

# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

Federal regulations require that Rhodes State College develop and enforce standards of satisfactory academic progress prior to awarding students any federal financial assistance (HEA Sec. 484(c) [34 CFR 668.16(e), 668.32(f), 68.34]). A SAP review process evaluates whether a student is "making measurable progress toward completion of their course of study and eligible to continue receiving federal assistance." All credit hours attempted, from a student's first term of enrollment at Rhodes State College, must be included in the SAP review process.

If a student is not in compliance with the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards, they are ineligible to receive the following:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Direct PLUS Loans
- Federal Work-Study
- Student Worker Wages

A student may still receive various scholarships if he/she meets the eligibility and requirements for such scholarship awards.

## Notification of Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student who fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress during a term will receive a warning status letter. The letter informs the students that failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress in any subsequent term will result in the suspension of federal aid. If, after one term of warning status, the student still has not corrected the SAP deficiencies, a suspension letter will be mailed informing the student that his/her financial aid has been suspended.

## Repeating Courses

The Department of Education will allow for repeating coursework previously taken in a program. Students CAN receive financial aid:

- To repeat a course that has already been passed (D- or higher) only one additional time. Any repeated attempts after that will not be eligible for financial aid. Note that this applies even if you earn a failing grade (E) or withdraw (W) during the second attempt.
- As many times as necessary to repeat a course in which the only previous grade earned has been a failing grade (E).

## Auditing

Prior to the 15th day of the term, audited hours will not receive federal financial aid. After the 15th day of the term, students who change to an audit will be subject to a return of Title IV Funds. Auditing a course (s) is not considered successful completion of the course(s) and may affect a student's financial aid status.

## Criteria for Determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

All Rhodes State College student academic records are reviewed to verify that a student is meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

standards. This includes all transfer credit hours being accepted by Rhodes, developmental courses, and English as a Second Language course taken at Rhodes State College. Those students who are receiving federal student aid are required to maintain SAP standards to remain eligible for federal aid. Please be aware that being eligible to enroll in classes does not mean that the student has an eligible SAP status and can be awarded federal student aid.

The SAP status is reviewed after each semester's grades are posted. All Rhodes State College student records will be reviewed, even if the student did not receive financial aid during their periods of enrollment at Rhodes.

Once the SAP status is determined, students will receive notification via their Rhodes State College email indicating if they are not meeting the SAP requirements.

The criteria used in determining student academic progress at Rhodes State College include:

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Credit Hours Attempted/Completed (Percent of Completion Rate)
- Maximum Timeframe/Credit Hours for Program Completion

### A. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement Explained

To receive federal student aid (Title IV) a student must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA based on their program of study. Below is a list of programs and the minimum GPA required to maintain SAP.

Program of Study	Minimum GPA
Nursing	2.5
All Other Programs	2.0

A student will be placed on warning status when he/she drops below the required Minimum Cumulative GPA. Failure to achieve Minimum Cumulative GPA requirements for two consecutive terms will result in the suspension of all federal financial aid.

### B. Credit Hours Attempted/Completed Explained

To receive federal student aid (Title IV), students must successfully complete at least 67% of all credit hours attempted each term. Financial aid hours are set on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the semester, and all attempted hours after that time will be calculated in the completion rate. An unsuccessful completion of a course is one that has been dropped, audited, or ultimately failed with a grade of "E." To calculate your completion rate, you will divide your successfully completed hours by the total number of credit hours attempted. Financial Aid does not round percentages (i.e., 66.67% does not round to 67%).

Students will be placed on warning status the first term in which their cumulative completion rate drops below the required 67%. Failure to meet the minimum completion rate in two consecutive terms will result in the suspension of all federal financial aid. Successful completion is defined as receiving a letter grade "D" or better or an "S."

For example, the student registers for 12 credit hours in the Fall term and passes only 8 hours, he/she would be placed on warning status for the Spring term as the student did not successfully complete at least 67% of their course work (8 passed hours / 12 registered hours = 66.67%). Therefore, he/she must achieve the minimum 67% completion rate for their Spring term. If the student does not successfully complete at least 67% of registered credit hours for the Spring term, their federal financial aid will be suspended for the next term, he/she enrolls.

## C. Maximum Time/Credit Hours for Program Completion Explained

Students must complete the degree requirements within 150% of the required hours for their degree program. Students lose eligibility for future awards after the term in which they exceed the maximum hours. All hours attempted at Rhodes State (not just for your current program), and any transfer credits from other institutions are considered when determining financial aid eligibility; whether or not financial aid was received.

