

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

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This applies to all students. It is of particular importance if you are receiving financial aid under the Federal Student Financial Aid (FSA) program because these students may lose their eligibility for aid for at least one semester if they do not adhere to this policy. They may reestablish their eligibility for the following semester by meeting the standards of this policy.

There are two components to satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Students must meet both the standards to achieve and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

- One measurement is called "pace" and refers to the pace at which you proceed through the program (BFA or Diploma). It was previously known as the quantitative measurement.

**Important note:** In accordance with federal guidelines, students must complete all of their BFA or Diploma requirements in no more than 150% of the published length of the educational program. For a standard four-year, 120-credit program such as that at Montserrat, a student may take up to a maximum of six (6) academic years to complete the program and maintain eligibility for federal financial aid.

- The other measurement is called the qualitative measurement. It refers to your grade point average (GPA), both for each semester and the cumulative GPA (all semesters combined).

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### A. Pace (previously known as the *quantitative* measurement)

The pace at which a student makes his or her way through the program is measured by the number of credits successfully completed divided by the number of "credits attempted". This is a cumulative measurement, which is evaluated at the end of every semester. See examples below.

"Credits attempted" includes all courses taken for credit, regardless of the grade received, plus courses with designations of W (Withdrawal) or I (Incomplete) EXCEPT courses that are dropped within the Add/Drop period at the very beginning of each semester, and remedial, enrichment, and ESL courses. EN099 is not included. All other courses, even those courses from which the student later withdraws under the Withdrawal Policy, are included.

All accepted transfer credits are applied toward pace. See Part B below for an explanation of transferred grades and GPA.

*Examples:*

- Student Q enrolls in 15 credits for her first college semester, completes and passes all 15. The student has a 100% completion rate.
- Student L has just finished his second year. He has taken 20 courses (5 each semester) for a total of 60 credits. Out of those 60 credits, he failed two courses (6 credits). He withdrew from two other courses (6 credits). Out of the 60 credits attempted, he completed 48. His pace is 80%. His pace is satisfactory.
- Student V is in the middle of her third year. She has taken a total of 66 credits (first year=27; second year=24; first semester, third year=15). Of those, she failed 12 credits and withdrew from 9 credits, so she completed 45 credits (66 – 21=45). Her completion rate is 68%, so she is not achieving pace, therefore not making satisfactory academic progress.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** IF A STUDENT FAILS A COURSE AND HAS TO REPEAT THE SAME COURSE, BOTH ARE COUNTED AS "CREDITS ATTEMPTED". SEE THE SECTION ON REPEATING A COURSE, BELOW.

The minimum acceptable pace (number of credits successfully completed divided by total number of credits attempted) increases with each academic year in the program:

<b>Year Level (academic year)*</b>	<b>Total # credits attempted**</b>	<b>Minimum acceptable pace (Percent of credits completed)</b>
First Year	(Up to 29 credits)	67%
Second Year	(30-59 credits)	67%
Third Year	(60-89 credits)	67%
Fourth and above	(90+)	67%

\*Based upon the number of credits attempted at Montserrat and any accepted transfer credits

\*\*Number of credits attempted at Montserrat and accepted transfer credits

#### **B. Qualitative measurement (Grade-Point Average—GPA)**

Beginning with the first semester, students must earn and thereafter maintain a cumulative minimum grade-point average (GPA) no lower than 2.0 to maintain the qualitative standard of satisfactory academic progress. [Students should consult the College Catalog and relevant sections of the Student Handbook for an explanation of the grading system and for the method used to calculate the grade-point average.] NOTE: Although the credits from accepted transfer courses are counted toward the pace component of satisfactory academic progress, grades earned from accepted transfer courses are not included in the calculation of GPA. Please see the section in this handbook that discusses GPA for a full explanation.

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#### **Repeating a Course**

A student may repeat a course (take the identical course more than once) for different reasons. Under the FSA regulations, there are certain things that are allowable and certain things that are not and there are consequences that must be taken into account. REMINDER: Repeating a course will affect both the pace and qualitative (GPA) measurement because all enrollments taken for credit (the original and the repeated efforts) are counted as "credits attempted" for the calculation of satisfactory academic progress.

a. Repeating a required course as a result of a failing grade or a grade that does not meet the standard for the course, concentration or program\*: If a student has not met the minimum acceptable grade in a required course and must repeat the same course, the student may do this as many times as necessary in order to achieve the grade. Remember that all course credits, both the original enrollment and the repetitions, are counted as "credits attempted" when calculating pace.

