



## GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy 2024-2025

(Effective Fall 2024, supersedes all previous SAP policies)

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Federal regulations require Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges to establish, publish, and apply satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards for all financial aid recipients at the end of each term. SAP standards apply for all federal, state and institutional grants, loans, and work-study. It is the responsibility of all financial aid recipients to understand the terms and conditions of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca SAP policy in order to maintain their eligibility to receive aid. In addition to maintaining SAP standards, a student will be eligible for financial aid ONLY if college records indicate that they are enrolled BOTH in a current ELIGIBLE Education Goal AND a current ELIGIBLE Academic Program.

Financial Aid SAP standards are separate and distinct from general academic policies and apply only to financial aid applicants (current and new applicants). A similar but separate academic progress policy applies to the California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the Board of Governors [BOG] Fee Waiver).

#### **Satisfactory Academic Progress: 3 Required Standards**

1. **GRADE POINT AVERAGE:** a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0.
  - a. All transferable units from other colleges are calculated in the cumulative GPA. Official academic transcripts from all colleges attended (including foreign institutions) should be submitted to the Admissions & Records Office.
2. **PACE** (unit completion rate): A student must successfully complete 67% of units attempted.
  - a. Computed by dividing total Units Completed by Total Units Attempted.
  - b. Grades such as A, B, C, D, CR, or P are considered successfully completed
  - c. Grades such as F, W, EW, MW, NC, NP, RD, and I are NOT considered successfully completed, but count toward units attempted
3. **MAXIMUM TIMEFRAME (MTF):** or maximum time allowed a student to reach their educational objective, set at 150% of program length.
  - a. Since most Grossmont and Cuyamaca Associate degree programs and general education transfer programs are approximately 60 units, students will be expected to complete their educational objective by the time they have attempted 90 units (60 units times



150% equals 90 units attempted maximum). This includes a change of majors and degree objectives.

- b. Since most Grossmont and Cuyamaca Certificate programs are approximately 30 units, students will be expected to complete their educational objective by the time they have attempted 45 units (30 units times 150% equals 45 units attempted maximum).

\*At any point that it is determined a student cannot mathematically complete their program within the maximum timeframe in relation to the minimum pace required, a student must be immediately disqualified.

\*\*All repeated courses count toward the maximum timeframe GPA standards, including semesters for which Academic Renewal may have been applied by Admissions and Records or for which standard course repetition was achieved.

### **Remedial Coursework**

Students may be funded to a maximum of 30 units of remedial courses if documented by assessment scores and/or an academic counselor. Remedial courses taken in descending order or below the placement score will count as regular units and may not be deducted. Exceptions may be made if documented by Grossmont/Cuyamaca personnel and approved by the Financial Aid Office.

### **ESL Units:**

ESL coursework may be funded to a maximum of 35 units. ESL courses will be in addition to the established unit maximum stated above. Students who take ESL courses below the recommended placement level, per their assessment scores, will not have those courses considered as part of the 35 units and will be counted against the unit maximum. The unit maximum calculation will include ESL courses that are transferable or degree applicable.

### **How Standards Are Applied**

Each financial aid student's academic achievement is reviewed at the end of each semester (including the summer term if applicable). Students must meet all three standards for continued financial aid eligibility.

### **Academic Goal and Program (Major)**

Students must declare a financial aid eligible academic goal and academic program (major) by choosing the degree or certificate program that best suits their educational or career goals. The catalog lists the requirements for various majors and not all goals and majors are eligible for financial aid. If undecided about a major course of study, it is recommended that students meet with an academic counselor.

\*Refer to Current Course Catalog for unit requirements. Certificates of Proficiency are not approved for federal financial aid programs.



### **TRANSFER STUDENTS:**

Students transferring to Grossmont or Cuyamaca College with at least 12 units attempted and with an overall G.P.A. less than 2.0 will be subject to the Financial Aid Appeal process.

### **CREDIT BY EXAM:**

Units earned through Credit by Exam cannot be counted for federal aid payment purposes. These units still count toward SAP determination.

### **WARNING, DISQUALIFICATION, APPEAL PROCESS, REINSTATEMENT, AND PROBATION:**

#### **Financial Aid Warning:**

Students who do not meet SAP standards can be placed on Financial Aid *Warning* for the next semester. However, students on Financial Aid Warning or Financial Aid Probation status are not eligible to be placed on *Warning* status again for a consecutive term. In addition, students who have completed four or more terms and have an overall GPA that is below a 2.0 are not eligible for Financial Aid *Warning* status.

Students placed on Warning status are eligible for financial aid for the Warning term and must meet SAP standards for that term in order to maintain their continued financial aid eligibility.

Students will be notified in writing that they have been placed on Warning status and they will not be required to submit a SAP Appeal for the Warning term. A student placed on Financial Aid Warning who does not make SAP again for the Warning term will be disqualified the following term and will be subject to the Financial Aid Appeal process.