To determine the maximum allowable hours for a specific program of study (major), refer to the Rhodes State College Catalog, note the total hours required for the program, and multiply that figure by 1.5.

For example, if a student is enrolled in a program that requires 60 credits to graduate, the student cannot attempt more than 90 credits, or his/her financial aid will be suspended.

An attempted credit includes all credits that you are enrolled in after the add/drop deadline for the course and all courses that appear on your transcript. These may include courses for which you earn a regular letter grade, a "W" to show withdrawal, and pass/no pass grades. Regardless of where the hours were attempted (transfers from other institutions, or at Rhodes State College), Rhodes State College Satisfactory Academic Progress policy will apply. These hours include developmental courses, repeated courses, transfer courses, and courses from which a student withdraws. Students transferring to Rhodes State will have their eligibility determined after all transfer credits have been applied to their academic record.

### Options for Reinstatement of Financial Aid After Suspension

1. If the failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) was due to extenuating circumstances, students will need to submit the following documentation to the Financial Aid Office:
  - A completed SAP Appeal Form. (found online or in the Financial Aid Office)
  - A typed signed letter detailing the extenuating circumstances that caused you to unsuccessfully complete your classes. In addition, describe what has changed for you to be successful going forward.
  - Documentation showing the circumstances for which the student failed to meet the requirements.
  - Meet with your academic advisor to determine if you can meet SAP within one semester. If it is determined that you cannot, you must submit an Educational Planning Form with your appeal documentation. The Educational Planning Form will list all the courses you need to bring yourself to good standing and/or are needed to graduate with your degree.
1. If the failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) was not due to extenuating circumstances:
  - Successfully complete a minimum of three (3) credit hours required within your academic major. All courses for which you are registered must be successfully completed.
  - Achieve a term GPA of 2.0 without the use of federal financial aid funds and bring cumulative GPA to minimum standards set forth by your program.

Both of the options mentioned above must meet the following conditions:

- Pass the class(es) with a minimum GPA of 2.0 for the term.
- Pay your bill in full by the end of the term without the use of federal funds. (Out of pocket, scholarships, payment plan, etc.)
- Maintain a cumulative GPA that meets your program GPA requirement.
- Submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Review Request Due to Student Achieving SAP without Title IV form (found in the Financial Aid Office) with a typed and signed letter stating the courses the student has taken and passed to determine if aid will or will not be restored.

**Approval of Appeal:** If the written appeal is granted, the student's eligibility for federal aid will be restored on probation status until specific requirements of the approved appeal are met.

**Approval of Review Request:** If the Review Request is approved, the student's eligibility for federal aid will be restored in the next semester, the student enrolls.

**Denial of Appeal or Review:** If the appeal is denied, the student may submit additional written documentation, or the student may follow option II as listed above as an alternative to having their federal financial aid restored.

**Denial of Review Request:** If the Review Request is denied, the student's federal aid will not be reinstated for the next semester enrolled. The student may attempt Option II again in the next semester.

With either an approval or denial of the student's SAP appeal or review request, the student will receive written/mailed notification and notification of any requirements that must be met to continue receiving federal student aid.

## D. General Procedures for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeals

1. A student may successfully appeal satisfactory academic progress a maximum of two (2) times while enrolled at Rhodes State College.

Note: Students are only allowed two (2) approved satisfactory academic progress appeals during their enrollment at Rhodes State College. Once these two appeals are met, any subsequent appeal will be denied.

Additionally, if the student will not be able to return to satisfactory standing within one semester, an Educational Planning Form must be created with an academic or faculty advisor and must prove that, if followed, the student will be able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time.

1. The extenuating circumstances listed below will be reviewed as possible causes which may have prevented the student from maintaining satisfactory academic progress, with appropriate documentation:
  - Family difficulties (such as divorce, illness, hospitalizations)
  - Interpersonal problems with friends, roommates, significant others
  - Difficulty balancing school with work, athletics, family responsibilities, etc.
  - Financial difficulties

2. If an appeal without an Educational Plan is approved, the student will be expected to return to satisfactory standing after the semester appeal was granted. If the student is unsuccessful, they will immediately return to Financial Aid Suspension.

If an appeal with an Educational Plan is approved, the student will be expected to follow the Educational Plan exactly in order to continue making progress towards returning to satisfactory standards.

1. Successful completion of course work is defined as a letter grade. Acceptable grades for awarding federal financial aid are listed in the catalog under Registration in the student handbook. Unacceptable grades include: "W," "WP," "WF," "I," "E," "R," (Audit), or "U."
2. The GPA requirement for SAP is determined at the end of each term. Grade changes within a term will not change your SAP status but will determine your status for the next term of attendance.