

**Austin College**  
**Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**  
**and Related Policies**

*updated June 2017*

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that each student maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in the course of study the student is pursuing in order to receive Federal Title IV financial aid. The concept of satisfactory progress mandates monitoring of both the qualitative measurement (cumulative grade point average) and the quantitative measurement (number of credit units completed). This policy reflects changes to federal regulations that are effective as of July 1, 2011.

At Austin College, these standards are also applied to institutional aid programs. For State aid programs, there may be a higher academic requirement and eligibility for those aid programs is subject to the requirements of each program.

Details regarding Austin College Financial Aid policies concerning Satisfactory Academic Progress, withdrawals and refunds, packaging procedures, grade point averages required for scholarship renewal, over award procedures, requirements for transfer students, verification, financial aid award notifications, and other financial aid processes are available from the Office of Financial Aid. These various policies can also be found on the [Financial Aid webpage](#).

### **General SAP Standards and Process**

Satisfactory Academic Progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period (fall and spring semesters) by the Office of Financial Aid. This includes those who transfer in or are readmitted to the College.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Requirements**

All financial aid recipients must complete the number of cumulative credit units by the end of each long semester (fall or spring) as listed in the table below. Part-time students must reach the required credit unit level in double the number of terms.

No student will be eligible to receive federal or state aid for more than 10 long terms for a four-year program. No student will be eligible to receive Austin College institutional aid for more than 8 long terms for a four-year program.

A 2.00 cumulative GPA earned at Austin College is required for graduation from Austin College and is not rounded.

#### **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

<b>Number of Long Terms (Fall or Spring) at Austin College</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Credit Units to be Completed</b>	<b>Minimum Cumulative GPA</b>
1	2.00	1.50
2	5.00	1.70
3	8.00	1.80
4	12.00	2.00
5	15.00	2.00
6	19.00	2.00
7	22.00	2.00
8	26.00	2.00
9	29.00	2.00

10

34.00

2.00

Advanced Placement (AP) credits, International Baccalaureate (IB) credits, and institutional exams for placement credit will not be used in the determination of credit units attempted or completed for Satisfactory Academic Progress purposes.

### **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

<b>Number of Long Terms (Fall or Spring) at Austin College</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Credit Units to be Completed</b>	<b>Minimum Cumulative GPA</b>
1	2.00	3.00
2	4.00	3.00
3	6.00	3.00
4	9.00	3.00

### **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

A transfer student who enrolls at Austin College will be considered to be maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress for their first payment period of their enrollment. At the end of a transfer student's first payment period, progress will be reviewed in the same manner as for all other Austin College students. The number of credit units accepted for transfer credit will only be considered toward completing graduation requirements as both credit units attempted and credit units completed. Only the cumulative GPA earned and the completed credit units completed at Austin College will be considered when evaluating the qualitative requirements for SAP.

### **Maximum Time Frame for Financial Aid**

For an undergraduate student, the maximum time frame to receive Federal Title IV aid is 51 attempted credit units (150% of published length of program—34 credit units at Austin College for undergraduate students). If a SAP review shows that a student cannot complete the degree program within 51 attempted credit units, all Title IV aid is stopped. For a graduate student, the master's degree must be completed within two years following enrollment as a full-time graduate student.

### **Veteran Benefits**

Students eligible to receive education benefits from the Veterans Affairs (VA) Administration must provide their certification form from the VA to the Registrar's Office. To receive benefits from the various programs, i.e. Chapter 30, 31, 33, 35, 1606 or 1607, students must be making SAP towards a degree. Any student receiving VA benefits who is on academic probation risks losing benefits. If probation persists beyond two semesters the student's status is reported to the VA for termination of benefits. As of August 2009 veteran benefits no longer impact eligibility for Federal Title IV aid. The Office of Financial Aid will determine eligibility for institutional aid based on the percentage of tuition covered by the VA benefits. VA recipients eligible for 100% Veteran Education benefits are not eligible for any institutional aid through Austin College. A VA recipient who is eligible for less than 100% Veteran Education benefits may be eligible for a prorated amount of institutional aid through Austin College. If a VA recipient is eligible for a Federal Pell Grant he/she is able to use these grant funds to pay for any additional expenses such as housing, meal plan, books, etc.

