Satisfactory academic progress for students receiving US Title IV funding

The standards for satisfactory academic progress (SAP) are applied across the institution; however, there are requirements which are specifically applicable to students in receipt of US Department of Education Title IV financial aid.

The SAP requirements for Title IV students are outlined in this document.

Students in receipt of Title IV funding from the US Department of Education are required to adhere to defined performance standards to remain eligible for financial aid. These performance measures are aligned with the institution's SAP requirements; they are as strict in all cases related to actual measurement of SAP as the institution's SAP requirements for all students; the only differences are that the sanctions for noncompliance carry additional financial implications (up to and including the withdrawal of financial aid) and that the timeframe for evaluating SAP for financial aid students is different (see below: (A) Timeframe for evaluation of SAP).

(A) Timeframe for evaluation of SAP

Evaluation of a student's continued eligibility to receive Title IV funding in terms of SAP compliance takes place at the end of each academic year, during the month of August. During this period the student is evaluated according to the qualitative and quantitative criteria set out below; if the student is in compliance with SAP no communication is made to the student; if the student is not achieving SAP, he or she is advised of ineligibility to continue receiving Title IV funding and directed towards the procedures to regain compliance, set out below.

(B) SAP requirements

There are two performance benchmarks with which Title IV students must remain in compliance in order to continue to receive financial aid:

 (i) qualitative (grade-based) requirements; and
 (ii) quantitative (pace of progression, or time-related) requirements.

(i) **Qualitative (grade-based) requirements**

Each final alphabetic grade for a module is given a grade point value (GPV). The GPVs for American College Dublin's alphabetic grades are as follows:

A = 4 grade points for each credit
B+ = 3.5 grade points for each credit
B = 3 grade points for each credit
B- = 2.75 grade points for each credit
C+ = 2.5 grade points for each credit
C = 2 grade points for each credit
D = 1.5 grade point for each credit
F = 0 grade points

ACD requires that all students in receipt of Title IV funding meet the following qualitative requirement of satisfactory academic progress (SAP):

1. *A student's cumulative GPA should always be above 2.0 (that is to say, averaging an alphabetic grade of C or above) at the end of each Title IV SAP evaluation point (ie, at the end of each academic year) for all programs of a duration of more than two academic years.*

   - A student who is in compliance with this policy receives no notification from the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board.
   - A student whose cumulative GPA for the academic year is below 2.0 for the academic year is sent written notice by the Registrar that he or she is no longer eligible for continued Title IV funding. The student will then be withdrawn from the Title IV program;
   - Following withdrawal from the Title IV program the student may enter the appeal process – for this process, see the section below titled: Appeals.

(ii) **Quantitative (pace of progression, or time-related) requirements**

ACD requires that all students in receipt of Title IV funding meet the following quantitative (pace of progression, or time-related) requirements of satisfactory academic progress (SAP):

1. *Students must complete their program within 150% of the applicable time frame;*
2. *Students must, at each SAP evaluation point for Title IV funding, achieve completion rates that demonstrate that they are maintaining a pace of progression that will allow them to complete the program within the 150% maximum time frame.*

In terms of credit hours, for financial aid students ACD requires that at the end-of-year SAP evaluation point, in which 30 credit hours per academic year are attempted, the student should have completed a minimum of 20 credit hours. If a student fails to complete more than 20 credit hours (that is to say, fails to complete more than 66% of the credit hours attempted in the academic year), he or she is not completing credit hours at a sufficient pace to be able, unless performance subsequently improves, to complete the program within 150% of the applicable time frame (within 90 credit hours attempted for a 60-credit hour program, within 135 credit hours attempted for a 90-credit program, within 180 credit hours attempted for a 120-credit hour program); such a student is failing to achieve quantitative SAP.

In order to ensure that a registered student has a realistic chance of completing the program within 150% of the applicable time frame, the College requires that a student completes no less than 66% of the credit hours attempted in any academic year up to the graduating year (for an explanation of what counts as an attempt, see the section below: (C) Attempts).

- A student who is in compliance with the quantitative requirements of SAP at the end-of-year evaluation point receives no notification from the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board.
- A student who fails to complete 66% (or 20+ credit hours out of 30 attempted) of courses attempted in the academic year at the SAP end-of-year evaluation point is sent written notice by the Registrar that he or she is no longer eligible for continued Title IV funding. The student will then be withdrawn from the Title IV program;
- Following withdrawal from the Title IV program the student may enter the appeal process – for this process, see the section below: (D) Appeals.

(C)   Attempts

For the purposes of evaluating SAP, the following grades count as attempts:

A to D   (Completion – all final grades in which the student passes the course)
F   (Fail)
X   (Transfer – course credits transferred from another institution)
W   (Withdrawal – a student withdraws from a class after the one-week drop/add period)
NP   (Not Present – unexcused incompletion)

The following grade does not count as an attempt:

I   (Excused Incompletion – awarded when a student provides sufficient and approved evidence of extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control to the Registrar in the Academic Office for incompletion)

Note: if an F, NP or W is converted to a passing grade in the repeat final examination period in the same academic year, the original F, NP or W is not taken into account in calculating SAP.

(D) Appeals

If a student is withdrawn from the Title IV program for failing to meet the qualitative and/or quantitative requirements of SAP, he or she may enter the appeal process. In order to do this, the student should do the following:

- o Complete an appeal form. This appeal form is available in hardcopy form in the Academic Office or as an email attachment from the Registrar (dwebb@iamu.edu).
- o The appeal form requires the student to provide the specific basis of the appeal for Title IV purposes; there must be an explanation of why the student failed to achieve the Title IV SAP requirements, and the Title IV SAP benchmarks the student proposes to achieve in the probationary period if the appeal is granted. Two bases can always be used for Title IV purposes: injury/illness and death of a relative; the institution also allows for the consideration of other special circumstances, which are reviewed on a discretionary, case-by-case basis.
- o The appeal should be submitted to the Registrar in the Academic Office (either by hardcopy, or emailed to the Registrar at dwebb@iamu.edu) no later than close of business on the first Monday of September.
- o The Registrar brings the appeal to the Internal Student Learning Board for consideration on the Thursday following the final submission date, and informs the student of the decision by email from the Registrar the following day.
  - If the Board grants the appeal, the student is placed on probation, and the requirements of the probationary status are notified by the Registrar to the student; the student must agree to the requirements of probation in writing in order for the probationary status to be confirmed.
  - If the Board is unable to accept the appeal, the reasons for this will be noted, notified in writing by the Registrar to the student, and the student will be withdrawn from the Title IV program.
- o Probationary status is for a limited period, and requires either:
  - the student to be making SAP in the next payment period; or
  - to be successfully following an academic plan designed to ensure student will be able to meet SAP by a specific point in time, set and monitored by the Internal Student Learning Assessment Board (if the specific point in time is more than one payment period, the student will be monitored for progress at the end of each payment period and only allowed to continue to remain on probation if the stipulated academic performance benchmarks are being achieved).
- o A student may only be placed on one probation for one payment period per appeal.
- o If a student continues in the probation period to fail to achieve SAP, financial aid

is discontinued.
- A student may apply to reestablish eligibility for Title IV funding subsequently as soon as he or she achieves qualitative and quantitative SAP.