Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Program for Financial Aid Recipients

The office of Financial Aid at Messenger College is required by federal regulation to determine whether a student is enrolled in a degree-seeking program and is meeting satisfactory academic progress requirements. The student's official academic record maintained by the Office of the Registrar and shared with the Office of Financial Aid is reviewed to determine student compliance with this policy. All students must maintain satisfactory progress in an eligible program of study leading toward a degree or certificate.

150% Completion (Quantitative Rule)
The quantitative requirement has two parts: a maximum time frame, and a required completion ratio. The maximum time frame requirements are different based the number of credit hours required for certificate, associate, and bachelor degree programs.

Maximum time frame (maximum attempted credit hours) – Eligibility ends when the student has *attempted* 150% of the program's published required credit hours. For example, bachelor degree programs require 129 hours for completion and would reach maximum time frame once the student has attempted 193 credit hours. The maximum time frame calculation includes all credit hours attempted including withdrawals, incompletes, failed, or repeated courses contained on the Messenger academic record.

No longer eligible - Once students have attempted 150% of their current program's required credit hours, they are no longer eligible for financial aid but may submit an appeal.

Completion Ratio
Students must earn a minimum of 70% of all credit hours attempted (69.5% and above will be rounded up to 70% provided Student Financial Services determines the student is on track to complete the program within the parameters set by the Department of Education. (69.4% and below will be rounded down to 69% and not eligible under policy). This is a cumulative calculation of all attempted and earned credit hours during all terms at all schools, for credit hours included on the Messenger academic record.

Grade Point Average (Qualitative Rule)
A student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) is used to evaluate academic progress. If the grade point average falls below the minimum standard, the work is considered unsatisfactory. Cumulative GPA is calculated using all credits the student has earned toward a degree including transfer credits.

Grade Point Average Requirements
Messenger students must maintain the following cumulative grade point average (GPA) listed below dependent on their classification to maintain financial aid eligibility. If the GPA average falls below the minimum standard, the work is considered unsatisfactory.

Hours Attempted
1-22 Semester Hours 1.6
22-33 Semester Hours 1.7
34-44 Semester Hours 1.8
45-55 Semester Hours 1.9
56 Semester Hours and above 2.0

Incomplete:
Incomplete grades revert to failing grades at the end of the next semester following the semester the incomplete grade was received. A student must request permission from the Vice President of Academic Affairs and his/her professor to complete a course beyond the scheduled time limit. To request an incomplete, a student must submit a signed Incomplete Grade Request Form to the Registrar. The Registrar's office must provide the updated grade(s) to the Financial Aid Office upon availability.

Repeated Grades:
All courses taken are listed with the grades assigned. No courses have been deleted. Only the highest grade earned in a repeated course is applied to the student's grade point average and earned credits towards graduation.

Financial Aid GPA Warning Status
The student's academic progress will be reviewed at the end of each semester. If a student fails to earn the minimum number of credit hours (70% of attempted credits) **and/or** minimum cumulative GPA, the student will be placed on financial aid warning.

The student may continue to receive eligible financial aid for one semester following the semester in which a warning was issued. The student will be notified in writing of their warning status at the end of the semester in which SAP was not met.

Due to the limited time frame between the end of one session / semester and start of another, students may not be notified of their SAP status by the Business Office prior to the start of the next semester and may be ineligible for federal financial aid.

Students are strongly encouraged to monitor their progress through the information provided in Populi and take action by contacting their academic advisor if they are in danger of not meeting SAP.

After the warning period, if the student fails to meet SAP requirements, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension. The student must pay for all courses taken without receiving financial aid until SAP is met.

Financial Aid Suspension Appeal Process
A student may appeal to the Finance Committee if there were extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the SAP standards.

Examples of extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to: unexpected death or major hospitalization of an immediate family member, extended hospitalization or medical condition of student, house fire, or a victim of a violent crime. Unexpected employment or work issues beyond the student's control may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The appeal committee determines acceptable documentation; if there is a death of an immediate family member, a copy of the death certificate will be required. In situations of illness or hospitalization, official medical documentation is required. If there is a homeless or domestic abuse situation, a letter from a social services agency or medical documentation in extreme cases may be required.

The student will be notified in writing by the Business Department about their suspension status and provided with an appeal form and instructions for writing an appeal and the date by which the appeal must be submitted.

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The letter of appeal should address in detail any extenuating circumstances that have affected the student's academic performance. The student must work with his/her academic advisor to complete an academic plan as part of the appeal process.

Action taken on a financial aid appeal is transmitted to the student in writing, via Populi, or via email. Depending on the timeliness of the appeal, it is possible for a student to have an appeal denied and not be entitled to a refund of charges if the student must withdraw from classes.

Students who have an academic progress appeal approved will be placed on financial aid probation status for the subsequent semester(s).

If SAP is not met at the end of the probation period, the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid for the remainder of their degree program.

Approved appeals **DO NOT** override federal regulations such as annual or aggregate loan limits, loan default, overpayments, Pell Grant Lifetime eligibility limits, or any other reason the Department of Education has determined the student ineligible for federal student aid. If a student is determined ineligible for reason other than Satisfactory Academic Progress during the probationary period of an approved appeal, financial aid will be cancelled immediately.

Additional Notes

Changes in major may cause the student to reach the maximum attempted hours and lose eligibility before earning a degree.

Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, course withdrawals -- all lower the student's completion ratio, because they are counted as attempted, but not earned credit hours. They also count against the students maximum attempted hours. Incomplete grades, missing grades and withdrawals after the add/drop period are counted as attempted credit hours in the calculation.

Courses taken for pass/fail grades – will count against both the students maximum attempted credit hours and the student's completion ratio.

Repeated courses - count as attempted credit hours each time the student registers for the course but reduce the completion ratio because they count as earned credit hours only once.

Remedial courses – does not fulfill degree program requirements but counts as either attempted or earned credit hours.

Late posted grades or grade changes – will not change the student's status. The student may request a recalculation of SAP after the student has confirmed with the Registrar that the grade change has been posted to the student's academic record.