



Gaston College Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards and Policies

All financial aid recipients are required to meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) according to Federal regulations and policies set by Gaston College. The intent of these policies is to ensure that students who are receiving financial aid are making measurable progress toward completion of an approved program in a reasonable period of time and within a reasonable number of credit hours attempted in their program of study. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress in order to receive financial aid. All students who apply for and receive financial aid at Gaston College must be working toward an associate or diploma program. Financial aid is *not awarded* for certificate programs.

Progress Standards

Students must meet the following progress standards in order to maintain Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress and receive financial aid:

Qualitative Standard

Must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 each semester as computed by the Financial Aid Office. This may be different from your transcript GPA.

Quantitative Standard

Must successfully complete 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted each semester. For example, if the student has attempted 50 credit hours, the student must successfully complete 33 credit hours (50 hours attempted x 67% = 33 hours). Successful completion is defined as the number of credit hours from each term at Gaston for which the student received a passing grade of "A", "B", "C", or "D".

Maximum Time Frame Eligibility Requirements

Must complete their program of study in a time frame not to exceed 150% of the published length of the program. For instance, if the published length of an academic program is 64 credit hours, the maximum eligibility timeframe cannot exceed 96 (64 x 150%) **attempted** credit hours.

In determining a student's time frame eligibility, **all credit hours attempted and all periods of attendance at Gaston College are included regardless of whether financial aid was received for these periods.**

Transfer credits accepted from other institutions are also included in the calculation of maximum timeframe. If a student is pursuing more than one program of study, maximum timeframe standards of 150% will be applied toward the primary major for all attempted hours. Once the student reaches the 150% maximum time frame, the student is ineligible and suspended from receiving financial aid.

Monitoring

The Financial Aid & Veterans Affairs Office will monitor satisfactory academic progress for all students receiving or applying for financial aid to ensure that they are making progress toward program completion. SAP will be reviewed for all students at the end of each semester.

In order to measure a student's satisfactory progress toward their degree or diploma, the student's total academic record at Gaston College will be evaluated whether or not the student received financial aid for the entire time of enrollment.

Financial Aid Statuses

Satisfactory: Satisfactory status is achieved when all criteria explained above are met.

Warning: Students are placed on financial aid "Warning" status for one semester the first time the student fails to meet SAP standards at the end of a semester. Students will continue to be eligible for financial aid for

one semester only during the Warning period. The student is responsible for regaining satisfactory academic progress standards by the end of the warning period in order to continue receiving financial aid.

Suspension: Students who fail to regain SAP at the end of the Warning period will be placed on financial aid "Suspension" status. The student is no longer eligible for financial aid and their aid is terminated immediately. **Any financial aid previously awarded before the suspension occurred will be terminated and will not be re-instated or reimbursed.** The suspension status will remain until the student, at his/her expense, enrolls in a future semester(s) and regains satisfactory academic progress.

Probation: Students are placed on financial aid "Probation" status when the suspension status is appealed and approved. Financial aid will be reinstated during the probationary term. Students on probation must maintain a term GPA of 2.00 and a 100% term completion rate. In order to achieve a 100% completion rate, a student must successfully complete each course enrolled for the term. If a student withdraws or fails a course during a term which drops the term completion rate below 100%, or does not maintain a term GPA of 2.00, the appeal is terminated and the student will return to a financial aid Suspension status.

Maximum Time Frame: Students who have attempted the maximum allowable credit hours, 150% of their program of study, will have their financial aid suspended.

Notification of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students who are placed on financial aid Warning, Suspension, Probation or have exceeded Maximum Time Frame will be notified by the Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs Office.

Treatment of Selected Grades

Withdrawals – Grades of "WA" or "WI" are included in attempted hours, but do not count toward successfully completed hours and will not count in the GPA. Students who withdraw may have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements.

