

Determining Eligibility for Academic and Financial Aid Standing at Laredo College

Student success at Laredo College (LC) is an integral and crucial component of the campus mission. For this reason, policies have been established to help ensure that all students meet academic standards and expectations for success set forth by the institution. Listed below are the Satisfactory Academic Progress policies for determining academic standing and financial aid eligibility. Students must carefully read, understand, and adhere to these policies in order to help them attain their educational goals. The policies and practices presented in this document detail and outline the expectations of successful students at Laredo College.

Satisfactory Academic Progress for determining - Academic Standing

The primary responsibility for acceptable standards of academic student success at LC lies with the student. It is up to him/her to maintain their GPA in accordance with established academic standards. In order for students to be considered to be in good academic standing the following measures must be met. Students attending LC must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 or better to be considered in good academic standing.

Satisfactory Academic Progress for determining - Financial Aid Eligibility

Federal regulations mandate that a student receiving financial assistance under federal Title IV programs must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in his/her course of study regardless of whether or not financial aid is awarded each semester. Students pursuing a certificate or associate degree are responsible for understanding and adhering to the financial aid satisfactory academic progress policy. It is important for all students to understand that the primary financial responsibility for paying for college lies with the parent and the student. All appropriate applications, documentation, and information must be accurate. In the case of a self-supporting student, the primary financial responsibility lies with the student and/or the spouse, if married. Therefore, the purpose in completing the financial aid application process is to determine the expected contribution from income and assets toward the total cost of education by the student, his/her parents or spouse if married.

Mandated by federal regulations for the purposes of receiving student aid, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is measured with the following standards:

Qualitative measure which consists of overall Grade Point Average of at least a 2.0 that includes transfer credits applicable towards the program of study with passing grades.

Quantitative standard is used to accurately measure a student's progress in a program, which has two sub-components listed as follows:

- A.) Minimum percentage of credit hours completed – minimum standard is 67% completion rate of attempted course work each term.
- B.) Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

QUALITATIVE STANDARD OF WORK FOR FINANCIAL AID

Students will be expected to maintain minimum academic standards as outlined in this SAP policy for the purposes of receiving federal financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 or better and successfully complete at least 67% of the course work attempted each term to be considered in good standing for receiving federal student aid. This includes credit hours that transfer to LC for establishing eligibility to receive federal student aid.

QUANTITATIVE STANDARD OF WORK

The quantitative standard is used to accurately measure a student's progress in a given program and thus continue to receive federal student financial aid.

There are two components of the quantitative standard:

Quantitative - PART A - Percentage: 67% completion rate requirement:

Students must complete 67% of the course load that they register for each semester. The chart below shows credit hour totals and the number of credits that must be completed to meet this requirement. Developmental remedial course work will be counted in the 67% calculation after each semester.

Attempted Semester Hours	67 Percentage Rule	Earned Semester Hours Must Be > or =
18 Credit Hours	67 %	12
17 Credit Hours	67%	11
16 Credit Hours	67%	11
15 Credit Hours	67%	10
14 Credit Hours	67%	9
13 Credit Hours	67%	9
12 Credit Hours	67%	8
11 Credit Hours	67%	7
10 Credit Hours	67%	7
9 Credit Hours	67%	6
8 Credit Hours	67%	5
7 Credit Hours	67%	5
6 Credit Hours	67%	4
5 Credit Hours	67%	3
4 Credit Hours	67%	3
3 Credit Hours	67%	2
2 Credit Hours	67%	1
1 Credit Hour	67%	1

Quantitative - PART B - Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

Maximum Time Frame is the pace at which students must progress through their program of study to

ensure that they will graduate within a maximum time frame. Students must complete their program of study within a period no longer than 150% of the published length of the program. MTF is measured by multiplying the total number of program hours by 150%. If a student reaches 150%, and has not completed their program of study, they have reached the Maximum Time Frame and are no longer eligible to receive federal financial aid. For example, a student with a degree plan that requires 60 college credit hours can only access financial funds for up to 150% of the time needed to complete that program. The graph below contains examples of this.

Graduation Requirement Hours	Multiply by	Maximum Time Frame Percentage	Maximum Attempted Hours Permitted
32 Credit Hour Program	X	150%	48
60 Credit Hour Program	X	150%	90
72 Credit Hour Program	X	150%	108

Maximum Time Frame Adjustment for Change of Major

Students who change their major may have credits attempted and grades earned excluded from the Maximum Time Frame calculation if those credit hours do not count toward the new major. Exclusion of credit hours from the Maximum Time Frame Calculation will be allowed once, for change of major for the purposes of receiving federal financial aid. All academic courses where the student earned grades of "F", "W" or "I" will be excluded from the Maximum Time Frame calculation when those courses are between the first major and the second major change. However, these grades cannot be excluded after the second major for the purposes of determining financial aid eligibility. Developmental courses are not calculated into MTF (quantitative measure), and are also excluded from GPA calculation (qualitative measure) for academic and financial aid standing/eligibility. Students who exhaust the Maximum Time Frame (MTF) allowed for a program of study will be placed on financial aid suspension.

