



AUSTIN
CAREER
INSTITUTE

Satisfactory
Academic
Progress
(SAP) Policy

2023

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 applies to all students enrolled at Austin Career Institute. The SAP Policy is in the Consumer Information of the Austin Career Institute website (<https://www.austincareerinstitute.edu/Consumerinfo.html>) 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.

PROGRAM	ACTUAL MAX WEEK/HOURS
Medical Assistant - Diploma	FT -24 hrs. per week/32 Weeks/24 semester credits 48 Weeks/36 semester credits
Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration	FT -24 hrs. per week/30 Weeks/24 semester credits 45 Weeks/36 semester credits
Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate	FT -24 hrs. per week/30 Weeks/24 semester credits 45 Weeks/36 semester credits

If midpoint Title IV funding is scheduled as listed above for a program, it will not be drawn or disbursed until the student has successfully reached the midpoint semester credits which is half of the total credits/weeks/total hours of the total length of a program listed above. This means for the above programs the students must attend the minimum semester credits for funding to be drawn or disbursed.

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

Each student must meet the minimum requirement for each of the two evaluations separately to meet SAP.

1- QUANTITATIVE MEASURE (PACE)

Definition: To measure progress toward program completion.

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

- For semester credits, evaluating cumulative semester credits under the quantitative measure expressed in calendar time.
- Successfully completed semester credits ÷ Scheduled credits ≥ 67%.

This means that a student in a program with length of less than one academic year and only two payment periods will have two SAP evaluations, one at midpoint and one at the scheduled end of the program. The midpoint SAP evaluation, if reached within MAXIMUM TIME FRAME, and if the student is still active student in good standing (financial, academic, etc.) in the program result in meeting the Quantitative Measure (Pace) portion of the SAP.

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

SAP evaluation is conducted at the end of each payment period, which is the midpoint of the program and the end of the program to determine if the student has met the minimum attendance requirements. Example, there are 6 modules of instruction per program each payment period in semester credit programs consists of at the end of every 3 modules.

2- QUALITATIVE MEASURE

Definition: To assess quality of academic work using standards measurable against a norm like Grades; work projects; etc.

The Qualitative Measure evaluation is conducted at the end of each payment period, also known as the midpoint of the program, to determine if the student has met the minimum attendance requirements. ACI will evaluate the following at the end of each payment period:

- The minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA), which measures the quality of a student’s academic work, required for meeting SAP in the various programs is a minimum of 2.0 GPA which is equal to or greater than a passing grade of 70% at end of each payment period SAP evaluation.
- Students must make up failed or missed tests and incomplete assignments to bring their SAP to minimum of C- to graduate.
- Grades will be determined using the following scale:

3.7 - 4.0	90% - 100%	A
3.0 - 3.6	80% - 89%	B
2.0 - 2.9	70% - 79%	C
1.0 - 1.9	60% - 69%	D
0.0	0% - 59%	F

Failed = GPA below 2.0 or below 70% or below C is considered as failed and must retake the failed module. A student should meet with their instructors and the Director of Student Services for academic advising for support to reach satisfactory academic progress.

I = Incomplete Grade. A grade will be issued once the student has completed a module academic work and activities that produce a passing grade.

W = Withdrawal.

DR = Drop.

3- 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:

Program is 30 weeks long.

$30 \text{ weeks} \times 1.5 (150\%) = 45 \text{ weeks maximum time frame}$

Quantitative measure (tied to maximum time frame)

$30 \text{ weeks} \div 45 \text{ weeks} = .6666\% \text{ (rounded to 67\%)}$

Students must complete 67% of the semester credits and weeks in each SAP evaluation period to complete the program in Maximum Time Frame.

The maximum time for ACI programs which is 150% of the program length is stated below:

PROGRAM	ACTUAL MAX WEEK/HOURS
Medical Assistant - Hybrid	FT -24 hrs. per week/32 Weeks/24 semester credits 48 Weeks/36 semester credits
Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration	FT -24 hrs. per week/30 Weeks/24 semester credits 45 Weeks/36 semester credits
Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate Program	FT -24 hrs. per week/30 Weeks/24 semester credits 45 Weeks/36 semester credits

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

Incompletes

An “I” is awarded only if the student must withdrawal from the module prior to completing it. 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 the module and wish to re-enroll will return to the same satisfactory academic progress status as at the time of withdrawal. Module withdrawals are not included in the calculation of the CGPA.

