

Academic Student Policies

3.12 Satisfactory Academic Progress

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – February 28, 2013

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – March 10, 2016

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – August 3, 2016

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – May 5, 2017

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – March 28, 2018

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – May 26, 2021

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – April 26, 2023

Policy approved by the Board of Trustees – June 25, 2025

Federal and state regulations governing student financial aid mandates that institutions of higher education establish standards of “Satisfactory Academic Progress” (SAP) for students receiving federal financial aid. These standards apply to all Federal Title IV aid programs. The Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards apply to all students seeking federal Title IV financial aid, regardless of whether a student has received Title IV financial aid in the past. Federal regulations require that all students receiving federal financial aid make continued progress in their educational programs and toward their educational goals. (CFR 34 668.34).

Federal financial aid programs include:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant
- Federal TEACH Grant
- Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Direct Student Loans (including Parent Loans)
- Federal Work Study

Failure to meet SAP Requirements may also affect your eligibility for:

- State Financial Aid Programs
- VA Educational Benefits
- Westmoreland County Community College Scholarships
- Scholarships awarded by entities outside of the school with SAP requirements for award eligibility
- Other financial assistance programs awarded by Westmoreland County Community College

IMPORTANT: Students may be academically eligible to continue to take courses at Westmoreland, but be ineligible for federal financial aid. Students who regain financial aid eligibility will not be able to receive financial aid for any previous term during which they were ineligible for aid.

Program of Study

A student must declare an eligible program of study to be eligible to receive federal financial aid.

Process of Determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

In accordance with the Higher Education Act (HEA) and related regulations, the Financial Aid Office will monitor SAP after grades are posted at the end of each term (fall, spring, and summer).

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards:

- **Qualitative Standard** (Cumulative Grade Point Average) –A student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0. Cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the total credit hours attempted for which the student received grades. Credit hours attempted will be cumulative and will include all hours for which the student was enrolled as of the census date, defined as the day following the last day for registration and payment as outlined in the College catalog, of each academic term, or for which the student received a grade.
- **Quantitative Standard** (Completion Rate) –A student must maintain a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67%. A student's completion rate can be calculated by dividing the number of credit hours completed by the number of credit hours attempted. Transfer credits should count as both attempted and completed credits.
- **Maximum Timeframe** –A student must successfully complete the program of study within its timeframe. Federal regulations specify that the timeframe may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program. Students fail the maximum timeframe measure at the point at which it is determined that it is not possible for them to complete their program within the maximum timeframe, not at the point they actually reach the maximum timeframe. However, students who are not meeting the Maximum Timeframe criteria can submit an appeal to request their eligibility be extended if there are extenuating circumstances.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Review

Students are evaluated at the end of each academic term (fall, spring and summer). A student with a status of Unsatisfactory may either appeal to have their financial aid eligibility reinstated, or may notify the Financial Aid Office when they are meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. The appeal procedure is detailed in the College catalog. The review process will assign a status for each student of:

- **SATISFACTORY:** Student has met progress standards and is eligible for aid for the following semester or academic year.
- **WARNING:** Student has not met progress standards, but may continue receiving federal aid. Student is encouraged to seek tutoring to assist with the improvement of his/her GPA and progress. A student in the 'Warning' category is calculated based on cumulative evaluation through prior term enrollment.

- **UNSATISFACTORY:** Students who fail to meet the conditions of a Warning, which are to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67%, will be placed on Unsatisfactory. Students who are placed on Unsatisfactory forfeit their financial aid.
- **MAXIMUM TIME-FRAME:** A student is no longer eligible to receive Federal or State financial aid due to having exceeded the maximum allowed credits for earning his/her program of study. Students submitting a Maximum Time Frame Appeal must include an Academic Plan reflecting the date for completion of their program of study. The advisor or counselor must sign the academic plan prior to submittal.
- **PROBATION:** Probation occurs when students on Unsatisfactory or Maximum Time Frame have had their SAP appeal and Academic Plan approved by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal's Committee for financial aid reinstatement. Students in the status of probation will have their financial aid eligibility reinstated for one more semester. A student on probation may not receive aid for the subsequent payment period unless:
 - The student is now meeting the financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy at the end of the probation period (semester); or
 - The student adheres to the financial aid student academic plan.
- **CONTINUED PROBATION:** Students may remain on Continued Probation status for as long as needed to raise their cumulative GPA above a 2.0 as long as they maintain a 2.3 term GPA each semester and complete at least 6 credit hours in the Fall and Spring, and 3 credit hours in the Summer. Students with a completion rate of less than 67%, must complete all attempted classes taken during the probation period to remain on continued probation. That means that each continued probation student would have to make a 2.3 GPA in the classes they are currently enrolled in and not withdraw or make failing grades. The student will be cleared from probation when their cumulative GPA reaches a 2.0 or higher and/or their completion rate is 67%. Student will be required to submit an appeal request and be approved for each term of continued probation.
- **DENIED:** If the appeal is denied by the SAP Appeal's Committee, no further financial aid will be awarded to the student until the conditions of the SAP policy have been met. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment. The student may reapply for appeal in subsequent terms if they do not regain satisfactory academic progress after one term after being denied an appeal.

