

# Standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and Procedures Financial Aid Office

This applies to students applying for, or receiving financial aid. This policy is required for institutions to measure student academic progress towards a degree, certificate, or transfer requirements.

## **POLICY**

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Federal and State regulations require that College of the Desert Community College review the academic progress of students receiving financial aid. The review process evaluates whether a student is making measurable progress toward completion of their course of study in order to continue receiving financial aid. All credits attempted are reviewed, since the first semester of enrollment whether or not financial aid was used. At College of the Desert Community College (COD), Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is evaluated at the end of each semester. If a student submits a FAFSA or California Dream Act Application after the evaluation period, their SAP status will be reviewed at the time the application is received and/or when the Financial Aid Office receives all required verification documents from the student. If it is determined that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the student will receive an e-mail notification indicating that they have been placed on warning or suspension. The student must respond to all notifications from the Financial Aid Office in a timely manner to ensure proper processing of their financial aid.

**Standards of academic progress must be met by students** receiving Student Aid (FSA), under Title IV programs, and state aid including: Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study, Cal Grant, Student Success Completion Grant and Chafee Grant. The California College Promise Grant has its own [standards](#) that must be met that are separate from this policy.

### **Minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Standards**

A student's cumulative grade point average and the percentage of credits completed/attempted are used to determine satisfactory academic progress. The review is based on students' entire enrollment history at COD, including any enrollment period in which a student did not receive financial aid.

It is the student's responsibility to read, understand, and adhere to the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy in order to remain eligible for financial aid. Failure to comply with this policy can result in the student's financial aid being terminated at College of the Desert Community College.

## **Completion Rate & Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements**

*To be making satisfactory academic progress, a student must:*

- Complete at least 67% of all courses attempted AND maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher to remain eligible for financial aid and the student must complete their educational program within a reasonable timeframe. The Financial Aid Office's review of SAP is not complete until all three measures have been evaluated.
- Earned grades of A, B, C, D and CR are considered completed credits and are calculated in a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).
- F, and FW are not considered completed credits, but count in a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) and the student's attempted credits for financial aid completion.
- W, I, IP, EW, NC, NP, and MW are not considered completed credits, but count toward a student's attempted credits for financial aid completion.
- RD and P are considered completed credits but are not calculated in a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).
- Remedial coursework is included in the qualitative and quantitative assessment of SAP.
- EW (Excused Withdrawal) were not part of the calculation during the COVID-19 National Emergency. However, once the COVID-19 National Emergency was declared over, EW grades started to count towards Satisfactory Academic Progress. Any EW grades assigned after May 27, 2023 count towards Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Transfer credits from other institutions are included as attempted and completed units in the SAP calculation. Transfer credits are not included in the GPA calculation.

\*Please note, if the student has attempted less than 12 units at College of the Desert, the student will be required to maintain a 1.5 cumulative GPA and must complete 50% of the courses attempted to maintain SAP. Once the student has attempted 12 or more units, the student will be held to the standard as explained above (67% Pace of Procession and 2.0 GPA).

NOTE: Students who have earned a semester grade point average of 0.0 (zero) by receiving grades failing grades of F or W, with Incomplete (I), and/or combination of failing grades and/or withdrawals (W) will be automatically placed on a financial aid 'Warning' status for the following semester. Students may only be on 'Warning' status for one term.

### **Repeated Coursework:**

Repeated course units will be counted in the completion rate calculation as attempted units. When courses are repeated, only the earned units associated with the most recent attempt will be counted in the completion rate calculation as completed units. If there are two equal grades, only the earned units from the earlier course will be included as completed units in the completion rate calculation. If the student repeats the course three times, the two most recent grades will be averaged in the GPA calculation.

**Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

Failure to meet the rate of completion requirement and / or the grade point average requirement will result in the following:

**Financial Aid Warning:** (After one (1) semester)

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress for pace or GPA at the end of one term of enrollment will be placed on financial aid warning and will be notified of their financial aid status via email (see exhibit A) to their Mycod email account.

During the term of financial aid warning, students are eligible for financial aid and are encouraged to re-evaluate their academic progression toward the completion of their course of study, obtain academic advising, and other academic support resources to support their academic success.

