluated.

NOTE: All notices regarding your academic progress for financial aid purposes will be sent to your Titan email address.

Revised October 2024