University of Rio Grande/Community College

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Policy Overview:

The Financial Aid Office has recognized the following policies and procedures to fulfill title IV federal requirements set by the U. S. Department of Education. The Satisfactory Academic Progress policies and procedures of the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College are reviewed when changes at the federal level occur to ensure compliance with Federal Regulations. Students receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid are required to be making **Satisfactory Academic Progress** (SAP) toward their degree completion. The SAP regulations, defined in HEA 668.34, require Rio Grande to review on a regular schedule each student's progress using three measures: qualitative, quantitative, and pace (maximum timeframe).

New SAP regulations, effective July 1, 2011, dictate SAP statuses Rio Grande must use based on how frequently SAP is reviewed. The new regulations also addressed the treatment of credit hours that count toward students' degrees but earned prior to attending the school. These regulatory changes necessitated changes in Rio Grande's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. The Office of Student Financial Aid also uses the same SAP standards for certain institutional aid and for some State of Ohio Programs.

The office of Student Financial Aid reviews SAP for all students. This includes students who may not be receiving any aid affected by SAP eligibility. This is done to ensure that SAP eligibility is considered in the event a student was to become otherwise eligible for such aid in the future.

Students monitored under policy: Undergraduate, Graduate

Aid programs subject to policy:
- Federal Title IV aid programs
- State of Ohio Grants and/or Scholarships
- Institutional need-based scholarships
- Institutional grants/scholarships that require the student must meet the requirements stated on the scholarship stipulations. If no stipulations are stated then this policy is in effect.

Review schedule
- Cumulative grade point average (GPA), Semi-annually (end of Fall and Spring)
- Completion rate percentage, Semi-annually (end of Fall and Spring)
- Pace of completion (Maximum timeframe) is reviewed each term for all students.
- Students who regain conditional eligibility due to appeal will have one term of probation
- If the student enrolls in summer courses, the SAP process will be evaluated after the Fall term. URG will assess SAP progress after summer term upon request from the student.

SAP Measurements

The <u>Qualitative</u> [(all credit hours attempted/credit hours earned (completed successfully)] and the <u>Quantitative</u> (Cumulative GPA) measures are shown in the table below:

Total Credit Hours Attempted:	Cumulative GPA Required:	Minimum Completed Percentage Required:
1 - 15	1.50	65%
16 - 31	1.80	65%
32 - 52	1.90	70%
53 - Graduation	2.00	70%

Grade notations counted in attempted for completion rate:
- **Successful completion** means a student has received an **A, B, C, D, or S**.
- Grades of **F, I, NF, U, NG, and W** are not considered successfully completed courses.
- **Courses not included in the calculation of completion rate for SAP** are courses which the student takes as an audit
- **Transfer credits** appearing on a student's transcript are counted as attempted hours to determine completion rate.

Pace of Completion (Maximum timeframe) measure: the maximum timeframe for all students is defined as 150% of the published program length.
- Undergraduate students are measured based on all attempted credits (defined by the same grade notations as listed under the quantitative measure) and cannot exceed 150% of the number of credits required for each student's primary major.
- The maximum timeframe for graduate students is based on the degree level a student is pursuing.
- Students pursuing master's degrees are allotted a maximum of 60 attempted credit hours to complete a master's degree.
- Periods when a student doesn't receive Title IV aid must be counted toward maximum time frame.
- Students seeking second degrees and students with double majors may reach the maximum timeframe standard at an accelerated pace under this policy. Student may appeal for the allowance of additional hours to complete their program.
- If a student changes major during their academic career, the student is still subject to maximum time frame guidelines. Major change will be taken into consideration during the student's SAP appeal process. However, major change will not automatically mean the SAP appeal will be approved.

Treatment of Special Coursework
- **Audited Classes:** Audited classes are not considered :financial aid eligible;" therefore they count neither as classes attempted or completed.
- **Transfer Credits:** Transfer credits appearing on the URG transcript are counted for completion rate and maximum timeframe.

- **Remedial Coursework**: undergraduate students can take up to 30 hours of remedial coursework, and these hours are considered in the calculation based on the grade notations previously listed
- **English As A Second Language (ESL) Courses**: students taking these courses as part of a declared major will have them included in their SAP calculations based on the grade notations previously listed
- **Consortium Agreements**: coursework taken at other institutions via consortium agreements are assigned "Academic Affairs" courses, will be assigned grades, and will be counted for completion rate and max timeframe
- **Grade Forgiveness:** Student who are on Financial Aid Suspension due to not meeting SAP standards, who request Grade Forgiveness for previous enrollment due to an extenuating circumstance, are student required to follow the SAP appeal process to regain financial aid eligibility.

SAP Statuses:
- **Eligible**: meeting all requirements for SAP
- **Conditional**: assigned to students who regain eligibility due to an appeal; they are required to be meeting the completion rate at the next SAP review (most cases after the term). These students will be provided a GPA and completion rate goal that will let them know what is required of them to be making progress at the next review.
- **Warning**: Considering Rio evaluates SAP at the end of Fall and Spring, student's who fail to meet the SAP standards are placed on a one term warning status, and are notified immediately after each evaluation of their status.
- **Suspension**: assigned to students who fail to meet the required GPA and/or completion rate at the time of their SAP review. <u>Students on suspension are not eligible to receive SAP affected aid</u>.
- **Probation**: assigned to students who regain financial aid eligibility due to an appeal and who can reasonably be expected to meet SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period.
- **Nearing Max Timeframe**: status assigned to students who are within 30 credits of reaching their maximum timeframe.
- **Maximum Timeframe Suspension**: assigned to students who meet or exceed their maximum attempted hours. Students on suspension for maximum timeframe are not eligible to receive SAP affected aid.

