



SAP GPA and Academic GPA

During recent reviews across the district, an issue was identified regarding MCCCDC's SAP GPA and the Academic GPA.

Issue: SAP GPA and Academic GPA Discrepancy

Background: The Academic GPA in the Common Pages is for all students attending MCCCDC, regardless of financial aid eligibility.

The Financial Aid Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy and requisite GPA applies to students receiving Federal Student Aid only.

Applicable Law: HEA Sec. 484 (c), 34 CFR 668.34(a)(1). The law says that the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy must be "at least as strict as the policy the institution applies to a student who is not receiving assistance under the Title IV, HEA programs."

The Academic GPA (2.0) listed in the [Maricopa Common Pages](#) section 2.3.4 "Academic Probation" is not consistent with the Maricopa Financial Aid [Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#) GPA (1.6 – 2.0). Since these two policies are not consistent and the SAP policy is not "at least as strict" as the Academic GPA policy, we are currently out of compliance.

Implementation Timeline: Summer 2020. The best practice in financial aid is to implement new policy at the beginning of a new aid year when system configurations are required.

SOLUTION

Financial Aid SAP GPA will be changed to 2.0 across the board to align with the academic GPA. With this change, MCCCDC will implement a Financial Aid warning period to allow students one semester of eligible financial aid upon failing SAP.

JUSTIFICATION

A financial aid warning period is allowed by the U.S. Department of Education and is a delivered functionality in SIS. Those students who are not currently meeting the 2.0 SAP GPA (as of the date of the change) may be eligible for the one-semester warning period where they will still be able to receive Financial

Aid. The SAP warning period would allow students the opportunity for tutoring or other resources to help them meet Satisfactory Academic Progress at the next evaluation period to continue receiving federal student aid for the next payment period. The warning period will also allow colleges to communicate and deliver available resources to support student success.

By utilizing the FA SAP warning period, students still remain eligible to file a SAP appeal after the one (1) semester warning period if they are not meeting SAP at the end of the FA warning period, provided they had experienced extenuating circumstances causing them to drop below Satisfactory Academic Progress. Since the financial aid warning period is consistent with federal regulations, SIS already delivers the functionality, but will require IT support to change the current SAP evaluation and status assignment. Moreover, the district already evaluates SAP after each payment period, which is consistent with a warning period policy.

IMPLEMENTATION (To be completed by May 1 for live implementation by the SAP evaluation for Summer 2020)

In accordance with 34 CFR 668.34(c)(3)(iii)(B) and 668.34(d)(2)(iii)(B), the SAP Appeal process will be audited, reviewed and guidance provided on how to determine extenuating circumstances and implement academic plans as required for SAP probation beyond one semester (payment period). This guidance will be rolled out early February 2020.

Thank you for your compliance and for helping our students meet their academic goals!

For additional information on this subject please feel free to email Melissa Flores or Annette Linders.