

Satisfactory academic progress policy (SAP)

A student's progress is based on the number of credits attempted at Northwestern College and, if applicable, any credits transferred in along with the cumulative grade point average. Students must earn at least a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 and successfully complete a minimum of 124 earned credit hours in order to graduate and earn a degree from Northwestern College. This SAP policy is the same for all students regardless of whether they receive Title IV assistance and whether they are full- or part-time. Satisfactory academic progress is reviewed at the end of each academic semester (including summer), regardless of whether a student received Title IV aid. A student is making satisfactory academic progress toward graduation if he or she has completed the attempted credits and earned the necessary cumulative grade point average as explained in (1) and (2) below.

Financial Aid SAP: Federal regulations require that students who receive federal financial aid must make satisfactory academic progress towards degree completion. Financial Aid SAP is defined by the federal government using both grade point average and pace measures:

1. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

Cumulative Grade Point Average Progress Chart

	Attempted Hours	Placed on academic probation* when minimum cumulative GPA is below:	Suspended when cumulative GPA is below:
Freshman	0-23.99	1.75	1.00
Sophomore	24-54.99	1.90	1.50
Junior/Senior	55 and up	2.00	1.70

*Also placed on Financial Aid warning (see Financial Aid warning and probation below).

Students must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 by the time they reach junior status, which is based on the total number of credit hours attempted. Students not making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) will be placed on academic probation and financial aid warning.

2. Pace

In order to maintain satisfactory progress toward degree completion at Northwestern College, students must successfully complete 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted at all times. All courses taken toward the student's program of study are included as attempted hours. Students who successfully complete 67% of their attempted credits meet the quantitative measure for monitoring satisfactory academic progress. Students failing to complete 67% of their attempted credits will be placed on financial aid warning or probation.

Duration of financial aid eligibility or "Maximum Time Frame"

The maximum time period to complete a degree is no longer than 150% of the published length of the program measured in credit hours. Thus, students may attempt no more than 186 credit hours in order to maintain their financial aid eligibility. If a student is unable to complete his/her degree program in the 150% degree completion time frame (12 semesters), financial aid eligibility will be terminated.

Students who enroll in a second degree, additional minor or teacher certification may be eligible for financial aid and will have their SAP calculated using the credit hours beyond the first degree.

Incompletes, withdrawals, course repeats and transfer credits

- Incompletes: Students with incompletes at the end of a payment period will have their SAP calculation delayed until the incompletes are converted to a grade (within six weeks of the end of the payment period).
- Withdrawals: If a student withdraws before the withdrawal deadline and receives a "W" for the class, the credits are not considered attempted while computing GPA or pace.
- Repeated Courses: All repeated courses count as attempted credits each time for pace calculations, but only the highest grade is used for GPA calculations.
- Transfer Hours: All accepted transfer credits count as attempted and completed credits when calculating pace, but do not factor into the GPA calculation.

Academic probation/suspension

- Any student whose cumulative GPA is below the minimum standard, based on the total number of credits attempted, shall be placed on academic probation for the following semester.
- Any student who would be on academic probation for a second consecutive semester shall be suspended. An exception will be granted if the student's semester GPA during the semester on probation is above 2.00. In this case, the student shall be granted a second semester on probation, and would be placed on financial aid probation (see Financial Aid Warning and Probation). A student may be granted this exception only one time.
- If the student (on probation) enrolls in summer school classes at Northwestern and earns a summer GPA below 2.0, the student will be suspended. If the student enrolls in summer school classes and earns a summer GPA of 2.0 or above, the new cumulative GPA will determine whether the student is back in good standing or whether the fall semester counts as a second semester of probation.
- Any student who would be on probation for a third semester, whether or not any are consecutive, shall be suspended.
- Academic suspension means a student is suspended for a minimum of one semester. Students wishing to return after one semester must submit a Reinstatement Application to the Office of the Registrar. (The Registrar shall provide a copy of the Reinstatement Application to the Director of Admissions, the Director of Residence Life, and the Director of Academic Support so as to provide adequate notification of the student's possible return to campus.) The Academic Affairs Committee will then determine if re-admittance will be allowed based on the student's appeal.