**IMPORTANT:** For the purpose of determining federal financial aid eligibility, the federal regulations do not count the repeated effort(s) in determining "full-time" status, which is a minimum of 12 credits in a semester. This means that if a student is repeating a course—even if that course is required—the credits for the repeated effort(s) are not recognized as part of the full-time load. Therefore, in order to maintain eligibility as a full-time student for federal student aid the student must take at least 12 credits IN ADDITION to repeated course(s).

\*Example: A student earns a D in English Composition I, but a C- is the minimum required to pass. Therefore, the student has not met the standard for the course and, because it is a required course, the student must repeat it. There are other

courses and programs that also stipulate minimum acceptable passing grades. See the Montserrat website for individual course listings and program descriptions.

b. *Repeating a course for additional experience or to improve a grade in a previously passed course:* A student may repeat a course that he or she previously took and passed, but only once to still have it count toward federal financial aid eligibility.

*Example:* A student has taken and successfully passed Advanced Drawing Workshop (3 credits) and would like to take it again to enhance his or her experience and gain additional skill. The student may do so one time, and maintain eligibility as a full-time student for federal financial aid as long as the student is taking a full-time course load.

### **Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress**

The College will evaluate each student's satisfactory academic progress (both pace and qualitative measurement) at the end of each semester. Should a student fail to meet the minimum standard of either or both SAP components, that student may risk one of the following:

- a. academic probation for one semester;
- b. dismissal from the college.

The college Registrar will notify the student of his or her failure to make satisfactory academic progress and will inform the student of his or her right to appeal. This is the student's choice and responsibility.

#### Appeal process

A student who wishes to appeal must do so in writing to the Registrar no later than 14 days after the issuance of notification of his or her failure to make satisfactory academic progress. Unusual and/or extreme circumstances beyond the student's control which have interfered with the student's ability achieve satisfactory academic progress will be taken into account at the student's request. The student must present in his or her written appeal the reasons for the failure to make progress, as well as a plan and timeline for meeting the standards.

A panel will review the student's written appeal and the student's academic record, will consider the circumstances the student has presented, as well as the student's plan, and will be responsible for making a final determination of the student's status. The student may be required to meet with the panel. The panel will issue their decision in writing to the student at the mailing address on file at the time of the appeal. The panel will be made up of academic and student services administrators.

#### Appeal accepted

Should the student's appeal be accepted, the student will be on academic probation for the following semester. At the end of that semester the student's SAP will be evaluated again. At that time:

- If the student has achieved SAP, the student will no longer be on academic probation.

or

- If the student once again fails to meet one or both standards for satisfactory academic progress, he or she may continue on probation or may be dismissed from the college.

### **For students receiving federal student aid (FSA):**

1. At the end of the first semester during which the student has not made satisfactory academic progress the student will receive a Financial Aid Warning. If the student is permitted to continue his or her enrollment (e.g. not dismissed under the dismissal policy), the student may continue to receive FSA during the following semester while on warning. During this semester, the student must regain satisfactory academic progress (SAP).

2. If the student fails to achieve SAP by the end of the warning semester, is permitted to continue enrollment, and wishes to continue eligibility for federal student aid, he or she **MUST** file an appeal. If it is determined that the student has a mathematical possibility to achieve satisfactory academic progress by the end of the following semester or if the student is eligible to enter into a Personalized Academic Plan, AND the appeal is accepted by the college, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and will be allowed to continue to receive FSA for one more semester. If the appeal is rejected, the student will be ineligible for FSA.

NOTE: If the student chooses not to appeal, the student will be ineligible for FSA.

3. If the student does not achieve satisfactory academic progress during the probationary semester, or, for students who have a Personalized Academic Plan, if the student is not making sufficient progress on the plan, the student will be ineligible for FSA for the following semester.

4. A student who has lost eligibility for FSA may re-establish eligibility by successfully achieving satisfactory academic progress during the following semester.

(NOTES:

- FSA eligibility is NOT retroactive.
- No student may have consecutive semesters of Financial Aid Probation.)

#### Personalized Academic Plan

The Office of the Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing a student's Personalized Academic Plan. Should this option be available to the student, the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs will work with the student to design the plan and will supervise the student, collaborating with the student's advisor and integrating resources from elsewhere in the college, as needed.

#### Appeal rejected

A student whose appeal is rejected is not eligible for federal financial aid for the following semester. The student may re-establish eligibility by meeting SAP standards during that semester, to be determined during the evaluation at the end of the semester.

NOTE: The college maintains authority over decisions of academic probation and dismissal, according to existing policies. A student may be on academic