



SAP Policy

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/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.

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 student's scheduled clock-hours for the payment period have elapsed, regardless of whether the student attended them. For programs of study longer than one academic year ACI evaluates SAP at end of each payment period.

Definition: Informal Academic Evaluation is performed after each unit of study which is called a module. 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.

Definition: Actual hours is earned hours, which is hours the student actually attended and as a result earned. Actual hours are NOT scheduled hours, since if the student has not attended all of the scheduled hours, the student has not earned the hours. For example, students are in HVAC-R program which is 720 scheduled hours. Midpoint of the scheduled hours is 360 scheduled hours. At midpoint of the program's scheduled hours the student is scheduled to attend 360 hours, however, the student only attended 300 actual hours. The student at midpoint of the program's scheduled hours has earned only 300 hours. The evaluation of the student's attendance at midpoint of the program's scheduled hours is not SAP, rather it is an Informal Academic Evaluation. SAP evaluation must be conducted only when the students reach 360 actual hours of attendance.

These points are as follows for each program at ACI:

***Medical Assistant** - 450 (actual) and 900 (actual) hours

***Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration** - 360 (actual) and 720 (actual) hours

Residential Heating, Ventilation AC - 360 (actual) hours

Advanced Electrical Technician Certificate Program - 338 (actual) and 677.5 (actual) hours

Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate Program - 456 (actual) and 912 (actual) hours

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 hours. This means for the above programs the students must attend the minimum hours 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 evaluations:

1. Qualitative (grade-based)
2. Quantitative (time-related)
3. Maximum Time Frame standards

Each student must meet the minimum requirement for each of the three evaluation separately to meet SAP.

1- QUANTITATIVE MEASURE (PACE)

Definition: To measure progress toward program completion.

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

- For clock-hours, evaluating cumulative clock hours under the quantitative measure expressed in calendar time
- $\text{Successfully completed clock hours} \div \text{Scheduled evaluation point clock hours} \geq 67\%$.

By definition, midpoint SAP evaluation is conducted when the student has earned enough hours to



match the midpoint scheduled hours. For example, students are in HVAC-R program which is 720 scheduled hours. Midpoint of the scheduled hours is 360 scheduled hours. At midpoint of the program's scheduled hours the student is scheduled to attend 360 hours, however, the student only attended 300 actual hours. The student at midpoint of the program's scheduled hours has earned only 300 hours. The evaluation of the student's attendance at midpoint of the program's scheduled hours is not SAP, rather it is an Informal Academic Evaluation. SAP evaluation must be conducted only when the students reach 360 actual hours of attendance. Once the student reached 360 actual hours of attendance, then the SAP evaluation will be conducted as shown below:

$$360 \text{ actual hours of attendance} \div 360 \text{ Scheduled evaluation point clock hours} = 100\%$$

This means that a student in a program with length of less than one academic year and only two payment periods will have two SAPs, one at midpoint and one at the end. And according to above example the midpoint Sap, if reached within MAXIMUM TIME FRAME, and if the student is still active student in good standing (financial, academic, etc) in the program will have a SAP when they reach midpoint actual hours of attendance and as a result will meet 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.
- Evaluation is conducted at the end of each payment period of the program to determine if the student has met the minimum attendance requirements.

2- QUALITATIVE MEASURE

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

- It is cumulative
- CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (CGPA)
 - The CGPA measures the quality of a 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 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:

4.0	98%-100%	A+
3.8	94%-98%	A
3.7	90%-93%	A-
3.5	87%-89%	B+
3.3	83%-86%	B
3.0	80%-82%	B-
2.7	77%-79%	C+
2.5	73%-76%	C
2.0	70%-73%	C-
1.7	65%-69%	D+
1.5	63%-65%	D
1.0	60%-62%	D-
0.0	0%-59%	F



Failed = GPA below 2.0 or 67% or C- considered as failed and student should retake the course.

I = Incomplete Grade

W = Withdrawal

DR = Drop

3- MAXIMUM TIME FRAME

Definition: Maximum time a student can receive Title IV aid to complete a program of study. This maximum time frame portion of the policy only applies to students who use Title IV funding.

