Keeping Up With Satisfactory Academic Progress

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Satisfactory Academic Progress

• Schools must have reasonable standards for measuring a student’s satisfactory academic progress toward the degree or certificate
• A reasonable standard is in accordance with updated regulatory section 668.34

Reasonable SAP Policy

• At least as strict as policy applied to non-Title IV recipients
• Consistent application to all students within categories of students
  - Full-time or part-time
  - Undergraduate or graduate students
  - Educational program
SAP Continuing Requirements

• Continuing requirements
  - At least as strict as policy for non-Title IV recipients
  - Provide consistent application to all students within categories of students
  - Monitored at least annually
  - Description of effects of course incompletes, withdrawals, repeated courses
  - Maximum time frame

SAP Regulatory Changes

• Changed or new requirements
  - Specific GPA requirement
  - Pace requirement
  - Treatment of transfer credits
  - Financial aid warning definition
  - Financial aid probation definition
  - Options for schools that monitor progress each payment period

How Often is SAP Evaluated?

• Frequency of evaluation determines options
  - For programs of study that are one academic year or less in length, school must evaluate SAP at end of each payment period
  - For programs of study longer than one academic year
    - School must evaluate at least annually to correspond with end of a payment period
    - School may evaluate at end of each payment period
SAP Evaluations

- Each official evaluation must include evaluation of GPA and pace
- Warning and probation statuses only last for one payment period, no matter how frequently SAP is evaluated
- “Warning” and “probation” must have the same definitions as described in regulation
- Evaluations must be at end of payment period no matter how often progress is monitored
  - Clock hour schools – see Electronic Announcement June 6, 2011

Clock Hour Evaluation Points

- Schools may monitor progress by selecting 1 of 3 options for all students in a program
  1. At the point where the student’s scheduled clock hours for the payment period have elapsed, regardless of whether the student attended them
  2. At the point when the student has attended the scheduled clock hours
  3. At the point when the student successfully completes the scheduled clock hours for that payment period
- See Program Integrity SAP Q&A R-Q7

SAP Policy Requirements

- Must specify that if a student is not meeting the standards he or she is not eligible to receive Title IV Aid
- Warning and probation statuses must be described if included in school’s policy
- Students must be notified of determinations that impact their eligibility for Title IV
SAP Policy Requirements

- SAP policy required elements include:
  - Measurement of student’s progress at each official evaluation point
    - GPA that a student must achieve at each evaluation
    - Pace of progression to ensure completion within the maximum time frame

SAP Policy Requirements

- SAP policy must describe how student’s GPA and pace of completion are affected by:
  - Incompletes
  - Withdrawals
  - Repetitions
  - Transfer of credit from other institutions
- Accepted transfer credits count as both attempted and completed hours

GPA Requirement

- Specify GPA required at each evaluation point
- If GPA not appropriate, standard must be a comparable assessment measured against a norm
- For programs longer than two academic years, “C” average or equivalent required at end of second year, or academic standing consistent with the institution’s requirements for graduation
Pace Requirement

- Replaces quantitative component
- Policy specifies the pace at which a student must complete in order to complete within maximum time to complete
- Pace calculation specified in regulation

Cumulative hours completed
Cumulative hours attempted

Maximum Time Frame

- For undergraduate programs, must be no longer than 150% of published length of educational program
  - For credit hour programs, as measured in credit hours attempted
  - For clock hour programs, as measured in cumulative clock hours required to complete and expressed in calendar time
- For graduate programs of study, school defines the maximum based upon length of program

Credit Hour Example

- BA requires 120 credits for graduation
- Maximum Time Frame = 150% X 120 = 180 credits
- Pace calculation
  - 120/180 = 67% (also 100/150 = 67%)
  - Student earning 67% of credits attempted is on pace to complete the program within the maximum time frame
  - Applicable at any enrollment status
Credit Hour Example

- BA requires 120 credits for graduation
- Maximum Time Frame = 125% X 120 = 150 credits
- Pace calculation
  - 120/150 = 80% (also 100/125 = 80%)
  - Student earning 80% of credits attempted is on pace to complete the program within the maximum time frame
  - Applicable at any enrollment status

Clock Hour Example

- Program is 1,200 clock hours
- Students attend 30 hours per week
- Program scheduled to last 40 weeks
- 40 X 150% = 60 weeks maximum time frame
  - A student must complete 20 hours per week in order to complete 1,200 hours in 60 weeks