**Financial Aid Suspension:**

Students can become ineligible for following reasons

- 1) Student failed to meet SAP standards after their “Warning” semester and/or
- 2) Student exceeded the 150% maximum timeframe of their program of study and/or
- 3) Student failed to meet the conditions and/or SAP standards established by their approved appeal during their probationary period/term.

Students who are placed on financial aid suspension will be ineligible to receive federal financial aid for the next term of enrollment, unless they have an approved SAP Appeal.

*Some students may be automatically suspended based on previous academic history.*

**Financial Aid Probation:**

Students who fail to meet satisfactory academic progress standards and have been approved their appeal will be placed in a probationary status, and their financial aid eligibility will be reinstated for one payment period. Future financial aid eligibility will be contingent on appeal conditions and/or student’s progress.

**Maximum Time Frame:**

The maximum time frame for completion of a degree or certificate is 150% of the published length of the program, and a student may receive financial aid up to a maximum of 150% of the published length of the program. To obtain additional financial aid a student must submit a

completed SAP Appeal and meet with their academic advisor to create a SEP (Student Education Plan).

Students who have reached their maximum time frame (150%) in attempted credits are immediately ineligible for federal financial aid and do not receive a warning semester. All units attempted at College of the Desert will be included since the maximum time frame is based upon units attempted. All periods of enrollment count towards a student maximum time frame regardless if the student received financial aid.

- Federal regulations require the student to complete their academic program within 150% of the standard timeframe for your program. For example, if the student is in Liberal Arts A.A. program that is 60 units of coursework, the student will need to complete their program by 90 units or their financial aid will be suspended. All attempted units are counted (less non-degree/remedial/ESL coursework up to a maximum of 30 units) even if the student did not receive financial aid and even if the units taken do not count for credit toward graduation. The calculation of attempted units includes coursework completed at COD as well as all other transferable coursework completed at other institutions if the units are on our transcript.
- Withdrawals, incompletes, and repeated courses are considered in the calculation of credits attempted.
- Students may repeat a previously passed course and receive financial aid one time only. Meaning, the student may attempt and get paid for a passed course twice. Passed courses will count as attempted, but only one of those courses will be counted as completed, for purposes of determining course completion. The most recent grade earned will be calculated into the grade point average, unless the student has taken the course more than twice, then the two most recent attempts will be averaged together in the GPA.
- If a student has transfer credits, which are applicable to their program and are on our transcript, the credit hours are applied towards the student maximum time frame.
- Students who return to College of the Desert following any length of separation are subject to meeting SAP regardless of their previous financial aid status. All courses attempted from prior enrollment will be considered in evaluating SAP.
- If the student fails to meet the conditions of their SAP probation, or their appeal is denied due to their cumulative institutional GPA being below 2.0 or their completion percentage being below 67%, the student will need to bring their cumulative institutional GPA up to 2.0 and/or complete at least 67% of their classes before the student will be eligible to receive financial aid. ***If the student's appeal is denied by the Appeals Committee due to not completing a program in a reasonable timeframe no new appeals will be accepted.***

### **SAP Notifications:**

Students who are placed on financial aid suspension or financial aid warning will be notified via their COD email of their financial aid status (Exhibit A and B). Students are also able to view their current SAP status on the Financial Aid Self Service Portal (Exhibit C). Students who submit a SAP Appeal will also be notified via their COD email of their appeal status, whether or not it was approved.

### **Reestablishing Aid Eligibility:**

Students who fail to meet SAP standards and lose eligibility for financial for pace of progression and GPA can restore their eligibility by successfully completing sufficient units to improve and meet SAP standards once again, or if extenuating circumstances apply, the student can submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form.

Students who fail to meet SAP standards for exceeding the 150% maximum timeframe of their program of study can submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form to attempt to get their financial aid reinstated.

### **SAP Appeal Process:**

Students may appeal the suspension of their financial aid by documenting any extenuating and/or mitigating circumstances that may have led to their inability to maintain satisfactory academic progress. *Students who submit a financial aid appeal are not automatically reinstated for financial aid.* The Office of Financial Aid considers the students' written appeal, other supporting documentation, and federal regulations when making a final determination of financial aid reinstatement (see Exhibit D and E).

