

How Your Academic Progress Affects Your Financial Aid Eligibility

What is Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

The Federal Department of Education and Student Financial Assistance Programs require schools and colleges to develop and apply a consistent standard of academic progress in determining student eligibility. West Valley and Mission Colleges adhere to this regulation by maintaining a satisfactory academic progress policy for the awarding of Title IV funds and institutional financial aid. The Colleges award assistance based on demonstrated financial need to those in an eligible program of study as approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) or, in the case of Certificate programs, be a minimum of 15 weeks in length and 16 credit units, approved by the West Valley-Mission College District Board of Trustees. In addition, an individual educational plan showing your degree or certificate objective may be required. By applying for and receiving financial aid, you are expected to demonstrate the ability to succeed by being persistent in maintaining enrollment and a cumulative GPA of 2.00 ('C' average).

What is an Eligible Program of Study?

A student can not be offered or paid financial aid if they are not in an eligible program of study at West Valley or Mission College. Eligible Programs include AA/AS Degrees and Certificate Programs as approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) or, in the cases of Certificate programs, be a minimum of 15 weeks in length and 16 credit units, approved by the West Valley-Mission College District Board of Trustees. For a listing of state-approved programs, please view the information at the following link:

http://misweb.cccco.edu/webproginv/prod/collegelist_n.cfm

What is considered Good Standing?

The minimum standards to maintain "good standing" while receiving financial aid are:

- **FULL-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting 12 or more units) must complete at least 2/3 or 66.7% of the units attempted (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- **THREE-QUARTER-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting 9 – 11.5 units) must complete at least 2/3 or 66.7% of the units attempted (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- **HALF-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting 6 – 8.5 units) must complete at least 2/3 or 66.7% of the units attempted (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.

- **LESS-THAN-HALF-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting less than 6 units) must complete at least 2/3 or 66.7% of the units attempted (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.

How long may I receive eligibility?

Students are allowed a maximum number of units to reach their goals in their eligible program of study. At West Valley and Mission Colleges, many students achieve their AA/AS Degrees or Certificates within 60 units or less. The Federal rule applied is that the student is allowed 150% of the minimum number of units required to complete their degree or certificate. In the example where the degree unit minimum is 60 units and students reach a total of 90 semester units of work, they have reached their maximum units allowed and no longer qualify for federal aid. All work performed at and transferred in from other colleges and all units attempted (not necessarily completed) at either West Valley or Mission Colleges are included in determining whether students are under or over the 90 semester units. Once applicants reach the maximum units allowed, they are placed on Financial Aid Disqualification– Units (FADU) and are no longer eligible for federal financial aid. If they would like to be considered for additional eligibility, they must submit an appeal petition. The appeal is reviewed, based on any extenuating circumstances, to determine whether the student's maximum units allowed should be extended. The purpose of the federal aid programs is to provide low-income students with the opportunity to gain access to higher education opportunities. At Mission College, you may need special authorization to pursue more than one degree or certificate, during either the same time frame or consecutively.

What happens if I am placed on Probation?

At the end of each regular semester, the Office of Financial Aid runs a program to identify students who are not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress. If a student fails to meet the base requirements for either the calculation of Attempted vs. Completed units **OR** minimum Cumulative GPA, the student may be placed on Probation. Probation will be considered a warning status, but financial aid eligibility for the semester will remain. A notice will be sent via e-mail to the student when an e-mail address is available within our student information system. Otherwise, the notice will be sent via U.S. Postal Service to the students mailing address.

Example: Mike, who was in good standing previously, does NOT meet the minimum SAP requirements at the end of Fall semester. Mike would be on probation for Spring semester OR the next semester that he attends. Mike could still be paid financial aid while under probationary status.

*Effective 2010-11 academic year, in order for students on Financial Aid "PROBATION" to receive their **SECOND** financial aid disbursement, they **MUST ATTEND** a mandatory*

“Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Session” to help them avoid becoming “Disqualified”.