## **Non-Completion of Courses**

### **Withdrawals**

A student who withdraws (whether a complete withdrawal or with intent to return to Austin College) after the semester has begun, has failed to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. The student will receive a Financial Aid Warning for the next semester in which he or she enrolls. If the student withdraws from Austin College during the Financial Aid Warning period, he or she will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and will be ineligible to receive any financial aid.

### **Repeated Coursework**

Students may only receive federal aid funding for one repetition of a previously passed course. There is an exception for courses that require repeats (see examples below). Students taking a required repeat of a course should work with the Office of Financial Aid to ensure those credits are counted appropriately for financial aid eligibility.

Examples of repeated coursework that may, or may not, count for financial aid eligibility:

1. Allowable: Repeated coursework may be included if the student received an unsatisfactory or failing grade. There is no limit on the number of attempts allowable if the student does not receive a passing grade.
2. Allowable: Repeated coursework may be included if a student needs to meet an academic standard for a particular previously passed course, such as a minimum grade. Example: Student received a D in a course that requires a minimum grade of C for his/her major or for a prerequisite for another course.
3. Allowable: Student is enrolled in 3 credit units that include 1 credit unit repeating a previously passed course. Because the student is repeating a previously passed course for the first time and is enrolled in 3 credit units (making the student full-time) the student's financial aid eligibility is not impacted by the repeat.
4. Not Permissible: Student receives a D in a course that does not have a minimum grade requirement for the major and decides to repeat the course to improve his/her GPA. The student may repeat this passed course one time, but if the student wants to repeat it a second time, the second repeat would not count for financial aid eligibility. In this example, the student is enrolled in 3 credit units, including the 1 credit unit second repeat, so only 2 credit units will count for financial aid eligibility. Financial aid would be adjusted since the student is no longer a full-time student.

All repeated courses affect financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress calculations. A repeated course along with the original attempt must be counted as attempted credits.

### **Incompletes (Grades of I)**

If a student who received a grade of "I" (incomplete) in a course in the prior term is completing the coursework in the subsequent term to erase the incomplete in the prior term, the student is not considered to be enrolled in the course for the subsequent term. Therefore, the hours in the course do not count toward the student's enrollment status for the subsequent term, and the student may not receive FSA funds for retaking the course.

However, if a student who received an incomplete in a course in the prior term is retaking the entire course for credit in a subsequent term, the hours in the course count toward the student's enrollment status and the student may receive federal aid for retaking the course.

Any course with an incomplete grade is counted as a course attempted for SAP purposes. An incomplete grade will not be included in calculating the cumulative GPA used for the period being evaluated. When the incomplete grade is replaced with a final grade in the course, the student's SAP status will be re-evaluated to determine his or her final SAP standing for the prior term. It is possible that if SAP is not met, Federal Title IV aid may have to be returned to the appropriate federal aid program.

### **Failed Courses**

A course in which the student receives a failing grade will be considered toward the cumulative GPA, credit units attempted, and whether a student is making SAP at the end of each payment period.

Courses with grades of F, U, WF, or WU are counted as courses attempted for purposes of calculating GPA and making SAP. Courses with grades of S, W, WP, or I also are counted as courses attempted but are not included in the computation of GPA.

## **SAP Standings**

At the end of each fall and spring terms, a SAP review will be conducted for each student receiving financial aid. A financial aid standing is a status assessed at the end of a term that could have consequences for future financial aid awards. The financial aid standing assessed at the end of a term may or may not coincide with the “academic standings” related to the Academic Probation and Suspension policy of the college (see Academic Regulations). Financial aid standing and academic standing are determined through independent processes based on the nature of their purpose and guiding regulations. Appeals for these different standings are considered independently, and it should not be assumed that if an appeal for academic suspension is approved that an appeal for financial aid suspension would be approved.