**\*System Implementation:** Students with prior academic history within the Grossmont/Cuyamaca district will be evaluated at the end of the 2023/2024 aid year to ensure they meet the minimum cumulative SAP standards of 67% completion rate, 2.0 GPA, and within the 150% timeframe. If not, a student will not receive a *Warning* term but will be subject to disqualification and be required to submit a financial aid appeal.

#### **Financial Aid Disqualification:**

All students who do not meet all SAP standards (excluding students who meet the Financial Aid Warning status) will be disqualified from receiving financial aid.

Students who choose not to complete an SAP Appeal or who do not make SAP while on Financial Aid Probation will be disqualified and will not regain eligibility for Title IV aid at Grossmont or Cuyamaca College until they meet the reinstatement conditions outlined below.

#### **Financial Aid Appeal Process and Reinstatement:**



Reinstatement is not an automatic process and is not guaranteed. Students may attempt to regain eligibility for financial aid after disqualification and/or denial of appeal for lack of progress by:

1. Enrolling in a minimum of six (6) units and successfully completing a semester according to the SAP standards outlined above, and
2. Meeting with an Academic Counselor to complete a Comprehensive Educational Plan. Students must submit their Education Plan with their appeal.
3. Students MUST describe how they have resolved the issues that prevented them from making SAP and describe any preventative measures they have enacted to ensure it will not be a factor in their future progress.
4. Students must provide their unofficial Grossmont/Cuyamaca College transcripts.
5. Students must submit supporting documentation of their extenuating circumstances that caused them to not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.
6. Complying with any other specific conditions that were set in the Appeal decision made by the Financial Aid Advisor or the Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

Following each semester, the GPA and the number of units completed will be evaluated based upon the 'SAP Pace of Progression' standards above.

#### **Financial Aid SAP Appeal Process:**

Students may appeal for reinstatement or continuation of financial aid by submitting a SAP Appeal form to the Financial Aid Office. The SAP Appeal must indicate:

1. A written explanation of extenuating circumstances surrounding why you did not complete the minimum number of units, maintain a 2.0 GPA, or exceed the maximum unit time frame.  
Extenuating personal circumstances may include:
  - a. Death of a relative or other significant person.
  - b. Injury or illness, including behavioral health conditions, of the student or a relative or other significant person.
  - c. Pregnancy or birth of a child.
  - d. Homelessness.
  - e. Loss of childcare.
  - f. Loss or change in employment.
  - g. Loss of access to personal or public transportation.
  - h. Being a victim of a serious crime, including domestic abuse, even if it was not reported or did not result in criminal prosecution or civil liability.



- i. Natural disaster.
  - j. Change of major.
2. The steps you will take to improve your academic status or positive progress to complete your educational objective.
3. Third-party documentation to support your extenuating circumstances.
4. A current Comprehensive Education Plan as completed by your Academic Counselor.

Appeals are initially reviewed by Financial Aid Advisors. Students approved through this process will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and eligible for financial aid.

#### **Retroactive Awards**

Students are not eligible for retroactive awards if the appeal is approved. Students who appeal only because they have completed more than the unit maximums may be eligible for a retroactive award because they may need additional units to complete their objective, and they are not in a lack of progress status for that retroactive term.

#### **Important Dates and Deadlines**

Per CA state assembly bill 789 (AB789), schools can no longer advertise SAP appeal deadline dates. Students may submit an appeal at any time. It is important to note, however, that federal financial aid regulations require that a student establish eligibility prior to the end of the term in which they are seeking financial aid. The financial aid office needs reasonable time to process appeals, so students that submit an appeal during the last two weeks of any term *may* not be able to establish eligibility prior to the end of the term.

#### **Probation**

Students approved through the Appeals process will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and eligible for financial aid.

Students on Financial Aid Probation must make SAP according to SAP general standards above by the end of the following term and may also need to meet the conditions set by the Appeals Committee to maintain financial aid eligibility. If they do not, they will need to submit an additional appeal for the following term.

Students subject to disqualification going into summer must submit a petition for reinstatement for the subsequent fall or spring term. If a student receives financial aid in the summer session, they will be held to the SAP criteria previously outlined in the General SAP standards.

#### **APPEAL OF DENIED PETITION**



Students wishing to appeal the denial of their financial aid appeal must submit a Second Level Appeal form with documentation of extenuating circumstances not already presented. The appeal will be reviewed by a committee consisting of Financial Aid Advisors, Academic Counseling staff, the Financial Aid Supervisor, and/or the Director of Financial Aid.

Students may appeal the committee's decision to the Director of Financial Aid. Students must provide compelling information regarding the College, District, State and/or Federal regulations or policies that were misinterpreted or wrongly applied by the committee to the Director.