Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

There are three major standards listed below that are used to determine eligibility for participation in financial aid programs at Northern New Mexico College. To maintain eligibility a student must be meeting the minimum standards for SAP by the end of any given enrollment period. Though this policy establishes the minimum standards for federal financial aid programs at NNMC, an individual aid program may have unique qualitative and/or quantitative standards as mandated by law or the program’s governing entity (e.g., Legislative 3% Scholarship and the Legislative Lottery Scholarship).

Minimum Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

1. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students must meet the minimum of a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

2. Completion Rate

Students must earn 67 percent of the total number of credits they attempt. A student’s completion rate is calculated by dividing the total number of earned credits by the total number of attempted credits. This is calculated on a cumulative bases at the end of each term.

3. Maximum Time Frame

Financial aid eligibility is limited to 150 percent of the published length of the student’s declared program of study. This is based on the total credits required for the program not necessarily the time a student is expected to complete the program. For example: the Bachelor’s in Business Administration requires 120 credit hours to complete the program. A student may attempt and receive aid for a total of 180 credits (120 credit hours x 150% = 180 credit hours) maximum.

The following criterion applies when evaluating a student’s Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards:

Earned Credit: Courses in which grades of A, B, C, D, or CR are considered earned and completed.

Attempted Credit: Courses with assigned grades of W, I, NC, and F are considered attempted but not earned hours.

Repeated courses: Are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours. A student is allowed to repeat a course once if previously passed. A student is allowed to repeat a course twice if previously failed.
Audited courses: Are not included in the determination of SAP nor are they eligible to be counted in a student’s enrollment status for the purpose of awarding aid.

Remedial courses: For the purpose of evaluating the maximum time frame, up to 30 hours of remedial courses are excluded in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours, and for the purpose of evaluating the GPA standard, passing grades of (CR) are calculated at a 4.0 grade point average.

Transfer credits: With the exception of remedial courses, all transfer credit hours that are counted as credit toward a student’s declared degree/certificate are included in the maximum time frame calculation (even if the student received no federal student aid for those courses). Transfer credits however, are not included in the calculation of GPA.

Changing a Program of Study and/or Pursuing Additional Degree: Students are allowed to change majors, but may not exceed the maximum time frame as noted in item 3 above.

Semester Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Review: Those students not meeting the minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of any given enrollment period will be placed in either of the following statuses:

Warning: A student placed on a warning may continue to receive financial aid for the assigned warning payment period/semester, but must meet the minimum SAP standards by the end of the warning semester.

Suspension: If a student does not attain the required cumulative GPA and/or credit completion ratio by the end of the warning semester, or if it is determined that a student is within 36 credits of reaching the 150% maximum time frame or has exceeded the time frame, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension status and will be notified of the change in eligibility. While on suspension status a student is not eligible to receive financial aid (The exceptions are external scholarships that may have different eligibility requirements). To regain eligibility a student must meet the minimum SAP standards by enrolling in and completing courses or by successfully gaining back eligibility through the appeal process. Appealing suspension status is explained below.

Appealing the Suspension of Financial Aid Eligibility

If there are extenuating circumstances that contributed to a student’s inability to meet the minimum required SAP standards the student can formally appeal the suspension status by completing and submitting the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form for Financial Aid Recipients, and all required supplemental documentation to the Financial Aid Office. Incomplete appeals will not be reviewed. Some examples of extenuating circumstances might include:

- Severe illness, medical condition, or injury
- Death of a family member
- Traumatic life-altering event

A complete appeal includes

- Required documentation based on circumstance you are appealing under
- Complete and concise answers to all of the questions on the appeal form
• An Academic Improvement plan, signed by both the student and the academic advisor, outlining the steps the student is committed to taking to meet the SAP requirements, for example attending tutoring, peer counselling, instructor check-ins, or meeting with a professional counselor.

Appeal Review: All SAP appeals will be reviewed by a committee. Students will not be permitted to personally address the committee, so it is important that you submit all required documents with your appeal and answer all questions, in a clear and concise manner, on the appeal form. Committee decisions are final.

Approved Appeal: If the appeal is approved, the student’s financial aid eligibility will be reinstated on a probationary status for one semester. At the end of this semester the student must be meeting all SAP requirements or they forfeit future aid eligibility. Students who have demonstrated significant academic improvement and are close to meeting SAP requirements may appeal for an additional probationary semester.

Denied Appeal: If the appeal is denied financial aid suspension status remains until the student completes courses and attains the minimum SAP standards. The student will be responsible for any charges incurred by enrolling in courses.

Reinstatement of aid:
If a student is readmitted and demonstrated improved academic abilities during their absence, or subsequently meets SAP requirements after losing aid eligibility, the college will consider the student’s application for financial aid. In order to remain eligible for aid, the student must meet the minimum academic progress standards as outlined or lose eligibility for the following semester.