Financial aid warning and probation

A student is placed on financial aid warning for failing to make the qualitative and/or quantitative measure of SAP, as outlined by the SAP guidelines above. If a student is placed on financial aid warning, the student may continue to receive Title IV assistance for one additional semester despite the fact that they failed to make SAP. No appeal is granted or required.

If a student on financial aid warning fails to make SAP at the end of the semester (or payment period), and if the student is not academically suspended, the student loses Title IV aid the following semester unless they appeal (see Financial Aid Appeal Process below) to be placed on financial aid probation or to receive an individual academic

plan. An individual academic plan could be established to assist a student who cannot meet SAP in one semester. Progress in the plan will be evaluated at the end of each payment period. Failure to meet the terms of the academic plan will result in a loss of Title IV aid until SAP is re-established. A student on financial aid probation may receive Title IV funds for one payment period. At that point, the student must meet SAP or the requirements of an established individual academic plan in order to maintain Title IV eligibility.

Financial aid probation appeal process

Students who fail SAP may appeal based on any circumstance the student deems as difficult circumstances, such as family difficulties, illness/injury, roommate or dating issues, loss of balance between responsibilities, death in the family or financial struggles. The financial aid appeal (for students on financial aid warning who again fail to make SAP but are not academically suspended) will be handled in the same manner as academic suspension appeals. The student's appeal must be in written (letter) form and state why they failed to meet SAP as well as what will change to demonstrate SAP at the end of the next semester. Students will be notified of the appeal decision via email and/or a letter in the mail. If an appeal is granted by the Financial Aid Director (who decides the appeal in consult with the Academic Support Director and the Registrar), the student will be placed on financial aid probation and allowed to receive Title IV funds for one additional semester. If making SAP is not realistic in one semester, the academic appeal committee may develop an academic plan in lieu of probation that, if followed, will ensure the student is able to meet SAP standards at a specified point in time. If the appeal is not granted, the student may not receive Title IV funds until they regain eligibility by taking actions that bring them back into SAP. These actions may include filing an appeal after attending classes at another institution or by taking classes at NWC without the assistance of Title IV aid. For a returning student seeking re-instatement from a prior academic suspension, or for any re-registering student who does not meet SAP, if the academic appeal for re-instatement is granted, the student will re-enter on financial aid probation or an established academic plan.

Appeal procedure for students who have been academically suspended

Students may appeal their academic suspension only in cases of extenuating circumstances. An extenuating circumstance is defined as a disruptive, unavoidable circumstance beyond the student's control (e.g. chronic illness, medical emergency, family crisis, physical attack). Students may not appeal using the concept of academic amnesty, whereby only certain courses are excluded from GPA calculations.

Students wishing to appeal their academic suspension must send a one-page typed letter (email is not acceptable), signed and dated, to the chairperson of the Admissions, Retention, and Honors Committee (ARHC) within three weeks of the last day of final exams. The letter should outline 1) the extenuating circumstances that affected the student, 2) actions the student has taken to address those circumstances so that they will not influence future academic endeavors, and 3) whether or not the student wishes to attend the appeal meeting. Letters written by outside persons supporting the appeal must be sent to the chairperson at this time.

A subcommittee consisting of the ARHC chairperson, one faculty member, and one staff member will be the first to review all appeals.

Once the student has filed an appeal, the committee chair will notify the subcommittee members and arrange a meeting as soon as possible. The student who is appealing may choose to be present when the subcommittee considers the appeal; a request for an outside party to be present at the appeal must be approved by the

subcommittee prior to the appeal. If the subcommittee decides the appeal does not merit further review, the student will be notified of the decision.

If the subcommittee determines the appeal warrants further review, ARHC will convene to consider the appeal. Again, the student may choose to be present when the committee considers the appeal; a request for an outside party to be present at the appeal must be approved by ARHC prior to the appeal. After the appeal meeting, the student will be notified of the committee's decision.