The student must graduate within the Maximum Time Frame allowed which does not exceed 150% of the course length at ACI. 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:

720 clock hour program is 30 weeks long

30 weeks X 150% = 45 weeks maximum time frame

Quantitative measure (tied to maximum time frame)

30 weeks ÷ 45 weeks = 67% (usually rounded to 67%)

Student Must complete 67% of clock hours and weeks each evaluation period to complete program in Maximum Time Frame

The maximum time for ACI does not exceed 150% of the course length allowed for students to complete each course at satisfactory academic progress is stated below:

COURSE	ACTUAL HOURS/WEEKS/HOURS	MAX WEEKS/HOURS
Medical Assistant	FT - 24 hrs/37.5 weeks/900 Hrs.	57 weeks/1,350 hrs.
Residential & Commercial HVAC & Commercial Refrigeration	FT - 24 hrs/30 weeks)/720 Hrs.	45 weeks/1,080 hrs.
Residential Heating, Ventilation	FT - 24 hrs/15 weeks)/360 Hrs.	22.5 weeks/540 hrs.
Advanced Electrical Techniques	FT - 24 hrs/29 weeks)/677.5 Hrs.	44 weeks/1017 hrs.
Advanced Electrical and Renewable Energy Technician Certificate Program	FT - 24 hrs/38 weeks/912 Hrs.	57 weeks/1,368 hrs.

The maximum time allowed for transfer students who need less than the full program requirements will be determined based on 67% of the scheduled contracted hours.

Students who have not completed the course within the maximum timeframe may continue as a student at the institution on a cash pay basis.

All programs are offered with delivery method of traditional and hybrid.

Incompletes

An "I" is awarded only by student request, and only if the course has been fully paid, and the student must withdrawal from the module prior to module completion. Incomplete Grades do not affect the student CGPA however student must re-take the module and successfully pass the module.

Withdrawals

Students who withdraw prior to completion of the course and wish to re-enroll will return in 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.



Transfer of Credit

Transfer credit accepted toward completion of student's program will be counted as attempted and completed hours. ACI will not include transferred modules in the transcript and towards the CGPA. Transfer hours accepted into a program are factored into the quantitative measure and Max Time Frame by reducing the number of hours remaining in the program. ACI does not accept transfer credits except from SkillPoint Alliance.

For Example: 1200 hours/40 weeks program; ACI accepts 400 hours; new student's program is 800 hours and 25 weeks; max timeframe will be $25 \times 150\% = 38$ weeks

Excused Absences

Up to 10% of a student's hours in a payment period can be comprised of excused absences for Title IV purposes. Excused absences always count as successfully completed for Title IV purposes

Leave of Absence

If enrollment is temporarily interrupted for a Leave of Absence, the student will return to school in the same progress status as prior to the leave of absence. Hours elapsed during a leave of absence will extend the student's contract 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.

NON-CREDIT / REMEDIAL COURSEWORK

ACI does not offer module for no credit and individual courses for credit without being enrolled in an approved program. Satisfactory academic progress standards do not apply to these modules. Students are not eligible for financial assistance for these modules.

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 evaluation point are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress until the next scheduled 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.

FINANCIAL AID WARNING

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for attendance or academic progress are placed on warning.

The student will be advised in writing on the actions required to attain satisfactory academic progress by the next evaluation performed upon completion of the course 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.

FINANCIAL AID PROBATION

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for attendance or academic progress after the warning period, will lose their Title IV, HEA 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 a Title IV, HEA probation 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, HEA eligibility.

Additionally, only students who have the ability to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards by the end of the evaluation period may be placed on 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 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, HEA eligibility, must submit a written request to the School Director within ten (10) business days of being notified that they are in a non-satisfactory progress status.

The student must describe any unusual circumstance(s) that the student believes deserve special consideration. The 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 School Director receives the appeal, they will evaluate the appeal and provide a decision within ten (10) business days. The School Director 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 make SAP. 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 a Financial Probation for that payment period. The student will then be eligible for Title IV, HEA 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, HEA eligibility. A student on Financial Aid Probation because of a successful appeal is eligible for Title IV, HEA funds for ONE payment period.

Financial Aid Probation status:

A student placed on Financial Aid Probation may receive Title IV, HEA programs funds for one payment period. Any student that prevails upon the appeal process shall be placed on financial aid probation and will be eligible to receive Title IV, HEA 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, HEA funds for the following payment periods. A student must meet SAP prior to having eligibility reinstated.

If the student is not granted a Probation they will remain on Academic Warning with a loss of Title IV, HEA funding for at least one payment period, at which time they must be making SAP in order to regain Title IV, HEA funding for the next payment period.

Reinstatement of Title IV, HEA 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, HEA aid.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals, Probation, and Academic Plans

A student may appeal the school's determination of withdrawal due to failure to re-establish satisfactory progress by the end of the Academic Warning period to the Director of Education 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 Director of Education will review the information submitted in the context of the student's entire academic record and notify the student of the decision within 24 hours. This decision is final. If the appeal is granted, the student will be placed on probation for the evaluation period, and the Director of Education's 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. 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.