



AUSTIN CAREER INSTITUTE

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Revised 05/25

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) ensures that students are progressing through their program of study both academically and in a timely manner. To be considered as making satisfactory progress, a student must both maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and completion rate (pace). The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is consistently applied to all students enrolled at the school. The SAP Policy is in the Consumer Information of the Austin Career Institute website: (<https://www.austincareerinstitute.edu/Consumer-information/>) and the Catalog to ensure that all students receive a digital link prior to enrollment. The policy complies with the guidelines established by the United States Department of Education.

INFORMAL EVALUATION PERIOD: Informal Academic Evaluation is performed after each unit of study which is called a module. The program is a full semester and has published semester credit hours in the catalog. Modules are NOT courses in the program and should not be treated as such. Each program course is designed with a set of modules that complete the program. Therefore, a program is an entire course made up of a set of modules also known as classes. Informal Academic evaluation is not SAP and is not related to SAP, rather it is an internal measurement to ensure that students are on the correct path to complete their course successfully. A warning may be issued to the students whose GPA falls below 2.0 during the Informal Academic Evaluation.

SAP EVALUATION PERIOD: Students are evaluated for SAP at the end of each payment period for programs that are one academic year or less in length, at the point when the students earned the credit-hours for the payment period.

Definition: Semester credit hours earned are semester credit hours when the student received a passing grade for those credits. Attempted semester credit hours are the hours when the student did not receive a passing grade.

Academic Year Definition:

24 Semester Credits 30 weeks.

SAP Evaluation Points for Each Program:

Medical Assistant – 12 semester credits and 16 weeks and 24 semester credits and 32 weeks

Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration Certificate Program- 12 semester credits and 15 weeks and 24 semester credits and 30 weeks.

Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate Program - 12 semester credits and 15 weeks and 24 semester credits and 30 weeks.

If at the midpoint of Title IV funding as listed above for a program, it will not be disbursed until the student has successfully reached the midpoint which is earning half the number of credits and half of the total weeks of the program.

SAP evaluations will determine if the student has met the minimum requirements for satisfactory academic progress.

SAP Evaluation

Each SAP evaluation includes the following program completion evaluations:

1. Quantitative (credits-related Pace)
(Maximum Time Frame 150% of Program Length)
2. Qualitative (grade-based/GPA)

Each student must meet the minimum requirement for each criterion to meet SAP.

1- QUANTITATIVE MEASURE (PACE)

Definition: To measure progress toward program completion.

Pace of progression required to ensure student completes the number of credits within maximum time frame and is calculated as below:

Quantitative Measure (Earned/Attempted Credits)

To comply with the Quantitative Measure, students must successfully earn a minimum of 66.7% (rounded from 2/3) of all attempted credits. Please note repeat and incomplete courses are included in the quantitative measurement.

Quantitative formula:

Successfully earned credits are divided by attempted credits.

In other words, a student in a program with length of one academic year or less than one academic year and only two payment periods will have two SAP evaluations, one at midpoint and one at the end of the program. If the student reaches midpoint within MAXIMUM TIME FRAME, and if the student is still active student in good standing (financial, academic, etc.) in the program, the student SAP will be measured and, if the student meets SAP, the student will be considered to have met the Quantitative Measure (Pace) portion of the SAP.

- ACI uses standard rounding rules when calculating percentages under the program's quantitative measurement.
- Example: 66.5% is rounded up to 67%.
- The minimum PACE required for maintaining SAP in the various programs is 67% completion rate.

MAXIMUM TIME FRAME

Definition: Maximum time a student can receive Title IV financial aid to complete a program of study. If the student does not graduate within the Maximum Time Frame allowed of 150% of the program length at ACI, ACI may dismiss the student. The decision as to which students will be dismissed will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the ACI management team. The qualitative element used to determine academic progress is a reasonable system of grades as determined by assigned academic learning and attendance.

