

NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) STANDARDS POLICY

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) is required by Federal Student Aid, an Office of the U.S. Department of Education, to monitor satisfactory academic progress (SAP) for students who are receiving federal Title IV financial aid. Iowa College Aid, a bureau of the Iowa Department of Education, also requires students to meet SAP for Iowa grants and scholarships administered by NICC. NICC also applies this eligibility criteria to institutional financial aid (NICC scholarships) and any other funding sources that NICC administers. Students who do not meet the standards lose financial aid eligibility.

Satisfactory academic progress standards are the same for all NICC students. The following factors do not impact the application of SAP standards: chosen program of study, type of student (resident versus nonresident), and the number of credits a student is registered for per semester.

Note: the term “cumulative” means all credits completed and grades earned at NICC over a student’s lifetime.

SAP Standards

1. Cumulative Grade Point Average Policy (qualitative component)

A student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C average) or better.

2. Cumulative Pace Policy (quantitative component)

A student must successfully complete 67% or more of their cumulative attempted credit hours including remedial and transfer credits. A student’s pace is calculated by taking the cumulative number of credits the student has successfully completed divided by the cumulative number of attempted credits.

3. Completion of Program 150% Policy (maximum time frame component)

A student must earn their degree within a maximum timeframe to continue receiving financial aid. The maximum time frame is 150% of the published length of the program’s credit hours. A student is ineligible when it becomes mathematically impossible for them to complete their program within 150% of the length of the program.

Example: the length of the Accounting Specialist Degree is 65 credits. $65 \text{ credits} \times 150\% = 97.5 \text{ credits}$. So a student can receive financial aid for up to 97.5 credits in pursuit of this program.

Note: credits earned at another institution that have been accepted by NICC as transfer credit are included in this total even if financial aid was not awarded for these credits.

Impact of Transfer Credits, Incompletes (I), Withdrawals (W), Course Repetitions, and Pass/Fail Grades:

Transfer Credits

All transfer credit hours that have been accepted by NICC toward a student's academic program will be counted as both attempted and completed credits when evaluating a student's satisfactory academic progress (SAP). All transfer students, who were not at NICC previously, are considered to have a satisfactory SAP status for their first semester and are eligible for Title IV aid.

Incomplete Grades

Students who have an incomplete grade (a grade of "I") must follow the NICC Incomplete Grading Policy. An incomplete grade does not impact a student's SAP calculation; therefore, it does not count towards attempted or completed credits in the quantitative or qualitative component. Once an incomplete grade is finalized (Registrar Office notifies Financial Aid Office), it is factored into the student's SAP calculations at the time of the next formal SAP evaluation. NICC does not retroactively change the student's SAP status when the grade of "I" becomes a final grade since, at the time of the SAP evaluation, the grade of "I" was a valid grade.

***Note:** NICC Incomplete Contract Agreements are not to exceed midterm of the next semester as the latest and final date that a student can submit work for a course in which they received an I grade.*

Example One: a student earns a SAP suspension status at the end of a semester during which an "I" grade was issued, and then at some point in the next semester, the I grade changes to a completed grade. Aid eligibility remains suspended even if the new grade that replaced the incomplete has resulted in reaching the 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA or 67% completion rate. Aid eligibility remains suspended because by policy NICC does not retroactively change a student's SAP status.

Example Two: if a student is enrolled under an academic plan and receives an I grade, this may result in the student not meeting the terms of their plan, which would result in a SAP suspension. If and when the I grade changes to a completed letter grade in the next semester, aid eligibility for that semester remains suspended. Even if the new grade that replaced the incomplete has resulted in reaching the 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA or 67% completion rate. Aid eligibility remains suspended because by policy NICC does not retroactively change the student's SAP status.

Withdrawals

Students who officially withdraw (a grade of "W") from a course(s) will have those credits counted as attempted but not completed credits towards their SAP calculation. This will impact the quantitative (pace) component but not the qualitative (GPA) component. Students with an unofficial withdrawal receive an "F" grade, which negatively impacts both the quantitative (pace) and qualitative (GPA) components, as these credits count both as attempted and not completed.

Repeat Courses

Students who are repeating a course(s), and earn a satisfactory grade (not an F), will have all credits counted as both attempted and completed credits toward SAP.

Pass/Fail Grading

Pass/fail grades do not affect a student's GPA and are not factored into the qualitative component of the SAP calculation, but the courses do count toward the quantitative measure (pace of progression).

SAP Evaluation and Statuses

A student's satisfactory academic progress will be evaluated at the end of each payment period (fall, spring, and summer) once official grades are reported to the registrar by faculty. Upon evaluation of a student's satisfactory academic progress, a student will be notified of their SAP status through their official NICC email account. Students may also view their grade point average (GPA), completion rate, and current SAP status at any time in MyCampus > Self Service for Students > Financial Aid.

A student returning to NICC will also have a SAP status assigned once a FAFSA is received by NICC if the student has a past academic record at NICC. This may include college credit classes that were earned while in high school (i.e. PSEO, concurrent enrollment, etc.). A student will have a status assigned even if those grades were earned without utilizing financial aid in the past.

SATISFACTORY STATUS

Students who are meeting all three SAP standards (GPA, pace, and max time frame) at the time of evaluation have a satisfactory SAP status and are eligible to receive financial aid for the next semester.

WARNING STATUS

Students who are not meeting one or more of the SAP standards after evaluation will remain eligible to receive financial aid for an upcoming semester, but must meet SAP standards when they are evaluated at the end of that semester in order to maintain eligibility for the next enrolled semester. Students who fail to meet the requirements at the end of that warning semester will receive a suspension status.