Repetitions

A student who receives a D or F grade must repeat the module and earn a passing grade. A student may also repeat a module with a grade other than F or D to earn a higher grade. If a student must repeat a module, the repeated module must be successfully completed within the Maximum Time Frame and upon the completion of the repeated module, the higher attendance and grade of the module will be counted toward the student’s CGPA. Once a student fails a module, it may not be possible for him/her to graduate on time (1.5 times the program length). The students who repeat a module will not be charged for the module they are repeating, unless they have exceeded 150% of the maximum time frame of a program length.

Program Transfers

If a student decides to transfer/switch into another ACI program, the credits earned for modules completed in the first program with a grade of “C” or higher, which are also requirements in the new program, will be transferred to the new program. The student will be financially responsible for all modules attempted in the first program, as well as the additional modules required to be completed in the new program.

Transfer credit accepted toward completion of student’s program will be counted as attempted and completed credits/hours. ACI will not include transferred modules in the transcript and towards the CGPA. Transfer credits accepted into a new switched program are factored into the quantitative measure and Max Time Frame by reducing the number of credits remaining in the program. ACI does not accept transfer credits from another institution of higher learning.

For Example: 24 semester credit hour/30 weeks program; ACI accepts 12 semester credits; new student’s program is 12 semester credits and 15 weeks. Max timeframe will be $15 \times 143\% = 21$ weeks

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 of 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.

Leave of Absence

If enrollment is temporarily interrupted for a Leave of Absence (LOA), the student will return to school in the same progress status as prior to the leave of absence. The duration of a leave of absence will extend the student's enrollment period and Maximum Time Frame by the same number of days taken in the leave of absence and will not count against the student when calculating SAP. An approved leave of absence can not exceed six months of the duration of a program.

Non-Credit Remedial

ACI does not offer remedial modules or 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 modules 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 attendance at the SAP evaluation point are 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 Evaluation Period

Students are evaluated for SAP at the end of each payment period, which is the midpoint and end of a program that is one academic year or less in length. Therefore, ACI evaluates SAP twice, at minimum, during the length of the program.

Medical Assistant – 12 Semester credits / 16 weeks and 24 Semester credits / 32 weeks

Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration Certificate Program- 12 Semester credits / 15 weeks and 24 Semester credits / 30 weeks

Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate Program - 12 Semester credits / 15 weeks and 24 Semester credits 30 weeks

Title IV/Financial Aid SAP Warning

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for attendance or academic progress are placed on Financial Aid SAP Warning. The student will be advised in writing by the which measures the quality of a student's academic work on the actions required to attain satisfactory academic progress by the next evaluation performed upon completion of the credits and hours. If at the end of the warning period, the student has still not met both the attendance and academic requirements, he/she will not graduate.

Title IV Financial Aid Probation

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for attendance or academic progress after the 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 for one payment period which is the equivalent time frame of 3 modules. If the student fails to regain SAP at the end of the payment period, the student will once again lose their Title IV eligibility.

Additionally, only students who do not meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards at each evaluation period may be placed on Financial Aid Probation. Students placed on an academic plan 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 student will be advised in writing by the Director of Student Services of the actions required to attain satisfactory academic progress by the next evaluation. If at the end of the probationary period, the student has still not met both the attendance 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.

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 has the right to file an appeal regarding their Satisfactory Academic Progress Evaluations.

A student who wished to appeal 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 deserve 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 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 will evaluate the appeal and provide a decision within three (3) 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.

Title IV Financial Appeal Granted

Should the student prevail upon their appeal they will be placed on 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 which is the equivalent length of 3 modules.

Title IV Financial Aid Probation Status

Any student that prevails upon the appeal process shall be placed on financial aid probation and will be eligible to receive Title IV funding during this period. The student may also be placed on an individual development plan to assist the student in regaining SAP at the end of this payment period. Those who are not making SAP at the end of the Financial Aid Probation period will be ineligible to receive Title IV funds for the following payment periods. 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 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 Director of Student Services 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 Director of Student Services 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 Director of Student Services will review the information submitted in the context of the student's entire academic record and notify the student of the decision within 1 to 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 timeframe (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 of the length of one module. 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 Texas Education Code, Section 132.061(f), students who withdraw 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.

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/fsa-assessments/2022-11-17/satisfactory-academic-progress>

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2022-2023/vol1/ch1-school-determined-requirements> Refer to SAP section.