### **Financial Aid Warning**

Any student who does not meet the SAP requirements as outlined above will be placed on “Financial Aid Warning” for the following payment period and will be eligible to receive aid during the warning period. By the end of the warning period, the student must be in compliance with the SAP requirements. Students not meeting SAP at the end of the warning period will be ineligible for financial aid and placed on Financial Aid Suspension. A student placed on Financial Aid Suspension following a warning period may elect to submit an Appeal to the Executive Director of Financial Aid for review by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. See APPEALS section below for details on what is required in an appeal.

### **Financial Aid Probation**

Any student who does not meet SAP requirements following a Financial Aid Warning period is placed on Financial Aid Suspension. If the student files an appeal for reinstatement of aid and if the appeal is approved, the student would be placed on “Financial Aid Probation.” A student may receive financial aid for one more payment period while on Probation.

After a payment period on Financial Aid Probation, the student must be making SAP or student must be successfully following an academic plan (described below in SAP Appeals).

### **Financial Aid Suspension**

If the student does not meet all the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements at the end of the Warning period (does not appeal the suspension) or at the end of the Probation period (filed an appeal and was approved to continue receiving aid for one more payment period), the student will be placed on “Financial Aid Suspension”. Students who are on Financial Aid Suspension are not eligible to receive any federal, state or institutional financial aid. This includes grants, loans, student employment and institutional scholarships.

In addition, any student who is readmitted to Austin College following an *academic suspension* (see Academic Regulations – Academic Probation and Suspension) is not eligible to receive any federal, state or institutional financial aid until SAP is met. The student may enroll at his/her own expense. SAP is met when the student achieves at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA and completes the required number of credit units. It is the student’s responsibility to consult with the Office of Financial Aid to determine what must be done to regain eligibility.

### **Reinstatement of Aid**

A student can regain eligibility for financial aid by enrolling at Austin College at his/her own expense and achieving at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA and completing the required number of credit units. Periods of enrollment while receiving no Title IV aid count towards the maximum time frame in which to earn the degree. Reinstatement of aid is contingent upon availability of funds. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the Office of Financial Aid to determine what must be done to regain eligibility.

## SAP Appeals

A student who fails to meet SAP requirements and has lost eligibility for financial aid may appeal this decision. **Appeals must be in writing (no emails accepted) and must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation.** In the appeal, the student must explain why he/she failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to meet SAP at the next review. Appeals must be submitted to the Executive Director of Financial Aid no later than **July 31** prior to the start of the fall semester or by **January 15** prior to the start of the spring semester. Appeals received after these dates will not be considered.

Reasons that may be acceptable for an appeal are: (1) serious illness or accident on the part of the student; (2) death, accident or serious illness in the immediate family; (3) changes in academic program; (4) other extenuating circumstances.

Reasonable consideration will be given to the student's ability to meet SAP requirements by the end of the next payment period or the student will be placed on an academic plan to ensure that student is able to meet SAP by a specific point in time.

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will review the appeal and send written results of the appeal to the student.

Approved appeals will include: (1) terms of reinstatement of financial aid eligibility (i.e. possibility of meeting SAP in the next payment period or possibility of an academic plan over an extended period of time); and (2) consequences for not meeting terms of approval. Approved appeals will result in financial aid being awarded for the payment period, based on available funding.

Denied appeals will include: (1) reason for denial; and (2) what the student must do to meet SAP. Denied appeals will not be awarded any financial aid until SAP is met.

Students must continue to meet terms, as established, until SAP is met to continue receiving financial aid on a probationary basis. Once SAP is met, the student is no longer considered to be on financial aid probation. Failure to maintain SAP thereafter will result in receiving an additional Financial Aid Warning for the next payment period.

Financial aid standing and academic standing (see Academic Regulations – Academic Probation and Suspension) are determined through independent processes based on the nature of their purpose and guiding regulations. Appeals for these different standings are considered independently, and it should not be assumed that if an appeal for academic suspension is approved that an appeal for financial aid suspension would be approved.