**GRADUATE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY**

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Financial Aid at Hood College monitors graduate students after the spring semester each academic year for successful completion of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards. For financial aid eligibility, terms are defined as fall, winter, spring and summer. All students are measured on qualitative (grade-based) and quantitative (time-based) standards. Students who fail to meet SAP standards are not eligible for any financial aid unless an appeal is approved. Students are not limited to one appeal.

Graduate programs range from 30 to 60 credits with most master's programs at the 36-credit level, and a 3.00 cumulative average is required to complete the degree. Students are considered to be making satisfactory progress toward degree completion for financial aid purposes by adhering to the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy outlined below.

Students who are not meeting the SAP standards at the end of the spring semester are notified in writing via email to their Hood College email address.

**CUMULATIVE GPA**

The qualitative standard measures a student's quality of performance in terms of GPA. Graduate students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of the spring semester in each academic year in order to meet this requirement. If a student fails to meet this requirement, the student will be suspended from financial aid but will have the opportunity to submit an appeal.

**CUMULATIVE COMPLETION RATE (PACE)**

In order to maintain financial aid eligibility, the U.S. Department of Education requires a student to successfully complete 67 percent of the credits for which he/she attempted as shown in the example below.

Hood College Office of Financial Aid calculates the pace at which a student is progressing by dividing the cumulative number of credits successfully completed by the cumulative number of credits attempted. All periods of enrollment count when assessing quantitative standards, even periods in which the student did not receive aid.

Pace = Cumulative number of credits successfully completed

Cumulative number of credits attempted

**TREATMENT OF W, INC, AU, F, S AND U GRADES AND REPEATED COURSEWORK**

Course withdrawals (W or WX) after the drop/add period are not included in the GPA calculation but are considered a non-completion of attempted coursework.

• Incomplete (INC) grades are not included in the GPA calculation but are considered a non-completion of attempted coursework until the incomplete grade is replaced with a permanent grade and academic progress can be reevaluated.

• An audit (AU) grade is not considered attempted coursework. It is not included in the GPA calculation or completion rate determination.

• A satisfactory (S) grade is treated as attempted credits earned, but it is not included in the GPA calculation.

• An unsatisfactory (U) grade is treated as attempted credits that are not earned, but it is not included in the GPA calculation.

• A failing grade (F) is treated as attempted credits not earned; it will be included in the calculation of the GPA and the minimum completion rate.

• All grades earned for a repeated course will be recorded on the transcript and the highest grade received will be included in the GPA calculation; however, every repeated attempt will be included in the completion rate determination.

• Transfer credits and/or credits for prior learning given at the time of enrollment will be counted in the total number of credits attempted and the maximum timeframe standard.

Students can only receive financial aid for a repeated, previously passed course one additional time. If the student registers for a previously passed course the third time, the course is ineligible for financial aid.

Students may only receive financial aid for courses which are required for their program of study.

*Due to flexibility provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), attempted courses will be excluded from the qualitative component if the credits not completed was a result of the COVID-19 national emergency.*

**MAXIMUM TIMEFRAME**

The maximum timeframe in which a graduate student is expected to complete their degree is 150 percent of the published length of the program measured in years. Students will become ineligible for any type of financial aid if the maximum timeframe for completion is not met. For example, if a published length of a graduate academic program is 2 years, the maximum period must not exceed 3 years. The maximum timeframe in which a student is expected to complete their additional or dual degree is 150 percent of the published length of the program measured in years.

The maximum timeframe for Hood College programs is as follows:

• Certificate programs: - 2 years

• Master’s degree - 3 years

• Doctorate degree- 6 years.

(Note: the SAP policy is separate from the time-to-completion Graduate School policy which allows up to seven years to complete a degree program.)

Students who fail to meet the maximum timeframe requirement towards completion of their degree will have their financial aid canceled. Students may appeal this suspension.

**FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION**

Students are placed on financial aid suspension if they do not meet all of the SAP standards. Hood College monitors SAP annually at the end of the spring semester and students are notified accordingly with an email to their Hood College email account. Students are not given a warning period since the process is monitored once per academic year. Students have the option to appeal for financial aid once they are on suspension.

**FINANCIAL AID PROBATION**

If the appeal is granted, students will be placed on financial aid probation for one semester and are expected to meet SAP standards by the end of the semester. If at the end of the probationary period the student still does not meet the standards set forth in this policy, eligibility to receive financial aid will be suspended.

If it is determined that the student will not be able to meet the SAP standards at the end of one semester of enrollment, the student will be placed on an academic plan for multiple semesters. If the student is placed on an academic plan as a condition of the appeal and is meeting the requirements of the plan, the student shall remain eligible for financial aid during the semesters specified in the academic plan. The academic plan may only be modified with prior approval of the academic advisor and/or relevant student services office.

**REINSTATEMENT OF AID**

Reinstatement of financial aid may be achieved as follows:

• The student submits a written letter of appeal in accordance with the appeals process and the Financial Aid Appeals Committee approves the appeal. The student is placed on financial aid probation for one semester or on an academic plan, and is allowed to maintain their aid eligibility. SAP will be reviewed at the end of that semester; or

• The student enrolls in courses at Hood College, pays for tuition and fees without the help of student aid and does well enough in the coursework to satisfy all of the satisfactory academic progress standards. The student must notify the Office of Financial Aid if they are planning to attend Hood College without the assistance of financial aid; or

• The student may enroll in summer courses to eliminate the deficiency in credits or GPA. The student must notify the Office of Financial Aid if they are planning to take classes during the summer to eliminate the deficiency. Students can only take classes at Hood College and cannot take classes at another institution to resolve a GPA deficiency.

A student whose eligibility has been suspended may regain eligibility at the end of any term after which they meet the above criteria.

Students who have been placed on suspension cannot skip a semester to regain eligibility. No financial aid will be disbursed during subsequent semesters for students on suspension.

**APPEALS PROCESS**

Students on financial aid suspension may appeal in writing to the Office of Financial Aid. Appeals must be submitted by August 1 in order to be reviewed for the upcoming fall semester. The written appeal must include the following:

1. A description of the extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the SAP standards. The student must demonstrate that they understand the reason behind failure to meet the SAP standards.

2. A description of the course of action and/or change in situation that will allow the student to meet the SAP standards by the end of the next semester or at the next SAP evaluation period. Include specific plans to rectify the SAP suspension status.

3. Documentation which supports the statements made in the appeal.

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee may request that the student submit an academic plan signed by the student's academic advisor if the student will not be able to meet the SAP standards by the end of the next semester of enrollment. The Office of Financial Aid will notify the student by email if such documentation is needed for the appeal.

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will review the appeal and notify the student by email within ten business days of the decision.

All decisions made by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee are final.

If the appeal is granted, students will be placed on financial aid probation for one semester and are expected to meet SAP standards by the end of the semester. If, at that time, the student does not meet SAP standards, the student will be suspended from financial aid and may appeal based on extenuating circumstances. If the student is successful, the student will be removed from probation and placed in good standing for financial aid eligibility.

If the student is placed on an academic plan as a condition of the appeal and is following the plan, the student shall remain eligible for financial aid during the semesters specified in the terms and conditions of the academic plan. The academic plan may only be modified with prior approval of the academic advisor and/or relevant student services office.

Appeals should be delivered to the Office of Financial Aid in person (3rd floor of Apple Resource Center), or by:

• Email: finaid@hood.edu

• Fax: 301-696-3812

If students are unable to fax or email appeals, they may submit all required documentation by postal mail to:

Office of Financial Aid

Hood College

401 Rosemont Ave

Frederick, MD 21701