GPA (qualitative component) Warning Example:

Students who fall below a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 will be given a warning status the following semester. If during this warning semester the student raises his/her cumulative GPA to a minimum of a 2.0 by the completion of that semester, the warning status will be changed back to a satisfactory status for the next semester and the student would maintain aid eligibility. If a student does not raise his/her cumulative GPA to a minimum of 2.0 during a warning semester, he/she will be placed on suspension for subsequent semesters and be ineligible to receive financial aid.

Completion (quantitative component) Warning Example:


Students who do not complete a minimum 67% of their cumulative credits at the end of the semester will be given a warning status the following semester. If at the end of the warning semester the student completes 67% of his/her cumulative attempted credits, the warning status will be changed back to a satisfactory status for the next semester and the student would maintain aid eligibility. If the student does not complete a minimum 67% of his/her cumulative attempted credits during the warning semester, the student will be placed on suspension for subsequent semesters and be ineligible to receive financial aid.

Maximum Time Frame Example:

There is no warning status for maximum time frame. Once it is deemed mathematically impossible for a student to complete their program within 150% of its length, the student will be on SAP suspension.

SUSPENSION STATUS

Students who do not meet one or more of the satisfactory academic progress standards at the completion of the semester, after being on financial aid warning, earn a suspension status and are no longer eligible to receive financial aid for a future semester. A student may re-establish eligibility by meeting SAP Standards while paying on their own. The student has the right to file a SAP appeal if the student believes special circumstances prevented them from meeting the grade and completion standards. The SAP appeal is a written request (via Student eForms) asking to reinstate financial aid eligibility.

Note: Please refer to the following Google document for examples of special challenging circumstances and suggested documentation-  Challenging Circumstances.docx

SAP Appeal Process

1. The student is notified via NICC email that they are now in SAP suspension and can complete a SAP appeal. It is also viewable in MyCampus > Self Service for Students > Financial Aid.
2. The SAP Appeal Request form is an electronic form located in Student eForms, accessible through the MyCampus student portal. Additional guidance is available online at www.nicc.edu/appeal.
3. A student may appeal the suspension on the basis of personal injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances. The appeal must explain why the student failed to make satisfactory progress and what has changed that will allow the student to make satisfactory progress at the next evaluation. Students are recommended to provide documentation that supports the special circumstances. If documentation cannot be provided the student will need to explain why.
4. Third and all subsequent appeals require documentation of any special circumstances.

5. The SAP appeal is reviewed by a committee whose decision is final and cannot be appealed. Students will be notified of the decision via their NICC email account within 14 days. SAP status is also viewable via MyCampus > Self Service for Students > Financial Aid.

There are three potential outcomes for an appeal:

- Appeal is approved for probation.
- Appeal is approved for an academic plan.
- Appeal is denied.

Note: second and subsequent appeals require new circumstances. ie. working too many hours which interfered with time to complete coursework can not be used twice as a reason for not making SAP.

Note: appeals submitted after day ten of the semester start date are not allowed for that semester unless circumstances beyond the student's control prevented them from submitting on time.

PROBATION STATUS

Students who were first placed on SAP suspension, appealed their suspension status, and had their appeal approved, may be placed on probation for one term if the Financial Aid Office determines the student should be able to mathematically meet SAP standards by the end of the next term. This student will not be required to complete an academic plan but will have their SAP reviewed at the end of the next term. Students who do not meet SAP standards at the end of this probation period will be moved back to suspended status.

FINANCIAL AID ACADEMIC PLAN

A student who was placed on financial aid suspension, appealed their suspension status, had their appeal approved will be required to complete an academic plan in Student Eforms if not put on probation.

The purpose of an academic plan is for students to reflect on their past academic performance and formulate a plan to ensure future success in meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards. The academic plan asks students to reflect on their goals and motivations, areas of improvement and strengths, academic resources, and potential barriers. The plan is reviewed with an academic or financial aid advisor to complete the process.

The academic plan will have specific requirements that the student will have to successfully complete by the end of the semester in order to remain eligible to continue receiving financial aid. Minimum academic plan standards include a semester GPA of 2.0 and a completion status of 67%. Academic plans for some students may deem more stringent requirements in order to move towards satisfactory academic progress standards.

The academic plan is evaluated and reviewed at the end of each semester. If requirements are met, the academic plan is renewed and will continue on into the next semester. While on the academic plan the student may meet SAP at a later evaluation and have their status returned to satisfactory, no longer requiring to be on

an academic plan. If the requirements of the academic plan are not met, the student will be placed on suspension for the following semester and will not be eligible to receive financial aid. A new SAP appeal must be submitted to try to regain eligibility.

Note: Revisions to academic plans during a semester are managed by the Financial Aid Office on a case by case basis.

DENIED APPEAL - REESTABLISHING AID ELIGIBILITY

If an appeal is not approved, the student will not be eligible to receive financial aid. Students may re-establish eligibility by meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards on their own for a future evaluation *without the benefit of federal aid*. A student may also submit a new appeal but only after demonstrating success.

Academic success may include but is not limited to:

- completing a minimum of at least three credits that are required for their program with a minimum 2.0 GPA and paying for said coursework on their own at NICC.
- successfully completing a course through NICC Business Community Solutions.
- completing a minimum of at least three credits with a minimum 2.0 GPA at another institution. These completed credits do not have to be transferred back to NICC or connected to the student's active program at NICC.
- refraining from enrollment at NICC for at least three years and explaining how the student's situation has changed in a way that will ensure academic success. This process will include completion of the SAP appeal request eform and may also include a personal interview with an academic or financial aid advisor.

Note: not enrolling for courses for one semester after a denied appeal does not demonstrate success and a new appeal will not be accepted.