- Only (1) appeal per student is allowed per academic year unless otherwise approved by the Financial Aid Director (Fall, Spring or Summer) and only twice during lifetime at College of the Desert.
- Appeal instructions are available in the Financial Aid Office and sent to the student via email. The processing time is 4-6 weeks from the date full documentation is turned in for the Appeals Committee to evaluate the student's appeal. Please note that submission of an appeal does not guarantee approval and decisions made by the Appeals Committee are final.
- Students will be notified of their approval or denial for their appeal by email (Exhibit F and G).
- If the student's appeal is approved by the Appeals Committee, the student will be placed on "Probation" and will be paid for courses listed on their Student Educational Plan. During this probationary period, the student is eligible to receive financial aid. The student will be switched to "Monitoring" at the end of the semester and a

review will take place to ensure the student is following their “SAP Probation Contract.” If the student is not meeting the contract, the student will be placed back on “Suspension.” If the student is meeting the contract, they will be placed back on “Probation” for the coming term. If the student is now meeting satisfactory academic progress, the student will be placed on “Satisfactory.”

## **Exhibit A: Satisfactory Academic Progress Warning Email**

A recent review of your Satisfactory Academic Progress, has resulted in you being placed on warning for financial aid for the 2018-2019 academic school year, due to the issues listed below:

\* Our records indicate that you have not met the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standard and, as a result, have been placed on financial aid WARNING.

To meet the SAP standard you must:

- Have a Cumulative Qualitative Grade Point Average of a 2.0 (GPA).
- Have a Cumulative Pace of Progression of 67%.
- Complete your Program of Study within the 150% Maximum Time Frame of your specific Program of Study(major)

It is strongly recommended that you:

- Enroll in courses as indicated on your Student Educational Plan.

It is recommended that students that have been placed on warning should have a current official comprehensive Student Educational Plan (SEP). To make an appointment to meet with an Academic Counselor to complete an SEP please call (760) 773-2521. Student Educational plans must be created using official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended.

Being placed on warning means you will continue to receive most types of financial assistance for the duration of the warning period (one semester), but you MUST meet the cumulative SAP standard by the end of this semester to return to a Satisfactory status. If you do not attend this semester your warning status will be carried over to the following semester in which you attend. If you do not meet the SAP standard by the end of your warning period your financial aid will be SUSPENDED.

It is our hope that you are successful in improving your academic record. It is recommended that you:

1. Seek assistance from the Tutoring & Academic Skills Center
2. Enroll in courses listed on your Student Educational Plan.
3. Complete all attempted courses with a "C" or better.

Please visit the following link to review our Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy:  
<http://collegeofthedesert.edu/SAPPolicy> or visit us in the Financial Aid Office.

Thank you,

Financial Aid Office  
(760) 773-2532

## **Exhibit B: Satisfactory Academic Progress Suspension Email**

A recent review of your Satisfactory Academic Progress, has resulted in you being ineligible for financial aid for the 2018-2019 academic school year, due to the issues listed below:

Suspended students may submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal form if you have not previously completed the appeals process at College of the Desert within the last academic year, and if Extenuating Circumstances caused the failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), or if there is a valid reason for exceeding the maximum time frame for your program (such as a change of major or goal, a high unit major, military credits, having repeated courses to improve your standing, having taken Basic Skills or ESL courses or having a second academic goal).

If you wish to appeal, you must obtain a SAP Appeal Form by completing a counseling session at the following link:

<http://collegeofthedesert.get-counseling.com/flag-session/5125>

Once your appeal is reviewed, the Financial Aid office will notify you by email of the results of your appeal to your MyCOD student email. Appeals that are approved will be awarded for the semester in which the appeal was received and approved. Federal Regulations prohibit retroactive awarding under the appeal process.

If you are working in the Federal Work Study Program you must stop working immediately pending an appeal decision. If approved you must contact the Financial Aid office to see if you may return to work or if you must stop working completely.

If you do not wish to appeal or your appeal is not approved, you may regain your eligibility by fully meeting the SAP standard of the minimum requirements of 2.0 cumulative GPA, 67% cumulative pace of progression (attempted units versus completed units), and not have exceeded the 150% maximum time frame.

It is our hope that you are successful in improving your academic record. It is recommended that you:

1. Seek assistance from the Tutoring & Academic Skills Center
2. Enroll in courses listed on your Student Educational Plan (meet with an academic counselor).
3. Complete all attempted courses with a "C" or better

Please visit the following link to review our Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy:  
<http://collegeofthedesert.edu/SAPPolicy> or visit us in the Financial Aid Office.

