

How Your Academic Progress Affects Your Financial Aid

What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?

The 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 adheres 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. In addition, an individual educational plan that either leads to a transfer to a four-year college or obtain a degree/a certificate 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 minimum semester and cumulative GPA of 2.00.

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 includes AA/AS Degree, Transfer Programs, and Certificate Programs. Certificate Programs must be at least 15 weeks long and have a minimum of 18 units of credit. For a listing of 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 of the units (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) attempted each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- **THREE-QUARTER-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting 9 – 11.9 units) must earn at least 2/3 of the units (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) attempted each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- **HALF-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting 6 – 8.9 units) must earn at least 2/3 of the units (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) attempted each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- **LESS-THAN-HALF-TIME STUDENTS** (attempting less than 6 units) must earn at least 2/3 of the units (rounded up to the nearest ½ unit) attempted each semester with at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA.

How long may I receive eligibility?

Students are allowed a maximum amount of time to reach their goals in their eligible programs. At West Valley and Mission Colleges, many students achieve their AA/AS or transfer goals within 60 units. Therefore, if students reach a total of 90 semester units of work, they may have reached their maximum time frame and no longer qualify for federal aid. All work performed at other colleges is included in determining whether students are under or over the 90 semester units. Once applicants reach 90 units and are applying for federal aid, they must submit a petition that will be reviewed to determine whether this student's time frame should be extended beyond the normal time. The purpose of the federal aid programs is to provide low-income students with the opportunity to gain higher education. When students have had that opportunity, they may not be assisted all the way through to a series of multiple goals if the time they have spent exceeds 150% of the amount of time normally needed to reach this goal.

What happens if I am placed on Probation?

If during a semester a student fails to meet the requirements for either the Completed units **OR** Cumulative GPA that 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 after summer school, does NOT meet the SAP requirements in fall semester. Mike would be on probation for spring semester **OR** the next semester that he attends. For the following semester Mike could still be paid financial aid.

What happens if I am placed on Disqualification?

If during a semester when the SAP status was listed as any form of Probation and the student fails to meet the requirements for either the Completed units **OR** Cumulative GPA, that student may be placed on Financial Aid Disqualification (FADQ). FADQ will be considered a status in which financial aid is cancelled and financial aid eligibility for the disqualified semester and future semesters forward will be cancelled, until SAP has been demonstrated or an appeal approved. 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 at least halftime in spring semester. Mike once again does NOT meet the SAP

requirements in spring semester. Mike would be disqualified for the next fall semester OR the next semester that he attends. Mike could keep his BOG Fee Waiver, but may have all other aid cancelled for spring semester and the following semesters if SAP is not met.

Is there an Appeals process?

If the student feels there were extenuating circumstances to explain that student's FADQ status, they have the option to appeal to the Financial Aid Director. 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.

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

If a student is in a Financial Aid Disqualified (FADQ) status and they attend a following semester at halftime or more and they meet the SAP requirements, then they will be considered to be making SAP for the semester after showing success. During the semester after showing SAP success the student would be in an eligible status and could be awarded, pending availability at the time of Reinstatement. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office of a successful semester.

Example: Mike was disqualified after spring semester and he returns to attend college at least halftime in the fall. Mike finally meets the SAP requirements at the end of the fall semester. Mike would be responsible to let the Financial Aid Office staff know that he reinstated himself to good standing. Mike will be eligible for aid the next semester he attends, pending eligibility and availability at the time of reinstatement.

Units and GPA calculation

The Financial Aid Office staff will depend on Admission and Records (A&R) staff to properly show units completed and calculated GPA for our use in determining SAP. Grades of "F" (Fail), "W" (Withdrew), "NC" (No Credit), "IP" (In Progress), "I" (Incomplete) and "RD" (Report Delayed) are not counted as completed units and thus will be assessed as not completed units when determining SAP. Courses taken as Credit/No Credit may have the GPA manually calculated, if not all classes were passed (Credit). We will follow A&R's rules on repeating courses for credit and may be able to pay for retaking a course. Because below college level courses are often used to get up to college level courses, meaning there is the intention to be in an eligible academic program, those classes will be used in determining SAP.

Return of Title IV Funds

Financial aid recipients who withdraw completely or reduce units before or equal to 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.