In some cases, a Work In Progress (WIP) report may be required for approval by the Financial Aid Office before additional federal aid (grants & loans) is disbursed or distributed.

What happens if I am placed on Disqualification?

If you are on probation and at the end of your current semester you still do not meet minimum SAP requirements for either the Attempted vs. Completed units **OR** Cumulative GPA, you will be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification (FADQ). FADQ means you are no longer eligible for federal financial aid. If you would like to be considered for additional eligibility, you may submit an appeal petition (requires approval) or re-establish SAP without Federal financial aid. An e-mailed notice will be sent to the student when an e-mail address is available within our student information system otherwise, the notice will be sent via U.S. Postal Service to the students mailing address.

Example: Mike was on probation after Fall semester and he returns to attend college in Spring semester. At the end of Spring semester, Mike again does NOT meet the minimum SAP requirements. He will have a disqualified status for the next semester that he attends. Mike could keep his BOG Fee Waiver (because this is not federal aid and therefore, not subject to federal rules) but will lose Federal financial aid eligibility until he re-establishes SAP either through appeal or by attending the semester without Federal aid and meet SAP minimum requirements.

Is there an Appeal process?

If the student feels there were extenuating circumstances to explain that student's FADQ or FADU status, they have the option to appeal. An appeal may require the student to meet with a counselor, seek tutorial assistance, correct the difficulties that prevent success, and/or other suggested remediation to show possibilities of future SAP success. An approved appeal will give the student at least 1, and possibly up to 4, additional semesters of Probation and allow them to receive financial aid, pending availability at the time of approval.

Students who were disqualified because of exceeding 150% of the total units (FADU) allowable to complete their program and whose appeals were “Approved” will be paid **ONLY** for classes required to complete their program within the next four terms of attendance.

Effective with the 2010-11 academic year, only **ONE** financial aid SAP appeal per academic year will be accepted by the Financial Aid Office with a maximum of **THREE** appeals during all the years of attendance at Mission College.

If my appeal is not granted, how may I be Re-instated for Financial Aid Eligibility?

If you have a Financial Aid Disqualified (FADQ) status and attend a future semester and meet the SAP requirements at the end of the term, then your status will be updated to Satisfactory. During the semester after showing SAP success the student would be in an eligible status and could be awarded, pending availability of funding at the time of Reinstatement.

Example: Mike was disqualified after spring semester and he returns to attend college in the fall. Mike finally meets the SAP requirements at the end of the fall semester. Mike will be eligible for aid the next semester he attends, pending other non-SAP eligibility requirements and availability of funding at the time of reinstatement.

Units and GPA calculation

The Financial Aid Office SAP program depends on the grades and units stored in our student system to properly show units attempted vs. completed and calculated cumulative GPA for our use in determining SAP. Grades of “F” (Fail), “W”(Withdrew), “NC” (No Credit), “NP” (Not Passed), “IP” (In Progress), “I” (Incomplete) and “RD” (Report Delayed) are not counted as completed units when determining SAP. Courses taken as Credit/No Credit or Pass/No Pass may have the GPA manually calculated, if not all classes were passed (Credit/Pass). We will follow institutional policies and rules on repeating courses for credit and may be able to pay for retaking a course. Because below-college-level courses are often required as prerequisites to take college-level courses to obtain your eligible program of study degree or certificate, those courses will be used in determining SAP. GPA Scale again? (I don't think so-kf)

Return of Title IV Funds

Financial aid recipients who withdraw completely or reduce units before or by 60% of the semester is over may have to return a portion of the aid received which was not earned. Students who withdraw and do not repay funds will have an institutional hold placed on future West Valley or Mission College registration and transcripts and a national hold placed on future aid eligibility at any institution.

Please contact the Financial Aid Office to speak to an advisor before withdrawing

from any or all of your classes.

Example: Mary is a full time student and received a Pell disbursement of \$1,350 for the semester. She dropped all her classes during the 5th week of the semester. After the calculation of Return of Title IV funds, Mary owes \$234 of the Pell amount. Mary must repay these funds in order for her account to be cleared for future attendance.