Maximum Time Frame Calculation example:

A Program is 24 semester credits
 $24 \text{ semester credits} \times 1.5 (150\%) = 36 \text{ semester credits attempted}$

Students must earn 67% of the credits attempted each evaluation period to complete the program within the Maximum Time Frame.

Students who have not completed the program within the maximum time frame may be required to pay in cash for the remaining semester credits of the program to continue as a student at the institution.

2- QUALITATIVE MEASURE

Definition: To assess the quality of academic work using Grades; work projects; etc.

- The student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) measures the quality of the student's coursework.
- The minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) required for maintaining SAP in the various programs is a 2.0 or greater than 70%.
- ACI calculates cumulative CGPA which must be 2.0 or greater at end of each payment period / SAP evaluation.
- Students must make up missed tests or incomplete assignments to bring their SAP to minimum of C- to graduate.
- Grades will be determined using the following scale:

GPA	Grade Percentage	Grade
3.6 - 4.0	90% - 100%	A
2.8 - 3.5	80% - 89%	B
2.0 - 2.7	70% - 79%	C
1.0 - 1.9	60% - 69%	D
0.0	0% - 59%	F

F = Failed
I = Incomplete
W = Withdrawal
DR = Drop

Incomplete Status: When a student receives an Incomplete, a grade will be issued once the student has completed the required academic work.

Incompletes

An "I" may be awarded by ACI when a student has been placed on a leave of absence, dropped, or has been called for active duty prior to completing a program. Incomplete Grades do not affect the student CGPA however student must re-take the module and successfully pass the module.

Withdrawals

A 'W' is awarded to students who withdraw prior to completion of a program.

Transfer Credit

Transfer Out

The transferability of credits you earn at ACI is at the complete discretion of an institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the certificate you earn is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the credits that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all your program work at that institution. For this reason, you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals.

Transfer In

All credits earned towards the completion of a certificate must be earned at ACI. No credit will be offered for past education or experience except for military service Veterans who use VA education benefits or programs at ACI. A review of military service transcripts is required for Veteran students using VA education benefits to pay for their program.

Leave of Absence

An authorized Leave of Absence (LOA) is a temporary interruption in the student's program of study.

- The LOA refers to a specific period of time in which a student is not in attendance.
- An LOA is not required during an institutional break, however; a scheduled break may occur during an LOA.
- An LOA must meet certain conditions to be counted as a temporary interruption (LOA) instead of being counted as a withdrawal, which would then require Austin Career Institute to perform a withdrawal calculation.
- Austin Career Institute will not assess the student any additional charges as a result of the LOA.
- A student who must take an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) or must withdraw from training for nonacademic reasons may return to Austin Career Institute with no loss of SAP if the student was making SAP when the student left.
- To qualify for an authorized LOA:
 - The student must follow Austin Career Institute's Leave of Absence Policy when requesting an LOA.
 - There must be reasonable expectations that the student will return from the LOA.
 - The LOA must be requested and approved in writing according to Austin Career Institute's LOA Policy and prior to LOA occurring unless there is an unforeseen circumstance that would prevent the student from requesting in advance.
 - The LOA must be dated and signed by the student.
 - The student must provide documentation to substantiate the LOA.
 - The student is required to list the reason for the LOA.
 - Emergency LOA, without prior written request, may be granted provided the student completes the LOA form and returns it to Austin Career Institute via mail or in person within a reasonable resolution of the emergency.
 - The first date of the LOA would be the beginning date of the approved LOA where the student, due to an emergency, was unable to attend Austin Career Institute.
 - A student granted an LOA that meets the criteria is not considered to have withdrawn, and no refund calculation is required at that time.