Thank you,

Financial Aid Office  
(760) 773-2532



# Exhibit C: Student Self-Service Portal Status

## Welcome to Financial Aid!

Use Colleague Self-Service Financial Aid to assist in managing your Financial Aid package from submission to completion.



Select an Award Year: 2018/2019 Academic Year

✓ Your most recent Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) evaluation has a(n) Satisfactory status. Please contact your Financial Aid Counselor if you need further assistance.



### Financial Aid Checklist Complete!

Congratulations! You've completed your Financial Aid checklist.  
You successfully completed all the items on your Financial Aid checklist.



### Average Aid Package

This chart represents the average financial aid award per student at the University. Depending on a number of factors, your aid package may vary.

- \$0.00 in Loans
- \$1,329.00 in Scholarships
- \$3,704.00 in Grants

### Checklist

Completed Submit Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Resource

Form Li

Exhibit D: College of the Desert SAP Appeal Process



## College of the Desert's SAP Appeal Process

**Appeal Deadline:**

**FALL**  
November 28, 2018

**SPRING**  
May 10, 2019

**SUMMER**  
July 18, 2019



**COLLEGE**  
*of the*  
**DESERT**

**Step 1:** Visit our GetSAP site at  
[collegeofthedesert.get-counseling.com/sessions](http://collegeofthedesert.get-counseling.com/sessions)

**Step 2:** Take the following GetSAP counseling session:

- An Overview of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Financial Aid Appeal Process

**Step 3:** Print out your certificate and attach to any other Appeal documents



Complete the checklist in the box below that corresponds to the reason(s) you are appealing. If you have exceeded the maximum time frame and are not meeting the Pace of Progression and GPA requirements please refer to box 2.

**1.** If you are appealing because you exceeded the Maximum Time Frame, follow these instructions:

Submit the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed written statement explaining why you exceeded the maximum time frame (see valid reasons listed below), what your educational goal/objective is, and what you are doing to complete this goal/objective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Current Official Comprehensive Student Educational Plan (SEP)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Probation Contract (page 3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate of completed Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Financial Aid Appeal Process

**Note:** Valid Reasons for exceeding the maximum time frame include: one time change of major or goal; return for second goal; ESL courses; military or AP credits; basic skills courses (ENG 50, 51, 61, 70, 71 - MATH 30, 54, 60, 70 - RDG 50, 51, 61); high unit majors such as Registered Nursing, and high unit transfer math and science based majors such as engineering, computer science, biology, chemistry, physics, etc.

**2.** If you are appealing because you are not meeting Qualitative Standard and/or Pace of Progression, follow these instructions:

Submit the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed written statement explaining extenuating circumstances that occurred during the terms you did not meet SAP (include dates and see valid reasons listed below), how has your situation improved, what your educational goal/objective is, and what you are doing to complete this goal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Official Documentation of Extenuating Circumstances (court documents, police reports, medical records, doctor's note, death certificate, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Current Official Comprehensive Student Educational Plan (SEP)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Probation Contract (page 3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate of completed Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Financial Aid Appeal Process

**Note:** Extenuating Circumstances usually include a death in the immediate family (i.e. mother, father, sister, brother, spouse & child), hospitalization, severe auto accident, family emergencies, or other situations beyond the reasonable control of the student. The demands of employment, transportation or insufficient childcare are not usually accepted as Extenuating Circumstances for an

**Student Educational Plan(SEP)**– If you do not have a current official comprehensive SEP an Academic Counselor can assist you with creating one that is approved for financial aid. Please call (760) 773-2532 to schedule an appointment. You must bring official transcripts from all other colleges or universities that you have attended with you to the appointment, unless transcripts have already been received at COD. *(Please note that there may be a delay in scheduling an appointment with a counselor, which may result in a delay in your funds being disbursed. Please be sure to plan accordingly.)*

Failure to attach **ALL** of the above documents will result in an incomplete appeal. If an appeal is not complete, it **WILL** delay your appeal process time.

**Deadline:** Appeals must be completed and submitted two weeks prior to the end of each term.

Fall 18' Deadline: Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Spring 19' Deadline: Friday, May 10, 2019

Summer 19' Deadline: Thursday, July 18, 2019



SAP Probation Contract

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID Number

Please be sure to completely follow the instructions on the front of this form and submit all necessary items when submitting your Appeal.

