



**Lone Star College System (LSCS)  
Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy  
(Revised 2011- 2012)**

Effective Date: August 29, 2011 (start of Fall Semester 2011)

**1) Policy Statement**

**Reference: 34 CFR 668.34(a)**

All LSCS aid applicants must meet three Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements, prescribed by federal regulation, to receive financial aid. Those SAP requirements include maintaining at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average, completing successfully 70% of cumulative credits attempted, and earning a degree or certificate within 150% of the published length in credit hours of the declared program of study.

To qualify for aid a financial aid recipient must maintain satisfactory academic progress, i.e., "Meets SAP". Failure to meet satisfactory academic progress will result in ineligibility for aid, i.e., "Not Meet SAP", except that there is one term of eligibility when placed on "Warning". If extenuating circumstances result in failure to meet SAP after one term of Warning, an appeal process is provided. An appeal must include an academic plan. If the appeal is approved, future terms of aid eligibility are contingent on satisfactorily performing the work required in the academic plan. During those terms, a financial aid recipient is placed on "Probation" and aid eligible. If aid eligibility is suspended at any time, i.e., "Not Meet SAP", aid eligibility can be reinstated by meeting the SAP requirements.

Lone Star College System's (LSCS) policy is designed to encourage students to achieve their academic goals and graduate.

**2) Evaluation Period**

**References: 34 CFR 668.34(e) and 34 CFR 668.16(e)(2)(B). Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(3).**

LSCS will evaluate satisfactory academic progress (SAP) at the end of each term, i.e., Fall, Spring, and Summer, for which a student receives financial aid.

An aid recipient's cumulative record, i.e., all enrollment periods at LSCS, regardless of whether or not aid was received during the periods, along with transfer credits, will be evaluated.

An admitted student that files a Free Application for Federal Student Aid and for which there is no SAP status on the student record will have a SAP evaluation performed based on the student's prior LSCS enrollment record and any transfer credits, as applicable. A first time student with no prior college enrollment will always be assigned "Meets SAP" and be aid eligible.

**3) Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Requirements**

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will be measured on the three metrics required by federal regulations.

**3.1) Cumulative Grade Point Average**

**References: 34 CFR 668.16(e)(2)(i) Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(4)(i) & 668.34(a)(4)(ii)**

A student must maintain a 2.00 cumulative GPA to retain financial aid eligibility.

The cumulative grade point average is computed by adding the grade point values for college-level, developmental, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and transfer courses for which grade point values (A, B, C, D, and F) are assigned and dividing this total by the appropriate number of credit hours attempted. Only credits for which grades are awarded are used in calculating grade point average. If a course is repeated, the highest grade is the permanent grade.

### **3.2) Cumulative Completion Rate**

**References:** 34 CFR 668.16(e)(2)(ii)(B) & 668.16(e)(2)(ii)(C) Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(5)(i), 668.34(a)(5)(ii), and 668.34(a)(6).

A student must successfully complete at least 70% of cumulative attempted hours.

The cumulative completion rate is computed by dividing the number of credit hours earned (completed) by the number of credit hours attempted for college-level, developmental, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and transfer courses. Successful completion results in grades of: A, B, C and D. Note: The grade of "D" is treated as unsuccessful completion in some program areas, including developmental studies and nursing.. (See College Catalog for more detail.) Unsuccessful completion results in grades (or marks) of F grade, W (Withdrawal), I (Incomplete), and/or NR (No Grade Reported). In addition, marks of P, NC, and/or X, which are no longer used, are treated as unsuccessful completion. Repeated courses, courses for which the student has been granted Academic Fresh Start at LSCS, and credit hours previously earned at another institution that are accepted by LSCS will be counted as both attempted and earned, i.e., if successfully completed, in the calculation of the cumulative completion rate.

### **3.3) Maximum Time Frame**

**References:** 34 CFR 668.16(e)(2)(ii)(A) Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(5)(i) and 668.34(b)(1).

A student must declare an academic program other than "undecided" and must be taking courses that apply to that degree or certificate.

A student must complete the declared academic program within 150% of the published length of the program in credit hours to maintain aid eligibility.

The maximum time frame is computed by dividing the number of credit hours attempted for college-level and transfer courses by the 150% of the number of credits required to complete the declared program of study. Transferred credit hours previously earned at another institution that are accepted by LSCS will be counted toward the maximum time frame at LSCS

A student that changes academic program will have all course credits taken under previous academic programs count towards the maximum time frame of the new academic program.

A student that graduates from a program must declare a new academic program and begin taking courses that apply to the new academic program to qualify for financial aid. Course credits taken under the completed academic program will count towards the maximum time frame of the new academic program.

Note: Developmental and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) credits are not included in the measurement of Maximum Time Frame.

## **4) Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Statuses**

LSCS uses four satisfactory academic progress (SAP) statuses.