- A student may be granted a LOA for any of the following reasons:
 1. Emergency medical issues
 2. Military requirements
 3. Jury duty
 4. Mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control
 5. Academic staff recommendation
- The day the student returns from an LOA, the student is required to inform staff in the financial aid office and education office of their return.
- A leave of absence extends the student's contract period and maximum time frame by the same number of days taken in the Leave of Absence without penalty to the student.
 - All parties must initial changes to the contract period on the Enrollment Agreement or an addendum must be signed and dated by all parties to reflect the new contract end date.
- If the student takes an unapproved LOA or does not return from an approved LOA, at the expiration of the LOA:
 - Austin Career Institute is required to take attendance, therefore; the withdrawal date for the purpose of calculating a refund is always the last date of attendance as listed in the student's attendance records.
- Austin Career Institute permits more than one LOA provided the total number of days of all LOAs does not exceed 180 calendar days in any 12-month period.
- If a student needs an extension to their LOA, pending all 180 calendar days have not been used in prior LOA(s), the student must complete a new LOA request form, prior to concluding the current LOA, outlining the details for the requested extension.
- If the student is receiving consumer loans and/or federal funding, no aid (consumer or federal aid funding) will be disbursed during the LOA.
- If the student does not return from the LOA, the student will be dropped from Austin Career Institute.
 - The student's Title IV loans (if applicable) will enter into repayment 6 months from the students' last date of attendance.
 - Any consumer loan repayment will be per the terms of the consumer loan.

Non-Credit Remedial

ACI does not offer remedial classes for any program.

Changing Programs/Additional Credentials

When a student changes programs or wants to enroll in another program to seek an additional credential, any earned credits applicable to the new program/credential must be included in the calculation of the CGPA and Maximum Time Frame for the new program.

Determination of Progress Status

Students meeting the minimum requirements for CGPA and Pace at the SAP evaluation point will be considered making satisfactory academic progress until the next scheduled SAP evaluation. Students deemed not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress may have their Title IV Funding interrupted, unless the student is on warning or has prevailed upon appeal resulting in a status of probation.

SAP Financial Aid Warning

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for CGPA or Pace are placed on Financial Aid Warning Status and **not** considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress during the warning period. The student will be advised in writing of the actions required to attain Satisfactory Academic Progress by the next evaluation period, **Students must sign Financial Aid Warning Status documentation for their file. All students, regardless of funding source, must sign the Financial Aid Warning Status document.** Students on Financial Aid Warning Status may continue to receive Title IV funding.

If a student is determined to not be making Satisfactory Academic Progress, the student may appeal the determination within 10 calendar days. Reasons for which students may appeal a negative progress determination include death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or any other allowable special or mitigating circumstances. Students are not required to appeal a Financial Aid Warning Status.

If the appeal is denied, ACI will determine whether the student can continue or needs to be placed on Financial Aid Probation. At the end of that time, ACI will determine whether the student can continue or needs to be dismissed from the program.

SAP Financial Aid Probation

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for CGPA or Pace after the Financial Aid warning period will lose their Title IV funding. The student has the right to appeal and, if the student appeals the decision, and prevails upon appeal, the student will be placed on Title IV, Financial Aid Probation is for one payment period. If the student fails to regain SAP at the end of the payment period, the student will once again lose their Title IV eligibility.

Title IV Appeal Process

A student who loses their financial aid eligibility due to not making SAP at the end of a Financial Aid Warning period has the right to file an appeal regarding their Satisfactory Academic Progress Evaluations.

A student who wished to appeal Satisfactory Academic Warning Status and with a loss of Title IV eligibility, must submit a written request to the Campus President within three (3) business days of being notified that they are in a non-satisfactory academic progress status.

The student must describe any extenuating circumstance(s) that the student believes deserves special consideration. The extenuating basis on which a student may file an appeal: death of a relative, an injury, or illness of the student or other special circumstance. The student must provide supporting documentation with information as to why they did not make SAP and what has changed that will allow them to make SAP by the next evaluation point.

Once the Campus President receives the appeal, they appeal will be evaluated and a decision will be made three (3) within business days. The Campus President will notify the student in writing of the decision and all decisions are final.

If the student is granted an appeal, they will then be placed on Financial Aid Probation, which is a status assigned by the institution to a student who fails to meet SAP requirements. Note: the appeal has been granted for one payment period only.