Clock Hour Pace Example

- 1,200 clock hour program scheduled for 40 weeks of instructional time
- Student attends 30 hours per week
- Maximum time frame is 60 weeks
  - 40 X 150% = 60
- Pace calculation
  - 40/60 = 67% (also 100/150 = 67%)
Clock Hour Pace Example

- School evaluates SAP based on successfully completed hours
- When 450 hours completed, 600 hours were scheduled
  - 450 hours/600 hours = 67%
  - 15 weeks/20 weeks = 67%

Clock Hour Pace Example

- School evaluates SAP based on scheduled hours
- When 450 hours scheduled, student has completed 300 hours
  - 300 hours/450 hours = 67%
  - 10 weeks/15 weeks = 67%

Implementation Issues

- Will you have fixed or graduated standards?
  - Fixed for one, graduated for the other? Both the same?
- How will you treat course incompletes, withdrawals and repetitions?
- How will you treat transfer credits?
- How will you treat remedial courses?
- How will you treat changes of major or program?
  Will these be limited?
Evaluations by Payment Period

• Student is in compliance with SAP standards
• Student is not in compliance with SAP standards
  - Financial Aid Warning
  - Financial Aid Probation
    • Requires student appeal
    • Academic Plan
  - Warning and probation statuses are optional, as is use of academic plan

Financial Aid Warning

• Status only available to students at schools that monitor progress at the end of each payment period
• Student may receive Title IV aid for one additional payment period
• Status may be assigned without student action or appeal
• Status is optional

After Financial Aid Warning

• Student meets SAP standards and regains eligibility
• Student does not meet SAP standards
  - Student successfully appeals and is placed on probation or an academic plan
  - Student does not appeal, or appeal is denied and school explains how student can regain eligibility
Annual Evaluations

- Financial Aid Warning status not available
- Probation requirements same as schools that evaluate at each payment period
- Student not making progress is not eligible for further Title IV assistance, unless student successfully appeals

SAP Appeal

- Process by which a student who is not meeting SAP standards appeals for reconsideration of eligibility for Title IV aid
  - Policy must describe conditions under which a student may file an appeal
  - Appeal must include information from student explaining why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at next evaluation point
- Appeal process is optional

SAP Appeal Approval

- School determines that student will be able to make SAP standards by end of next payment period
  OR
- Student is placed on an academic plan that will ensure the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time
Financial Aid Probation

- Status available for a student not making progress who has appealed and had aid eligibility reinstated
- Student may receive aid for one additional payment period
- School may require student action while on probation
- Possible use of academic plan

After Financial Aid Probation

- Student meets SAP standards and regains aid eligibility
- Student does not meet standards
  - Student successfully appeals and is placed on an academic plan
  - Student does not appeal, or appeal is denied and school explains how student can regain eligibility

Academic Plan

- Alternative to probation – available to all schools
- A plan that, if followed by the student, specifies a point in time at which the student will be able to meet the institution’s SAP standards
- Student on plan is evaluated against the plan requirements, not regular SAP standards
Academic Plan Example

- School has 67% pace requirement, students can only attempt 12 credits per term
- Student completes:
  - Term 1 – 9 of 12 = 75% completion rate
  - Term 2 – 0 of 12 = 9 of 24 = 37.5% completion rate
- Policy for term 3 requires 25 completed credits (67% of 36 is 24.12)
  - If student attempts and completes 12, he could only complete 21 credits (9 + 12) and cannot meet the standard by the end of term 3

Academic Plan Example

- Academic plan for this student
  - Term 3 – plan requires 21 credits (9 + 12 = 21)
  - Term 4 – plan requires 33 credits (21 + 12 = 33)
- Regular SAP policy requires 33 credits after term 4
  - (48X67%=32.16, or 33)
- Student’s plan brings student into compliance with SAP standards after term 4

Implementation Issues - Appeals

- Will your policy permit appeals?
  - How many?
- Who will review appeals?
- Will your policy permit academic plans?
- Who will develop academic plans? Approve? Monitor?
SAP Notifications

- Institution must notify student of results of SAP review that impacts the student’s eligibility for Title IV aid
- If institution has appeal process, must describe the specific elements required to appeal SAP
  - May specify how often and how many appeals are allowed
- In no appeal process, description of how student may re-establish eligibility for Title IV aid

SAP Policy Resources

- FSA Assessments
- Program Integrity Q&A – SAP
Questions?

Thanks!

Training Evaluation

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- Go to https://s.zoomerang.com/s/ByronScott
- Evaluation form is specific to Byron Scott
- Feedback is a tool to help us improve our training and to listen to our customers
- Additional concerns about training can be directed to joann.borel@ed.gov

Contact Information

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