**4.1) Meets SAP:** A status assigned to a student that meets all three SAP requirements and is aid eligible.

**4.2) Warning:** A status assigned to a student that did not meet the SAP cumulative GPA and/or cumulative completion rate requirements and had a SAP status of “Meets SAP” in the prior term. For one term, the student is moved automatically to “Warning” and is aid eligible.

At the end of the “Warning” term, the student must have met SAP, i.e., “Meets SAP” and remain aid eligible or be moved to “Not Meeting SAP” and lose aid eligibility.

Note: No appeal is required to be placed on “Warning”.

**Reference: Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(8)(i), 668.34(b), and 668.34(c)(2)(i)**

**4.3) Probation:** A status assigned to a student that did not meet a SAP requirement, was placed on “Not Meeting SAP”, filed an appeal, and the appeal was approved. “Probation” status is aid eligible.

4.3.1) Cumulative GPA and/or Cumulative Completion Rate

Specifically, the student’s prior term SAP status was “Warning” and at the end of the “Warning” term the student did not meet the SAP cumulative GPA and/or cumulative completion rate. Moved to “Not Meeting SAP”, the student files a SAP appeal that is approved. Placed on “Probation” and aid eligible, progress is reviewed by the student’s Financial Aid Department each term. The student must “Meet SAP” or meet the requirements specified in the student’s academic plan, which was approved as part of the SAP appeal process. If the student makes progress as stipulated in the academic plan, the student will remain on “Probation” and aid eligible. If not making progress, the student will be placed on “Not Meeting SAP” and lose aid eligibility.

4.3.2) Maximum Time Frame

Specifically, the student’s prior term SAP status was “Meets SAP” or “Warning” and at the end of the term the student exceeded maximum time frame. Moved to “Not Meeting SAP”, the student files a SAP appeal that is approved. Placed on “Probation” and aid eligible, progress is reviewed by the student’s Financial Aid Department each term. The student must meet the requirements specified in the student’s academic plan, which was approved as part of the SAP appeal process. If the student makes progress as stipulated in the academic plan, the student will remain on “Probation” and aid eligible. If not making progress, the student will be placed on “Not Meeting SAP” and lose aid eligibility.

**Reference: Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(8)(ii), 668.34(b), and 668.34(c)(3)**

**4.4) Not Meeting SAP:** A status assigned to a student that did not meet one of the three SAP standards. When placed on “Not Meeting SAP” the student is ineligible for financial aid. This unsatisfactory status can be appealed.

Aid eligibility is reinstated when a student meets all three standards satisfactorily.

## 5) Appeal Process

**References: Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(a)(9), 668.34(b), 668.34(c)(3)(ii), and 668.34(c)(3)(iii).**

5.1) A student that is ineligible for financial aid for failure to meet the SAP requirements may file a SAP appeal. If approved, the student will be placed on "Probation" and be aid eligible.

5.2) SAP appeal must include the following documents, which must be completed, signed and submitted to the student's College Financial Aid Department promptly, and no later than 10 days after receiving the "Not Meeting SAP" notification.

- Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form for Financial Aid (available online),
- Supporting documentation of the mitigating or extenuating circumstances,
- Student statement regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation,

**Reference: Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(9)(iii)**

and

- Academic Advising Report prepared and signed by an Academic Advisor in the Advising Department that outlines the sequence and term in which courses must be taken and successfully completed to achieve satisfactory academic progress and be on track to graduate from your academic program within the Maximum Time Frame for financial aid eligibility

**Reference: Amended and effective July 1, 2011, 34 CFR 668.34(8)(ii)**

5.3) .Mitigating or extenuating circumstances may include:

- Illness
- Death in the family
- Family problems (e.g., parents' separation or divorce),
- Change of major or pursuit of second degree or certificate, which caused the student to exceed maximum time frame

5.4) Appeal decision: An appeal will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt in a College's Financial Aid Department by the Financial Aid Director, or designated staff.

Your appeal will be considered if the documentation:

- substantiates the extenuating circumstances,
- explains the student's prior situation and what has changed to allow the student to perform satisfactorily is adequate, and
- indicates the student could achieve satisfactory academic progress status and complete the program of study within the maximum time frame if the student follows the academic advising report and successfully completes the coursework.

The student will be notified by email of LSCS's decision promptly.

If an appeal is granted, the student will be placed on "Probation" and financial aid will be awarded.

If an appeal is denied, the student may choose to file a written appeal to the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee, which will review the appeal and notify the student of its decision promptly. That decision is final. Each College's Vice President of Student Success will designate the members of the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee.

## **6) Reinstatement of Financial Aid**

A student that fails to meet the SAP requirements and is placed on "Not Meeting SAP", and may or may not have filed an appeal that was denied, will have financial aid eligibility reinstated when the student meets all three SAP standards.