

**Montgomery College**  
**Office of Student Financial Aid**  
**Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress**  
**2011-2012**

**Effective July 1, 2011, federal regulations for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) changed. Carefully review the information below to be sure you understand how these rules affect your eligibility for financial aid.**

When students apply for or receive financial aid, they are required to make satisfactory progress towards attaining a degree or certificate. It is a requirement of both the federal and the state government. The four standards of satisfactory academic progress are described below.

**ITEM #1 – Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA according to the following chart:

<u>Total credits attempted in classes that count towards your GPA (including transfer credits)</u>	<u>Minimum Cumulative GPA</u>
1 – 11	1.25
12 – 59	1.75
60 and above	2.00

Board of Trustees Grant and Scholarship recipients must maintain a 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA at all times to continue receiving BOT awards.

**ITEM #2 – Pace of Completion**

Pace is defined as the actual length of your program in hours as listed in the official college catalog, divided by the maximum hours you are allowed to attempt in your program for financial aid. To obtain your maximum hours multiply the length of your program by 150%. For example, the actual hours for a degree in General Studies are 61. The maximum credit hours you are allowed to attempt is 92 (61 multiplied by 150%=92). Divide 61 by 92 and the result is **an expected pace of 67%** (61/92=67%).

In order to stay on pace toward certificate or degree completion, students are expected to successfully complete the classes they register for each semester. Successful completion is a passing grade, such as A, B, C, D, and S. Grades such as U, F, X, AU or W **are not** successful completion. A grade of I (Incomplete) or a missing grade is treated as an F until a final grade is recorded. *Repeating classes can lower the completion rate because every attempt of the course is counted.* Changing a class from credit to audit once the semester has begun can also lower the completion rate.

The percentage of cumulative course work that must be successfully maintained each semester to stay on pace:

<u>Total Credits Counted in Your Academic History (including transfer credits)</u>	<u>Minimum Cumulative Completion Rate Required (successfully completed hours/cumulative attempted hours)</u>
0 – 30	50%
31 and above	67%

The billed hours (considered the credit equivalent hours) for developmental classes are included in the calculation of your cumulative completion rate. For example, if you attempted ten billed hours of developmental (noncredit) coursework and only successfully complete five billed hours, your completion rate is 50%. Financial aid is awarded and satisfactory academic progress evaluations are based on the credit hour equivalency of each class. Some individual courses have different credit, credit equivalent, and billed hours. **Financial aid will not pay for continuing education courses or any courses students register for as “Audit.”**

**ITEM #3 – Maximum Time Frame**

Students must complete their degree or certificate program at Montgomery College on pace. As discussed above, successful pace is within a time frame that is no longer than 150% of the published length of the program. The time frame includes all attempted credit course work at MC, as well as courses from other schools accepted for transfer at MC

(regardless of any change in program or any prerequisite course work necessary for admission to a program). The calculation does not include any developmental Math, English, Reading, or American English Language Program (AELP) courses, including SP102. The appropriate time frame is calculated using the student's current degree or certificate program, according to the Records and Registration Office. The timeframe cannot be calculated on multiple degree program choices.

For example, the General Studies A.A. degree program requires a maximum of 61 credit hours. To maintain financial aid eligibility, students in this program may not attempt more than 92 credit hours.

#### **ITEM #4 – Other Standards**

A student cannot receive financial aid for more than the equivalent of one year of non-credit (developmental) courses (30 credit equivalent hours). The one-year limit does **not** include AELP courses.

#### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Review Process**

We review financial aid recipients for satisfactory academic progress **when they apply** for financial aid each year **and at the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters**. Students who do not meet the requirements of Items #1 and #2 will be placed on **financial aid warning** for one semester. Students who do not meet the standards by the end of the next registered semester will be placed on **financial aid termination** and lose eligibility for financial aid. Students who do not meet the requirements of Item #3 will have their financial aid eligibility terminated. Students whose eligibility is terminated are not eligible for financial aid until satisfactory academic progress is re-established.

#### **Appeal Process and Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility**

Students who are ineligible for financial aid or who are terminated from financial aid may appeal by submitting a written statement, with appropriate documentation, to the financial aid office. Documentation to support the appeal may include an academic plan approved by the appropriate academic advisor for the student's program. If appeals are granted, students are placed on **financial aid probation**. Future eligibility for financial aid and the length of the probation period will depend on students' progress during probation.

Appeals are reviewed and students are notified of the results in writing. Denied appeals may be submitted to the Campus Financial Aid Director. The Financial Aid Professional Judgment Committee or the College Director of Student Financial Aid reviews final appeals, if necessary. Appeals are accepted for 30 days after the notification of financial aid termination.

**Reinstatement of aid eligibility after a financial aid termination is not automatic when students improve their GPA or completion rate.** Students must request a review of their academic progress and aid eligibility. The form for appealing financial aid termination provided to students with their notice of financial aid termination.

Appeals of Item #3, Maximum Time Frame, will only be accepted for one change of degree program. Progress under financial aid termination for maximum timeframe is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Documentation to support the appeal must include an academic plan approved by the appropriate academic advisor for the student's program. The decision of the appeal committee is final.

#### **Attendance**

Students who receive financial aid must attend their classes. Passing grades in classes are proof of attendance. Attendance in on-line classes is documented through submission of academic assignments, completion of exams, or actual participation in on-line discussions about academic matters. Students who withdraw from all of their classes or fail all of their classes, and do not have any passing mid-term grades, must prove their attendance in classes. If the financial aid office cannot document student attendance for the semester, all financial aid for that semester will be canceled and these students will owe a bill to the college. Financial aid will be canceled within 30 days of the end of the semester unless attendance documentation is provided. The canceled aid usually cannot be reinstated at a later date.