

SECTION 11: FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) EFFECTIVE BEGINNING FALL 2011

11.1 Process Overview & Responsibilities

Federal regulations require the CMU TSB to establish SAP standards for student financial aid recipients.

The school's policies for SAP are designed to review a student's academic performance in terms of qualitative measures and pace to ensure the student is making normal progress towards the completion of the academic program. The SAP policies apply to all Title IV financial assistance programs including Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford Loans, and Federal Grad PLUS loans.

The TSB Financial Aid Office (FAO) is responsible for ensuring that all students who receive Title IV assistance are meeting these standards.

Students who do not meet the standards are given a one-semester warning period during which time they are still eligible to receive financial aid. Students who do not meet the standards after the one-semester warning period are placed on financial aid probation. Students placed on financial aid probation may request an appeal, which includes submission of an academic plan developed in collaboration with the student's program director or the student services director. If the appeal is granted, the student may continue to receive financial aid as long as he/she is adhering to the goals and elements of the academic plan and otherwise financial aid-eligible. Students who do not fulfill the academic plan in the required time frame are not eligible for financial aid until such time that they are meeting the financial aid SAP standards defined in the appeal process.

The results of the SAP reviews are annotated in the Regent system with the following codes:

- SP - Student has met the standards.
- FP – Student has not met the standards and has been placed on financial aid probation for one semester (this field will not be used after Summer 2011).
- NP – Student has not met the standards after the probationary term and has been denied future Title IV aid (this field will not be used after Summer 2011).
- WP – Student has not met the standards and has received a financial aid SAP warning, a one-semester period during which the student may continue to receive financial aid (replaces the “FP” code beginning July 1, 2011).
- PB – Student has not met the standards after the “warning” term and has been placed on financial aid probation. Student may appeal this status, which includes submission of an academic plan.
- AG – Student who was denied renewal of Title IV aid appealed and the appeal was granted.
- AD – Student has not met the requirements of the academic plan stated in the appeal and financial aid is denied.

11.2 Same As or Stricter Than

Policies

The SAP policy at TSB for Title IV students is the same as or stricter than the university's standards for students enrolled in the same educational program who are not receiving Title IV aid.

The standards against which all Title IV recipients are measured include pace, maximum time frame, and qualitative. For all degree-seeking students, SAP is calculated at the end of each semester of enrollment, typically in January, June, and August.

Procedures

The TSB Director of Financial Aid is responsible to review the SAP policy to ensure it meets all federal requirements.

The TSB financial aid staff works closely with representatives from the academic and student services offices to communicate the importance of the SAP policies and to develop procedures on how the FAO is notified of any changes made by the school in its academic policies.

11.3 Pace

Policies

The TSB SAP policy contains the required measures for pace.

A student's pace is measured by comparing the number of cumulative attempted units with the number of cumulative units earned, and in reviewing the maximum time frame.

Attempted and Earned Unit measurement:

Attempted and earned units include any courses for which the student has remained enrolled for the semester past the add/drop period.

- Withdrawals, incompletes, and failures are considered attempted but not earned.
- Passing grades received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned units; failing grades in pass/fail are considered attempted but not earned.
- Repeated courses are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned units.
- Audited courses are not considered units attempted or earned.

Students must earn 75 percent of units attempted to maintain good standing and be considered as making financial aid SAP.

The completion percentage is determined by dividing the units earned by the units

attempted.

Maximum Time Frame

The school's policy also specifies a maximum time frame not to exceed the federally required 150 percent of the published length of the program in which a student must complete his or her program.

The table below indicates the minimum number of units required to be completed for each type of degree program, and the corresponding number of maximum units a student may attempt to maintain federal financial aid eligibility.

Program	Degree Minimum	Maximum
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MBA Degrees	192	288
MS Degrees	138-150	207-225
Master Dual Degrees	162-192	243-288
Doctoral (PhD) Degrees	216	324

Note: Students enrolled in the certificate programs or non-degree programs are not eligible for federal financial aid at the school.

Procedures

The following procedures are used to review pace:

- The TSB FAO receives quantitative information about Title IV recipients from the records office in batch files that have been downloaded into Regent from the university's Student Information System (SIS) and that contain the cumulative units attempted and earned at the end of each semester.
- The review process is performed by the Director of Financial Aid.
- The FAO documents the student's pace with a notation in the student's electronic record in the Regent system each semester of the review.
- Students who do not meet the standards are either placed in a warning status or financial aid probation status and are notified in writing.