*Please read, sign and date this contract. If your appeal is approved, you will be subject to the terms of the contract. If your appeal is denied, the contract will be void and not go into effect.*

You will be granted the opportunity for a Probationary Status, if your Appeal is approved. Your Satisfactory Academic Progress status will be monitored at the conclusion of EACH SEMESTER. You will need to meet the following standards:

1. You must meet the minimum Qualitative Standard of a 2.0 GPA and Pace of Progression of 67% completion rate each semester.
2. You must enroll in classes and successfully complete the classes on your Student Educational Plan required towards your major/goal. (If you decide to change and take a class that is not on your SEP and required towards your major/goal, it will be up to you to meet with the Financial Aid office prior to changing/enrolling in this class to make sure it will be approved)
3. You must complete your educational objective within your specific Maximum Time Frame (150% of program of study).

Failure to meet the terms of this Probation Contract will result in a Suspension status and the LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY to receive most forms of financial aid unless you are able to regain your eligibility by meeting each Satisfactory Academic Progress standard.

Your signature below indicates that you have READ, UNDERSTAND & AGREE to the terms of this Probation Contract.

**Note: A student can be Appeal Approved TWICE during their lifetime here at College of the Desert and only ONCE during the academic year. If you fail to meet the terms of this contract for any reason, you WILL NOT be ALLOWED to Appeal again until the following academic year.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Exhibit F: Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Approval**

Your Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status is Probation. This means that although you were not meeting the SAP standard, your appeal was APPROVED to receive financial assistance for the courses on your Student Educational Plan only.

The Financial Aid office will monitor or check all grades at the end of each semester for students whose status is now Probation. Your award could be rescinded should you not achieve the requirements on your signed Probation Contract and as outlined below:

--Earn the minimum Qualitative Grade Point Average of a 2.0 (GPA) each semester.

--Meet the minimum Pace of Progression of 67% each semester.

As indicated above, if you do not meet the terms of your probation contract each semester you will lose your Probation status and lose eligibility for financial assistance in the future. If you lose your eligibility for financial assistance, your status will be changed to Suspended.

NOTE: This is a reminder that you will receive financial assistance for the class(es) on your Student Educational Plan only. There may be times where you are required to repeat a class a third and/or a fourth time in an effort to graduate or transfer. Even though a class can be repeated up to a total of four times, Financial Aid regulations for Federal Aid states "If you have successfully completed a course at College of the Desert (a "D" Grade or higher), you can only receive financial aid for that course one additional time". If you choose to repeat the course for a 3rd time, you will not be eligible for federal financial aid or disbursement payment for that course". Currently, College of the Desert will allow a student to repeat a course up to three times.

It is recommended that you seek assistance from the Tutoring and Academic Skills Centers, enroll in the course(s) listed on your comprehensive Student Educational Plan, and complete all courses meeting the minimum Qualitative GPA and Pace of Progression requirements each semester. We also encourage you to work with an Academic Counselor, to help you meet your educational objectives.

--Counseling (760) 773-2521  
--Tutoring and Academic Skills Center (760) 776-7241

If you have questions or require additional information regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress standard, you may access the Financial Aid website: [www.collegeofthedesert.edu](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu)

Sincerely,

## **Exhibit G: Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Denial**

Your appeal was received, and the result of your appeal is:

DENIED, for one or more of the following reason(s):

- Documentation of extenuating circumstances was not submitted or is invalid.
- It was determined that Extenuating Circumstances did not occur.
- The reason stated for exceeding the maximum time frame is invalid
- A current Student Educational Plan was not submitted.
- You have exhausted your one appeal for this academic year.
- You have limited Pell eligibility for your goal.

To assist you in meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standard it is recommended that you seek assistance from the Tutorial and Academic Skills Center, enroll in the course(s) listed on your Student Educational Plan, and work with an Academic Counselor to help you meet your educational objectives. You may contact the tutorial department or make an appointment to meet with an Academic Counselor at the telephone numbers listed below:

- Counseling (760) 773-2521
- Tutoring & Academic Skills Center (760) 776-7241

For additional questions, please visit our website and view our consumer guide information. Go to [www.collegeofthedesert.edu](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu).

Financial Aid Office