Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Federal regulations require that all students receiving Federal Financial Aid make continued progress in their educational programs and toward their educational goals. This requirement is called Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and will be monitored by the Financial Aid Office. Students must meet all standards to continue to receive Federal Financial Aid. In accordance with these regulations the Financial Aid Office will check SAP at the end of each term (fall, spring, and summer).

Federal Financial Aid programs include:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Direct Student Loans (including Parent Loans)
- Federal Work Study

Institutional Financial Aid programs that follow this policy include:

- Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) Scholarships
- MOE Work Study
- Tuition Remission
- Other financial assistance programs awarded by the College (WCCC)

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards

The Department of Education has established the following three (3) standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to be measured:

1. GPA

Students must meet minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements based on the total number of credits attempted. In order to continue to receive Federal Financial Aid, GPA requirements are:

- Freshman (0 – 24 attempted credits): 1.70
- Sophomore (25+ attempted credits): 2.00

2. Completion Rate

Students who are maintaining a high GPA by withdrawing from courses they attempt would meet the GPA standard, but would not be progressing satisfactorily toward graduation. Therefore, a measurement must be applied to determine the percentage of credits completed versus those attempted.

In order to continue to receive Federal Financial Aid students must:

- Successfully complete a minimum of 70% of all attempted credits
3. Maximum Time Frame

In order to continue to receive Federal Financial Aid students must:

- Complete a program of study within 150% of the credits required to graduate

Students must complete all degree requirements within the following guidelines:

- Certificate Program: 30 credits
- Diploma Program: 60 credits
- Associates Degree Program: 90 credits

A student who has exceeded these limits is no longer eligible for Federal Financial Aid.

Remedial/Developmental Classes

- GPA: Remedial/developmental credits do not count toward degree completion and, therefore, are not included in the GPA calculation
- Completion Rate: All attempted remedial/developmental credits count toward attempted credits and earned credits
- Maximum Time Frame: All attempted remedial/developmental credits count toward Maximum Time Frame

Repeat Classes

Financial aid may be used to pay for repeated classes; however, only once for a previously passed class (“passed class” is a grade of “D” or better)

- GPA: The new grade replaces the old grade in the GPA calculation
- Completion Rate: All credits count toward attempted credits, but only the repeat credits count as earned credits
- Maximum Time Frame: All attempted repeat credits count toward Maximum Time Frame

F or I Grades

- GPA: F or I grades count as 0 points earned
- Completion Rate: All credits count toward attempted credits, but F or I grades do not count as earned credits
- Maximum Time Frame: All F or I grades count as attempted credits toward Maximum Time Frame

Withdraw from a Class

- GPA: W grades are not included in the GPA calculation
- Completion Rate: All W grades count toward attempted credits, but W grades do not count as earned credits
- Maximum Time Frame: All W grades count as attempted credits toward Maximum Time Frame
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Transfer in Credits

- **GPA**: Transfer credits are not included in the GPA calculation; however, they are used to determine freshman/sophomore status
- **Completion Rate**: All transfer credits accepted by the School count toward attempted credits and earned credits
- **Maximum Time Frame**: All transfer credits accepted by the School count toward Maximum Time Frame

Change of Program

A change of program does **not** “reset” SAP. **All** attempted and earned credits are used when calculating GPA, Completion Rate, and Maximum Time Frame

Self-Paid Enrollment

All periods of enrollment at Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) must be included when calculating SAP regardless of whether or not Federal Financial Aid was previously received.

Notification

Students who fail any of these tests for academic progress will be notified by e-mail; however, it is also the student’s responsibility to be aware of these guidelines and his/her academic progress in his/her educational program. Non-receipt of an e-mail does not alter a student’s status.

Failure to Make SAP

Students who fail to make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) for the **first** time will be placed in Warning Status for the next semester they attend and will be eligible for Federal Financial Aid during this period. Progress will be reviewed after grades post at the end of that term. If they make SAP after the Warning Status semester, Satisfactory Status will be restored and Federal Financial Aid will continue. Warning Status is issued **one time only**. If students fail to make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) a **second** time, they will be placed in Suspension Status and Federal Financial Aid will be denied.

Students who fail to make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) after their **first** Warning Status semester will be placed in Suspension Status and Federal Financial Aid will be denied.

Right to Appeal

If a student has experienced an **extenuating circumstance** that he/she feels has had an impact on his/her ability to make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate), the student has a **single opportunity during his/her time at the College** to file an appeal with the Financial Aid Office. Extenuating circumstances could include, but are not limited to: death of an immediate family member; injury or illness of student; or personal tragedy or event. Supporting documentation that confirms your situation is **required**.
Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeal (GPA/Completion Rate)

A completed Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeal Form and Satisfactory Academic Progress Plan of Action Form must be submitted along with documentation supporting the significant event or extenuating circumstance. IMPORTANT: Incomplete appeal packets will be rejected and returned to the student. The two (2) appeal forms with instructions are available on the College website at www.wccc.edu under “Quick Links”, “Financial Aid”, and “Standards of Academic Progress”. Look for “Academic Progress Appeal Form”. The complete appeal packet will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee prior to the beginning of each term (fall - in August; spring – in January; and summer – in May). Students will receive the Committee’s decision by e-mail before classes start. All Committee decisions are final.