11.4 Qualitative Measure

Policies

All TSB students in all programs must maintain a GPA of 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale for each semester of study for financial aid SAP purposes

Procedures

The following procedures are used to review the qualitative standards:

- The TSB FAO receives qualitative information about Title IV recipients from the records office in batch files that have been downloaded into Regent from the university's Student Information System (SIS) (SIS) and that contain the cumulative GPA earned at the end of each semester.
- The review process is performed by the Director of Financial Aid.
- The FAO documents the student's qualitative progress with a notation in the student's electronic record in the Regent system each semester of the review.
- Students who do not meet the standards are either placed in a warning status or financial aid probation status and are notified in writing.

11.5 Warning or Conditional Periods

Policies

TSB uses financial aid warning periods, in which the student is still considered to be making SAP, even though he/she has failed to meet one or more of the TSB SAP standards.

- Students are automatically put in a financial aid warning status the first time their **cumulative** GPA falls below 3.0 or if they do not **earn (complete) 75 percent of their attempted units** in any one semester.
- During the warning period, students are given one semester to meet the financial aid SAP requirements. If financial aid SAP is achieved, the warning status is removed. Financial aid probation (denial of financial aid) results if the student does not achieve financial aid SAP by the end of the one-semester warning period. Students may appeal a financial aid probation.
- Students who are close to reaching the 150 percent maximum time frame are monitored and are denied future Title IV aid at the appropriate time when necessary.

Procedures

The students enrolled in TSB are closely monitored by the representatives in the academic units and student services offices to ensure that they are following the rigid guidelines on standards required to continue enrollment in the degree programs.

Any exceptions made to the school's academic policy for individual students is discussed with the FAO and the appropriate documentation for the exception is noted in the student's academic and financial aid records..

11.6 Appeals

Policies

Students who receive a financial aid SAP warning do not submit a letter of appeal since their eligibility for federal financial aid continues during the warning period.

Following a financial aid SAP warning, students who are denied financial aid due to SAP may appeal this decision. SAP probation may be appealed if unusual and/or mitigating circumstances have affected academic progress. Such circumstances may include a severe illness or injury to the student or an immediate family member, the death of a student's relative, student activation into military service or other circumstances as deemed appropriate for consideration by the SAP Appeals Committee.

Procedures

The appeal procedures are as follows:

- To appeal, the financial aid probation, the student must submit a completed *Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Form* to the TSB FAO that has been signed by the student and either the student's program director or student services director. The appeal form should explain in detail why the student has failed to meet the minimum academic standards, what unusual and/or mitigating circumstances have contributed to the failure, and how their situation has improved. The appeal form includes an "academic plan" section that needs to be completed in cooperation with the student's academic program director or student services director.
- Appeals must be received by the committee no later than 15 business days before the end of the payment period for which reinstatement is desired.
- The decision of the SAP appeals committee is sent to the student by mail or electronic means.
- Appeal approvals are not applied retroactively after the end of a semester for Title IV aid eligibility.
- Appeal approvals include the conditions and time frame for maintaining aid eligibility.
- SAP appeals committee decisions may not be appealed to another source.

11.6.1 Documentation

Policies

According to federal regulation, SAP appeals are considered a form of professional judgment (PJ) exercised by the FAO. As with any use of PJ, adequate documentation is critical. The following are examples of acceptable documentation that may be submitted in support of an appeal. Some examples might include but are not limited to:

- Newspaper obituaries or death certificates to substantiate deaths.

- Physician's statement to substantiate illness or accident.
- Statement from clergy or family member who knows the student's situation.
- Statement from an academic advisor or professor.

Procedures

The procedures followed in reviewing and responding to appeals are as follows:

- Appeals and documentation are tracked electronically and forwarded to the staff (or committee) who review appeals.
- If an appeal is received without proper documentation the appeal is returned to the student with a request for the correct documentation.
- If documentation is submitted without an appeal, receipt of the documentation is noted and a written appeal is requested.
- The FAO documents the action taken as a result of an appeal electronically, inserts a note in the student's paper file, and sends a notification to the student.

11.7 Regaining Eligibility

Policies

A student whose appeal has been granted regains eligibility as long as he/she is adhering to the academic plan stated on the appeal form.

Eligibility is reestablished for students who do not appeal or whose appeal has been denied after the student improves his/her academic record to meet financial aid SAP.

Procedures

The following procedures have been established in order for students to be considered for reinstatement:

- The FAO continues to monitor student's eligibility each semester following the appeal.
- Until financial aid SAP is achieved, the FAO continues to consult with the student's program director or student services director to determine whether he student is following the academic plan outlined during the appeal process.
- By request of the FAO, the program director or student services director provides written confirmation, generally via email to the FAO, as to whether the student is following the academic plan outlined during the appeal process,
- The communication is documented in the student's file and the student is notified in writing regarding reinstatement.