Santa Monica College Financial Aid Office
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy 2014-15

To be eligible for federal financial aid, a student must make satisfactory academic progress. Santa Monica College has adopted the following satisfactory academic progress policy, which contains elements specified in federal regulations.

I. QUALITATIVE REQUIREMENTS
All financial aid students are required to maintain a minimum overall GPA of at least 2.0.

II. QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS
A. Maximum Time Frame
All financial aid students will be expected to complete their program within 150% of the published length of the program. Students enrolled in 60 units AA/AS, or 4-year transfer programs will be expected to complete their program by the time they attempt 90 units. Students enrolled in vocational programs of less than 60 units will be given a maximum time frame (attempted units) that is 150% of their program's length. In addition, students who have completed an AA/AS degree will be considered to have exceeded the maximum time frame.

B. Pace (Completion Rate)
To measure whether students are progressing at a “pace” that will see them complete their course of study within the maximum time frame, SMC will evaluate the pace (completion rate) of financial aid students at periodic intervals. At each interval, students will be expected to have completed at least 67% of all units attempted. Classes with grades of A, B, C, D, and CR (credit) are considered to have been completed. Classes with grades of F, NC (no credit), I (incomplete), and RD (grade withheld) will not be considered as completed.

III. INCREMENTS
The academic progress of financial aid students will be evaluated three times each academic year: after the fall term, after the spring term, and after the summer term. Progress will be evaluated after grades for the previous term are posted.

IV. FINANCIAL AID WARNING
When the academic progress of financial aid students is evaluated, students whose overall GPA is below 2.0 or whose overall pace (completion rate) is below 67% will be placed on Financial Aid Warning status. In addition, students who are either transferring from another college/university or who are continuing SMC students that previously did not apply for financial aid, will be placed on Financial Aid Warning status if their overall GPA is below 2.0 or if their pace (overall completion rate) is below 67%. Students on Financial Aid Warning will be eligible for financial aid during the term that they are placed on warning. After the term, if a student's GPA and pace meet the District's minimum standard, the student will no longer be on Financial Aid Warning status and will be considered to be making academic progress. Students who do not meet the GPA and/or pace standard will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification.

V. FINANCIAL AID DISQUALIFICATION
Students on Financial Aid Warning status for a term are required to improve their efforts during the term. After the term is over, SMC will again assess the student’s GPA and pace (completion rate). At that time, if the student is failing to meet either the GPA or pace standards, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification.

Students who exceed the maximum time frame will also be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification. In addition, students who have completed their second year of college (or university) but failed to reach a 2.0 GPA by the end of their second academic year will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification.
VI. FINANCIAL AID REINSTatement
Students, who are disqualified because they failed to achieve the minimum GPA and/or pace requirements (after first being placed on Warning status,) will be reinstated if they meet the GPA and pace requirements at the next evaluation.

VII. APPEAL OF FINANCIAL AID DISQUALIFICATION
Students who are placed on Financial Aid Disqualification may appeal for reinstatement. Both students who have exceeded the maximum time frame and those who have failed to maintain the minimum GPA and/or pace standards will be required to see an academic counselor for an educational plan that accurately reflects their goals. In addition, students will be required to submit a completed Appeal for Reinstatement form (available on the website) explaining their particular situation. Documentation of special circumstances, such as health issues, would also be required. Students who are approved by the appeal committee will be placed on Financial Aid Probation status for one term. Individuals with GPA or pace deficiencies will be expected to make improvements—during their Probationary Term—in the quality and/or quantity of their work. Probationary students, who fail to meet both GPA and pace standards, will again be placed on FA Disqualification.

Appeal approvals for students who have exceeded the maximum time frame will only be for the specific courses needed for their primary educational goal.

All appeal approvals are for one term.

VIII. REPEATED COURSES
All repeated courses will be included in the maximum time frame and the overall pace assessment. For GPA purposes, students who are allowed to repeat failed classes and subsequently earn a satisfactory grade—will have their satisfactory grade replace their initial failed grade in the GPA calculation.

Per federal guidelines, students can only repeat a class that they received a (passing) “D” grade—one time.

IX. TRANSFER COURSES
Transfer courses taken at other institutions will be counted when calculating a student’s maximum time frame and pace (completion rate), provided the courses will apply toward an SMC degree, certificate requirements, or baccalaureate degree transfer requirements. Courses at proprietary and trade schools will generally not be accepted for credit toward district degree or certificate requirements. Upper division courses from four-year colleges and universities will be counted when calculating maximum time frame and pace. All students with Associate or Bachelor degrees will be considered to have exceeded the maximum time frame and must be approved by an appeal committee before being funded. Foreign courses will be counted if they have been professionally evaluated and accepted by the district. Students with a foreign Bachelor degree will be considered to have exceeded the maximum time frame.

X. ESL COURSES
ESL courses that apply to AA, certificate, or transfer requirements will be treated the same as non-ESL courses—and will be factored into maximum time frame, overall GPA, and pace assessments.

Most ESL courses, however, do not apply toward an AA, certificate, or transfer requirements. These ESL courses will not be factored into the maximum time frame assessment—but are factored into the assessment of pace and overall GPA.

XI. REMEDIAL COURSES
The first 30 remedial English and math units attempted will not be counted when determining the remaining maximum time frame for a student. The academic progress in these remedial courses will be considered when assessing both the student's overall GPA and overall pace.

XII. INCOMPLETE COURSES
"I" (incomplete) grades will be considered as "attempted," but will not be considered to have been "completed." If a student's "I" grade changes during a term, it is the student's responsibility to inform the financial aid office of the change. If the change of grade will affect the student's financial aid eligibility, the financial aid office will then do a recalculation during the term.
Otherwise, the change of grade will not be factored into the overall pace assessment until the next incremental assessment.
ADDITIONAL "SAP" INFORMATION

Pace Calculation
The pace calculation is as follows:
Units Completed/Units Attempted = Pace (Completion rate)

Withdrawals and Grades of Incomplete
Students who withdraw from classes or receive grades of "incomplete" will have those units included in the "pace calculation." "Withdrawals" and "incompletes" will be included with all other units attempted.

Grades of "F" and "No Credit"
Students who receive grades of "F" or "No Credit" do not receive credit for the units attempted. Thus, these classes would not be considered to have been completed.

Grades of "D" or Better and "Credit"
Students who receive grades of "D" or better and "credit" will receive credit for the units attempted. Thus, these classes would be considered to have been completed.

Progress in Winter and Summer
A student's progress in both winter and summer will be counted when assessing overall pace and overall GPA. Winter progress will be included in Spring SAP assessments. Progress in summer will be assessed after the summer term.

East Los Angeles College Consortium
Classes taken at East Los Angeles College—through the Respiratory Therapy Program Consortium—will be factored into the SMC SAP assessments.