A student who successfully appeals a suspension status due to not meeting MTF standards will be placed on financial aid probation, but is still eligible to receive Title IV aid for up to two more semesters.

Student who graduates and returns to LC for a second degree

If a student graduates from LC and re-enrolls at LC to pursue another educational program, all developmental courses and academic courses where the student earned grades of "F", "W", "NC", or "I" will be excluded from the Maximum Time Frame calculation. Classes from the program the student graduated from, which do not count toward graduation for the new program, will be eliminated from the total. The review for a new degree after graduation is limited to one degree plan review per graduation. In other words, students are allowed to do this only once after graduation.

Public Law 112-74 which was amended in the Higher Education Act - section 401(c)(5) reduces the duration of a student's eligibility to receive a Federal Pell Grant from 18 semesters (or its equivalent) to 12 semesters (or its equivalent). This provision applies to all Federal Pell Grant eligible students effective with the 2012-13 award year. The calculation of the duration of a student's eligibility will include all years of the student's receipt of Federal Pell Grant funding.

Evaluation of student grades at LC

- LC will only accept transfer credit hours with passing grades applicable toward a program of study. This includes GPA and hours earned.

- Transfer credit course work and transfer credit GPA will be calculated into the overall GPA for the purposes of determining financial aid eligibility and academic standing. Transfer grades of "A", "B", "C", and "D" will be accepted and calculated into the overall GPA.
- For the purposes of financial aid eligibility, developmental credit hours and developmental course work GPA are not calculated into the GPA but will be counted towards 67% calculation after each semester SAP requirements.
- Grades of "A", "B", "C", "D" and "P" will be considered credit hours attempted and earned.
- Grades of "F", "W", "NP" or "I" will be considered as credit hours attempted towards the 67% rule and MTF rule. Additional, this will be considered as credit hours attempted for the semester, and will be calculate into the overall GPA.
- Students who withdraw from the college must still maintain financial satisfactory academic progress to meet the 67% pace of progress rule, and for the MTF rule.
- There is no specific limitation on the number of times a student may attempt of course under the financial aid satisfactory academic progress policy. All courses attempts, repeated courses, developmental courses, will count when assessing if the student meet the 67% pace of progress and/or the maximum time frame limit.
- A student may be repeatedly paid for repeatedly failing the same course, after the first passes financial aid will only pay for the course once more.
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Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

In addition to the items listed above, students are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress for the purpose of determining financial aid eligibility if the following conditions are met:

Students applying for any degree or certificate must meet the graduation requirements as set forth in the catalog for the academic year (i.e. 2010-2011) in which the student declares a major.

Degree and certificate requirements must be completed within five years of the declared major. If more than five years have elapsed, students must meet the graduation requirements under the most recent catalog.

Students failing to meet LC SAP requirements for student aid purposes are those individuals that fail to maintain a minimum overall GPA (2.0), and a minimum completion rate (67%) as determined by this SAP policy.

Courses listed as Non-Credit Courses, those courses where no academic credit is attained, are not allowable for financial aid purposes. Non-Credit Courses include those courses that are audited, or taken for personal enrichment. Developmental courses at LC are also non-credit based, but 30 hours of developmental courses can be paid for by student financial aid.

A maximum of 30 hours of developmental courses will be allowed for financial aid purposes as long as the developmental courses are required to pursue a degree, program, or certificate. Students are allowed financial aid awards in the form of Pell grants from the federal government for up to twelve full time semesters once they begin their higher education studies. This includes full time semesters of course work beyond the community college. Part time students will be assessed accordingly.

Students applying for admissions to Laredo College without having earned a high school diploma or GED **do not** qualify for student financial aid from the federal government.

Students who start their college education after July 1, 2012 cannot use scores from Ability to Benefit Test (ABT) to meet the financial aid requirements. Only students with a high school diploma or recognized equivalent are eligible for financial aid. Students that are home schooled will qualify for federal financial aid if they have the supporting documentation to classify them as a home schooled student.

When SAP is not met

For those students not meeting LC Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, the following will take place to help ensure that students continue making successful progress towards completion of their academic degree.

Academic Early Alert

In order to continue to receive student financial aid, students must meet the minimum academic requirements outlined in this SAP policy. The minimum standards to determine academic standing is a 2.0 overall GPA. The minimum standard for receiving federal student aid also includes having a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 and also includes a minimum completion rate of 67% of all course work attempted. Students not meeting these two requirements will be at risk of losing their financial aid award(s). For this reason, all students that fall below a 2.4 overall GPA and/or drop below a 67% completion rate will receive an electronic notification at the end of each session alerting the student to the potentially negative impact of not meeting the SAP requirements. The notification will also include information on the impact of falling below acceptable SAP standards along with strategies to help ensure they meet the SAP requirements in order to continue receiving their financial aid awards.