Appeal/Review Deadlines

Students wishing to appeal their SAP status of 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Max Timeframe' must submit their SAP appeal form with relevant supporting documentation to the Office of Financial Aid no later than the deadlines posted on the website for each term. Please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Procedures on the www.westmoreland.edu website.

Regaining Eligibility

If a student fails to meet the satisfactory academic progress standards, but meets the standards later at some point, the student can once again be eligible to receive federal Title IV aid. In such cases, financial aid eligibility will begin with the academic semester after which the student re-establishes progress. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Westmoreland Financial Aid Office after completing coursework that allows the student to regain eligibility for financial aid. Students cannot regain eligibility while a term for which they were not previously eligible is still in session. Students must complete the term and regain satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for federal Title IV aid for the next term.

Developmental Coursework

Developmental credits for which students receive a letter grade (not pass/fail) are calculated in Satisfactory Academic Progress for GPA. Developmental credits are also counted towards credits attempted, but are not included in the Maximum Time Frame calculation. Note: Maximum of 30 attempted Developmental credits are funded with federal financial aid. This restriction holds for all the federal grants and loans described on this site. Students can, however, still receive federal financial aid payments for credit bearing course work, subject to your ability to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

Repeated Courses

All Repeated courses will be counted in the total number of attempted credits for SAP calculation. The school will use the most recent letter grade earned for the course towards the GPA calculation for SAP. A student who passes a course (with a letter grade of D or higher, may retake the class one additional time and receive financial aid for that course. W grades do not count against total number of retakes

Incompletes

Courses with an "I" (incomplete) will be considered as courses attempted, but not successfully completed. Although Westmoreland's academic policy provides students up to an additional semester to complete an incomplete (I) grade, one or more "I" grades can adversely affect the Minimum 67% Pace of Completion component of the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy. The incomplete automatically changes to an F grade if work is not completed by the date specified by the instructor, not to exceed one semester. At the end of the following semester, whatever grade is earned for the incomplete course will be used in the SAP calculation for that term. Previous SAP calculations will not be adjusted for an "I" grade that has been converted after the calculation was completed unless the "I" grade was originally posted in error.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credits accepted by Westmoreland County Community College will be included in overall attempted credits, but not the GPA calculation. Attempted credits will be used in the calculation of Maximum Time Frame and Completion rate.

Change in Program

A change of program does **not** “reset” SAP. All attempted and completed credits are used when calculating GPA, Completion Rate, and Maximum Time Frame. Students must make sure that they have their correct program of study “active” on their school record and must only take coursework that is required to complete that program of study. SAP evaluation is completed on the most recently added, highest level, “active” program on a student’s record.

Self-Paid Enrollment

All periods of enrollment at Westmoreland must be included when calculating SAP regardless of whether or not federal financial aid was previously received.

Notification

Students will be notified via the student’s Westmoreland email account and their current SAP Status will be listed on the Student’s Portal. It is also the responsibility of the student to be aware of these guidelines and his/her academic progress in his/her educational program.

State Grant Academic Progress

Academic progress requirements for state grant programs can vary from the federal academic progress policy. Academic progress requirements for the Pennsylvania State Grant are communicated directly to recipients with their state grant notification by PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency); questions about appeals for Pennsylvania State Grant eligibility must be directed to PHEAA at 1-800-692-7392 or www.pheaa.org.