Submission of the appeal packet does NOT guarantee that a student will be eligible for Federal Financial Aid. If the student decides not to attend WCCC due to his/her current ineligibility for Federal Financial Aid, he/she should officially drop scheduled classes prior to the start of the semester to avoid being charged the tuition and fees.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed in Probation Status and may continue to receive Federal Financial Aid for that approved semester. Progress will be reviewed after grades post at the end of that term. If the student makes SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) after the Probation Status semester, Satisfactory Status will be restored and Federal Financial Aid will continue. Suspension Status is issued one time only. If the student fails to make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) a second time, he/she will be placed in Termination Status and be ineligible for Federal Financial Aid until he/she regains SAP at his/her own expense. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment.

If the student does not make SAP (GPA/Completion Rate) after the Probation Status semester, the student will be placed in Termination Status. He/she will be ineligible for Federal Financial Aid until he/she regains SAP at his/her own expense. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment.

If the appeal is denied, the student will be placed in Termination Status and will be ineligible for Federal Financial Aid until he/she regains SAP at his/her own expense. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment.

Financial Aid Maximum Time Frame Completion Plan Appeal

A completed Financial Aid Maximum Time Frame Completion Plan Appeal Form and Maximum Time Frame Academic Plan must be submitted. IMPORTANT: Incomplete appeal packets will be rejected and returned to the student. The two (2) appeal forms with instructions are available on the College website at www.wccc.edu under “Quick Links”, “Financial Aid”, and “Standards of Academic Progress”. Look for “Max Time Frame Appeal Form”. The complete appeal packet will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee prior to the beginning of each term (fall - in
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August; spring – in January; and summer – in May). Students will receive the Committee’s decision by e-mail before classes start. All Committee decisions are final.

Submission of the appeal packet does NOT guarantee that a student will be eligible for Federal Financial Aid. If the student decides not to attend WCCC due to his/her current ineligibility for Federal Financial Aid, he/she should officially drop scheduled classes prior to the start of the semester to avoid being charged the tuition and fees.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed in Probation Status and may continue to receive Federal Financial Aid for that approved semester. Progress will be reviewed after grades post at the end of that term. If the student has demonstrated satisfactory academic progress (“C” or better in all classes), Probation Status and Federal Financial Aid will continue as long the student meets the conditions of his/her appeal and abides by his/her academic plan. If the student does not demonstrate satisfactory academic progress (“C” or better all classes), does meet the conditions of his/her appeal, or does not abide by his/her academic plan, the student will be placed in Termination Status and Federal Financial Aid will be denied.

If the appeal is denied, the student will be placed in Termination Status and is no longer eligible for Federal Financial Aid at Westmoreland County Community College. He/she may continue to attend the College at his/her own expense. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment.

Termination Status

A student who has been placed in Termination Status will be ineligible for any Federal Financial Aid. He/she may enroll in future semesters at WCCC; however, it will be his/her responsibility to pay the required bill at his/her own expense. The student will be responsible for the payment of all tuition, fees, book charges, and any other costs associated with enrollment.

If a student in Termination Status following a Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeal (GPA/Completion Rate) enrolls at Westmoreland County Community College and successfully completes a minimum of six (6) credits with a “C” or better at his/her own expense, he/she may request a one-time review of his/her academic progress to possibly have Federal Financial Aid reinstated. The student is responsible for contacting the Financial Aid Office to request the review. These requests will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeal Committee prior to the beginning of each term (fall - in August; spring - in January; and summer - in May). All Committee decisions are final.

A student in Termination Status following a Financial Aid Maximum Time Frame Appeal is no longer eligible for Federal Financial Aid at Westmoreland County Community College.
Appeal/Review Deadlines

Deadlines for submitting all financial aid appeal packets and termination review request packets to the Financial Aid Office have been established to provide enough time for the Financial Aid Appeal Committee meeting prior to the beginning of each term. Appeal packets **must** be received in the Financial Aid Office by the following term deadlines:

- **Fall** 8:00 AM on August 1st (not enrolled summer)
  8:00 AM on August 15th (enrolled summer)
- **Spring** 8:00 AM on January 1st
- **Summer** 8:00 AM on May 15th

Documents received after these deadlines may have delayed processing or could be held until the next semester for review. **IMPORTANT:** Incomplete appeal packets will be rejected and returned to the student. If these packets are not completed and re-submitted to the Financial Aid Office by these deadlines, they may have delayed processing or could be held until the next semester for review. Consequences of missing these deadlines include, but are not limited to: being deleted from classes; or delayed availability of bookstore charges.

Other Consequences of Withdrawing from Classes

There are additional consequences students should be aware of before they withdraw from classes:

- PHEAA State Grant may be cancelled for upcoming semesters
- If student drops below 6 credits, work-study position will be terminated
- If student **completely withdraws**, he/she may have to repay some of the financial aid funds received for that term

Loan Borrowers should note that dropping below **6 credits** will:

- Send a loan into its “grace period” or repayment, if the grace period has already been used
- Cancel any subsequent loan disbursements

**IMPORTANT:** Students may be academically eligible to continue to take courses at WCCC, but be ineligible for Federal Financial Aid.