Incompletes, Failing and Missing Grades – Grades of "I", "F", or "X" are included in attempted hours, but do not count toward successfully completed hours. In addition, grades of "F" negatively affect GPA. Students with incompletes (I) or missing grades (X) may have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress (completion) requirements at the time of evaluation, but may request reevaluation upon completion and receiving a final grade.

Audit and No Show – Grades for audit "AU" or no show "NS" are not considered attempted coursework. Neither of these is included in the grade point average or completion rate determinations. A student cannot receive financial aid for courses that s/he audits or is considered a no show.

Credit-by-Exam – Credit-by-exam "CE" is not included in the enrollment hours for purposes of awarding financial aid; however, the attempted and completed credits are counted in each component of the quantitative standard.

Developmental Courses – Courses numbered less than 100, in which the student receives an "IP" grade, are not included in GPA calculations, but are included when calculating the 67 % completion rate. Financial aid recipients may take a maximum of 30 credit hours of developmental courses.

Repeat Courses – For financial aid purposes, all repeated credits are included as hours attempted and count towards maximum time frame requirements. Students are allowed to re-take a previously passed course once. Students that fail a course may repeat it as long as it falls within the College's repeat policy.

Transfer Credit – Students transferring to Gaston College will be considered making satisfactory progress at the time of enrollment. Transfer credits accepted by the College are factored into the completion rate requirement as both attempted and completed credits. Additionally, transfer credits also reduce a student's maximum time frame to receive financial aid at Gaston College.

Change of Majors

Students who change their major are still responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the procedures as outlined. A review of satisfactory academic progress will be based on the student's current program of study. A student changing from an associate program into a diploma or certificate program may lose federal and state eligibility immediately upon making the change.

Summer Session

Credit hours attempted during a summer session will be included in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress – just as any other enrollment period. For financial aid students, full-time enrollment status (12 credit hours) is the same for summer session as it is for fall and spring semesters.

Complete Academic Record

In order to measure a student's satisfactory progress toward degree or diploma, the student's total academic record at Gaston College must be evaluated whether or not the student received financial aid for the entire time of enrollment. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken through dual enrollment, the Huskins program, and the Early College High School. When students complete course work for more than one program, college and financial aid academic progress standards must be met for all programs to receive financial aid.

Returning Students

Returning students are evaluated on a continuing basis from the first enrollment at Gaston College unless an extenuating circumstance is considered. Returning students who are previously enrolled under an academic progress policy other than the current academic progress policy will be required to meet the standards of the current policy upon returning.

Regaining Eligibility

Students who attend Gaston College (without federal financial aid) may regain financial aid eligibility by achieving a 67% completion rate and earning the required GPA based on hours attempted. A student may request reconsideration of eligibility for financial aid by submitting a written request to the Office of Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs once all requirements are met.

Appeal of Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Students who have been suspended from receiving financial aid may appeal to the Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs Office to waive the academic progress requirements only where there are extenuating circumstances. A student may complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Request form that explains the extenuating circumstances that have affected academic performance and what has changed that will allow him/her to make Satisfactory Academic Progress. This form, along with supporting documentation (required), must be submitted to the Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to serious injury, death of a family member, or other extenuating circumstances that occurred during the term you received failing grades and/or withdrew from classes. *Students who have reached the maximum time frame for program completion are not eligible for financial aid and are not eligible for appeal.*

If a status of Suspension is appealed and approved, a status of Probation is assigned. This status requires students to maintain both a term GPA of 2.00 and a 100% term completion rate. In order to achieve a 100% completion rate, a student must successfully complete each course enrolled for the term. If a student withdraws or fails a course during a term which drops the term completion rate below 100%, or does not maintain a term GPA of 2.00, the appeal is terminated and the student will return to a Suspension status. Only one appeal per academic year will be considered.

YOUR COURSEWORK MUST BE RESTRICTED TO THE MAJOR THAT IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR. STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE BEFORE CHANGING PROGRAMS, AUDITING AND/OR WITHDRAWING FROM ANY COURSES.