WARNING

At the end of each academic term, the financial aid and academic standing of each student will be verified. Those students receiving financial aid and failing to meet SAP policy for financial aid eligibility will be placed on financial aid ***warning***. Those students not meeting academic SAP standards will also be placed on a ***warning***. Students in this category will receive an official notification at the end of each session via e-mail from LC informing them they are at risk of losing their financial aid award(s) due to not meeting the minimum GPA and/or completion requirements to be in good standing for financial aid purposes. Students placed on warning will be allowed to receive financial aid the following term.

Suspension

Students placed on SAP warning will be allowed to continue to receive financial aid, and be enrolled at LC the following semester, but if at the end of that semester the student is still not meeting the SAP requirements, the student will be **suspended** from receiving any additional financial aid until he/she complies with the SAP rules and regulations. Students that fall below the academic standards by not meeting their minimum GPA requirements will also be **suspended** for non-compliance. Students still have the right to attend LC if eligible to re-enroll based on academic standing, but must do so at their own expense until they are once again meeting the requirements to receive financial aid assistance. A suspended student has the right to appeal a suspension, and may do so by appealing to the campus SAP committee. Students placed on suspension after the spring semester, and **not granted** a successful appeal, *must meet with the Dean of Enrollment Management to determine the academic options of the student.* Summer sessions are not included in this time frame. Students can use the summer sessions to make up course work and GPA requirements at their own expense during summer sessions if they chose to do so. If a student manages to raise their overall GPA and completion rate to the minimum acceptable standards or above, they regain their good standing status.

PROBATION

Students suspended from attending LC for not meeting SAP academic requirements, or have lost their financial aid eligibility, have the right to appeal a suspension for financial aid ineligibility, or poor academic standing. Appeals may be granted to students when special circumstances have precluded the student from doing well academically, and not meeting the SAP rules/regulations. If a student appeals his/her suspension successfully, they will be placed on **probation**. Students placed on probation may qualify to receive student financial aid. Probationary status can be in place as needed to allow the student to re-establish full financial aid eligibility as long as the student is making forward progress towards the completion of a degree/program. This entails meeting a minimum GPA of 2.0 and successfully completing a minimum of 67% of all course attempted for each semester they are placed on probation.

Basis by which appeals may be granted

Appeals may be granted to students for various reasons. Examples of these include:

- Military Leave
- Illness
- Death in family
- Personal extenuating circumstances

Students that attended LC between the Fall of 2007 and Fall of 2012 and were using the sliding scale for Academic and Financial Aid Standing.

A student requesting an appeal must also provide appropriate documentation in his/her appeal request that illustrates what changes have taken place in the circumstance that caused the student to fall below the minimum SAP standards. Students requesting an appeal must provide documentable examples of the changes which have taken place that will result in successful academic course work in the future.

Probation

Once placed on probation, the student must continue making forward progress towards successful completion of their degree program. The student placed on probation must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA and pass 67% of the classes they attempt each semester they are on probation. The probationary period will be in place until the student's overall GPA and completion rate meet the SAP rules and regulations.

The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted in accordance with the standards set forth by the Committee on Satisfactory Academic Progress. Appeal letters will be reviewed by the committee and notifications sent to students via their campus e-mail informing them of the decision made by the committee along with what steps need to be taken next to complete the probationary process.

The appeal submitted by the student must contain the reasons why he/she did not do well academically and more importantly, what will change for the following semester(s) that will help ensure academic student success.

Students that successfully appeal a suspension and are placed on probation will be placed on a mandatory academic improvement plan that outlines keys to student success. This academic improvement plan will outline in detail for the student what needs to take place in order to continue on probationary status and receiving financial aid assistance. Once placed on academic improvement plan, the student must continue to meet the requirements of the academic improvement plan until they re-establish eligibility by reaching at a minimum an overall GPA of 2.0 and successfully completing at least 67% of the academic course work they attempt. If a student fails to meet the specified requirements set forth in the academic improvement plan the student forfeits their financial aid eligibility.

Students can stay on an improvement plan as long as they are meeting all requirements and are attaining the minimum standards of a 2.0 GPA and passing 67% of the courses they attempt each term until their overall standing is back in compliance with campus SAP guidelines. There are no limits on how many terms a student can remain on probation as long as they are making forward progress each session. They must continue to have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and successfully complete a minimum of 67% of classes they attempt each term.

Re-establishing Eligibility

A student will re-establish their full eligibility, and no longer placed on either of the above listed conditions, once their overall GPA is above a 2.0 and their overall attempted hours are completed at a percentage rate of 67% or better. It is the financial aid recipient's responsibility to determine or inquire about his/her financial aid status at the end of each semester. A student at LC is eligible to receive financial aid after completing and submitting a FAFSA application and meeting all federal rules and regulations pertaining to federal financial aid programs.

This Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy took effect August 27, 2012