Financial Aid Appeal Granted

Should the student prevail upon their appeal they will be placed on a Financial Aid Probation status for that payment period. The student will then be eligible for Title IV funds for that payment period. While on Financial Aid Probation, the student must meet the institutions Satisfactory Academic Progress standards and complete the requirements of the Academic Improvement Plan, which was developed by the institution to assist the student in regaining their Title IV eligibility. A student on Financial Aid Probation because of a successful appeal is eligible for Title IV funds for ONE payment period.

Financial Aid Probation Status

Students placed on Financial Aid Probation status must be able to meet requirements set forth in the academic plan by the end of the next evaluation period. Students who are progressing according to their specific academic plan will be considered making Satisfactory Academic Progress. The Dean of Academics will advise the student in writing of the actions required to attain satisfactory academic progress by the next evaluation. If at the end of the Financial Aid Probation period, the student has still not met both the semester credits and academic requirements required for satisfactory academic progress or by the academic plan, he/she will be determined as NOT making satisfactory academic progress and, if applicable, students will not be deemed eligible to receive Title IV funds. A student must meet SAP prior to having eligibility reinstated.

If the student is not granted a Financial Aid Probation status they will remain on Academic Warning with a loss of Title IV funding for at least one payment period, at which time they must be making SAP in order to regain Title IV funding for the next payment period. If a student does not meet SAP, they will meet with the Campus President and/or the Dean of Academics to determine whether the student needs to be dismissed from the program.

Reinstatement of Title IV Funding:

This process is limited to the period under evaluation. Students making SAP by the conclusion of the probation period will be removed from the probation status and will regain eligibility for Title IV aid funding.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals, Probation, and Academic Plans

A student may appeal ACI's determination of withdrawal due to failure to re-establish satisfactory academic progress by the end of the Academic Warning period to the Dean of Academics based upon extenuating circumstances. These might include the death of a relative, an illness of or injury to the student or other extraordinary situations. The student's appeal must be received within 3 days of final SAP evaluation.

The written appeal must contain 1) an explanation of why the student failed to meet the SAP standards; and 2) a description of what has changed in the student's situation that will enable him or her to again meet the satisfactory progress standards. Supporting documentation should be submitted if possible.

The Campus President and/or the Dean of Academics will review the information submitted in the context of the student's entire academic record and notify the student of the decision within 3 business days. This decision is final. If the appeal is granted, the student will be placed on probation for the evaluation period, and the notice to the student will outline the requirements of the academic plan the student must follow. The terms of the academic plan must ensure the student will be able to complete the program within the maximum time frame (1.5 times the program length) and with the required CGPA for graduation.

At the end of the probationary period of evaluation, the student's progress will be evaluated based upon the academic plan. If the student is meeting SAP standards, the student will be notified and removed from a probationary status and will be graduated.

If the student fails to meet the terms of the academic plan at the end of a probationary period of evaluation, the student will be notified and dismissed from school.

Procedure for re-establishing Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

A student can re-establish SAP by improving their CGPA and/or completion rate to the minimum requirements specified for SAP. A student who is placed on Academic Warning and re-establishes SAP at the end of the Academic Warning period will be removed from Academic Warning. A student who is placed on Probation and re-establishes SAP at the end of the Probation period will be removed from Probation.

Re-entry for students dismissed due to failure to meet SAP

If a student is terminated for unsatisfactory progress and pursuant to Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Section 807.221.224, the student cannot be readmitted until a minimum of one grading period has passed. Upon reentering the program, the student would be placed on academic probation for one grade period. If the student does not show satisfactory progress during their academic probation period, they will again be terminated and will not be readmitted to the program.

Pursuant to the Texas Education Code, Section 132.061(f), students who withdrew from a program for an appropriate reason, not related to their academic status, and who are paying full tuition, may request a grade of incomplete. A student receiving a grade of incomplete may reenroll during the 12 months following their withdrawal in the class or classes they are receiving an incomplete in at no additional tuition cost.