Regaining Eligibility
- Students who are suspended due to GPA or completion rate remain ineligible for SAP affected aid until both their GPA and completion rate are at or above the minimum levels. Ineligible students continue to be monitored annually, and will be returned to "Eligible" if they are meeting all standards at the time of a review.
- Students who self-correct during a term that SAP is not reviewed can be returned to "Eligible" only if they self-report.
- Students can also have their aid reinstated upon an approval of a SAP appeal.

Appeals
- **Appeal Requirements**:
- A letter of appeal must address and provide documentation of the extenuating circumstance leading to the failure to meet the required standards.

- o The student must also address and document what he or she has done to remedy the situation.
- o The appeal must be received by the Friday one week before the term for which the student is requesting reinstatement of aid.
- o An appeal form is required to be completed and submitted along with the letter of appeal to the Director of Financial Aid.
- o An appeal committee consisting of various student services office representatives review all appeals and make recommendations to the Director of Financial Aid on the outcome of each appeal.

Maximum Time Frame Allowed:

Student Category	Maximum Time Frame Allowed	Measure
Undergraduates	150% of required hours to complete degree*	All credit hours attempted including graded, transferred, pass or fail, repeated courses and testing credits
Graduates	150% of required hours to complete degree	All credit hours attempted including graded, transferred, pass or fail, repeated courses and testing credits
Certificate Programs	150% of required hours to complete degree	All credit hours attempted including graded, transferred, pass or fail, repeated courses and testing credits

Students may refer to the Course Catalog published online for required credit hours to complete a specific program.

- **An example of 150% calculation: If a student needs 125 hrs to complete a bachelors program, then 125 hrs* 1.5(150%) MTF =187.5 max hrs before a student would lose Title IV eligibility.**

Three Types of SAP Appeals
- SAP Appeal for Additional Maximum Time Frame Hours Only – to be used by students who have reached their maximum timeframe ONLY due to changing majors, having multiple majors, having a large number of transfer hours or having a previous bachelor's degree.
- Request for Mid-Year Review of SAP – to be used by students who have met the minimum SAP requirements during a term where there is not a SAP review
- Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal – must be used by students who are not meeting the minimum GPA and/or completion rate, but can be used by any student who is not making progress

Approved Appeals
- Students who successfully appeal their suspension due to GPA or completion rate will be placed on an academic plan with the end goal being to resolve all SAP deficiencies. A student will be placed on an academic plan if it is mathematically impossible to complete

the SAP requirements in one term. An academic plan can vary in length and is determined by the financial aid office. Students granted aid eligibility through an academic plan may receive aid for up to one year before conducting a review of the student's performance. These students will be provided with specific term requirements for completion rate and GPA to give them an understanding of what they must do minimally each term to be within standards by the next SAP review. If the student is meeting the criteria identified in the SAP appeal approval at the annual review, the student's academic plan may be extended.

- Students who successfully appeal their suspension due to GPA or completion rate and can reasonably be expected to meet SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period are placed on probation for one term.

- Students who successfully appeal their suspension due to maximum timeframe will be given additional hours to complete their program and will be assigned "Eligible" status. Only those courses required for program completion will be covered by financial aid.

- Students who have eligibility re-instated due to a Mid-Year Review will be returned to "Eligible" status

SAP Appeal Procedures - Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, significant changes were made to the appeal process. Federal regulations do not require that a school allow students an opportunity to appeal an unsatisfactory status. Rio Grande has chosen to exercise the ability to use professional judgment and entertain appeals for reinstatement of aid for no more than one term of probation. Students for whom it would be mathematically impossible to resolve all deficiencies during one term may be placed on an academic plan, which gives much more flexibility in financial aid reinstatement. However, per federal regulations, only appeals documenting specific circumstances will be considered for approval. The Director overseeing SAP will review the content of the appeal. Only appeals that document the following reasons will be considered:

- Serious physical or mental illness of the student
- Serious physical or mental illness of the student's immediate family member
- Death of the student's immediate family member
- Student was Absent from the University for at least five academic years
- Other Extreme Cases

If the appeal is not submitted for one of these reasons, it will automatically be denied by the Director and not reviewed. If the appeal is submitted based on an approved circumstance, but does not provide documentation of said circumstance(s), the Director will contact the student and request the documentation. If the appeal is complete and all necessary documentation is provided, the Director will prepare to present the appeal to the financial aid office.

Students may only submit one appeal per academic career. For example, students may appeal once as an undergraduate and once as a graduate. Exceptions may be made for students who have not attended Rio Grande for, at least, five full academic years.

For students who have exceeded the maximum timeframe, consideration for reinstatement may be given up to 175% of the normal time it takes to complete a degree in the student's academic career. Students seeking a bachelor's degree may appeal if they are between 180 and 210 credit hours. Students seeking an associate's degree may appeal if they are between 90 and 105 credit hours (111 and 130 for a nursing student). Graduate students may appeal if they are between 90 and 105 credit hours. Appeals for students who have exceeded 175% of the normal time it would take to complete the degree they are pursuing will not be reviewed. Students who have exceeded this cap may only pursue alternative loan funding. They will no longer be considered for financial aid during their academic career.

There is no secondary appeal process. If an appeal is denied, students can only be reinstated for aid eligibility if they satisfy all deficiencies. If an appeal is approved and the student does not fulfill the conditions of his or her probation or academic plan, the student will not be eligible for aid for any future terms during their academic career unless the student satisfies all deficiencies. Successfully attending 12 credit hours at your own expense **no longer qualifies** a student to regain aid eligibility. Certain extreme situations will be considered through the Director of financial aid. In cases of denial, there is no further action or secondary appeal process. The financial aid office's decision of a denial stands.