

# VASFAA Conference 2017



## The Basics of SAP Satisfactory Academic Progress

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Monday, April 24, 2017



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## Program Integrity Final Rule

- SAP regulations require an institution to “establish a reasonable satisfactory academic progress policy for determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program” [668.34(a)]. (October 29, 2010)



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## SAP Policy

► Your school's SAP policy must be as strict as your school's policy for students enrolled in the same program of study who are not receiving FSA funds.

- Applies to all students within categories:

- full-time, part-time, undergraduate, graduate
- You can have different policies for different categories of students. For example, one policy for undergraduate students and a different policy for graduate students.



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## SAP Policy

- ▶ For programs lasting one year or less SAP must be evaluated at the end of each payment period
- ▶ For other programs, annual reviews are required and correspond with the end of a payment period.
- ▶ You have the option of evaluating SAP at the end of each payment period.



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Financial Aid Warning

- A status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make Satisfactory Academic Progress
- School reinstates eligibility for aid for one payment period and may do so without a student appeal
- Warning status may only be used by schools that check SAP at the end of each payment period and for students who were making SAP in the prior period



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## SAP Definitions

### Appeal

- A process by which a student who is not meeting SAP standards petitions the school for re-consideration of his/her eligibility for FSA funds.
- An appeal can include an academic plan (addressed later in the presentation).



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Financial Aid Probation

- A status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make Satisfactory Academic Progress and who successfully appeals.
- Eligibility for aid may be reinstated for one payment period.



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Maximum Timeframe

- Undergraduate program measured in credit hours: A period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program measured by the cumulative number of credit hours required to complete the program.
- Undergraduate program measured in clock hours: A period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the programs as measured by the cumulative number of clock hours required to complete and expressed in calendar time.



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Maximum Timeframe – continued

- For a graduate program, a period the school defines that is based on the length of the program.
- Use of credit hours is also an option for graduate programs.



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Qualitative standard

- Your SAP policy must specify the grade point average that a student must have at each evaluation or, if GPA is not an appropriate qualitative measure, a comparable measure against a norm.
- Students enrolled in a program of more than two academic years must have a GPA of at least a “C” or its equivalent or must have an academic standing consistent with the school’s graduation requirements.



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## SAP Definitions

### ► Quantitative standard

- Your SAP policy must also specify the pace at which students must progress through their program to ensure that they will graduate within the maximum timeframe, and each academic progress check must measure this.



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## SAP Requirement

- Your policy must indicate the effect of course incompletes, withdrawals, repetitions, or transfers of credit from other institutions, on GPA and pace of completion.



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## Financial Aid Warning

- ▶ Only schools that check satisfactory progress at the end of each payment period may place students on financial aid warning as a consequence of not making satisfactory progress.
- ▶ A school may use this status without appeal or any other action by the student.



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## Appeals, Financial Aid Probation, and Academic Plan

### ► Probation

- If, by the end of the warning semester, the student is not able to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress status, the student will not be able to receive financial aid for the next period of enrollment unless the student successfully appeals.



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## Appeals, Financial Aid Probation, and Academic Plan

### Appeal

Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements can be appealed based on certain circumstances, such as:

- Death of a relative
- Student injury or illness
- Other special circumstance.



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## Appeals, Financial Aid Probation, and Academic Plan

The student's appeal must include:

- An explanation of why the student failed to make Satisfactory Academic Progress - explain how the circumstance prevented the student from performing up to potential.
- A description of what has changed that will allow the student to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress status after the probationary semester.



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## Appeals, Financial Aid Probation, and Academic Plan

### Academic Plan

A part of the appeal process can be the establishment of an academic plan designed to help the student regain Satisfactory Academic Progress standing.

- The development of the academic plan generally involves multiple departments



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## Appeals, Financial Aid Probation, and Academic Plan

### Academic Plan - continued

- The academic plan is not required at the start of the probationary semester. But, if the student fails to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress status at the end of the probationary semester, the student must be successfully following the academic plan in order to continue to receive financial aid.
- The academic plan must define how the student can regain Satisfactory Academic Progress status by a specific point in time.



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## Reestablishing Aid Eligibility

- Your SAP policy, even if it does not permit appeals, must explain how students who are not making Satisfactory Academic Progress can restore their eligibility for FSA funds.



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## Reestablishing Aid Eligibility

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