

Office of Student Financial Aid Services

December 2022 Podcast

Hernan:

UConn Nation yes, it's me again, Hernan Cortez, your financial aid officer, here at the Storrs Campus.

Welcome back to our Podcast here in December. Right now, most of you are probably studying for your finals and working on your projects, I want to wish good luck to that.

So, today we are going to talk about two topics Satisfactory Academic Progress also known as SAP and Academic Engagement. And I have with me Kathryn Satagaj, who is the expert on this topic. Welcome Kathryn.

Kathryn:

Hi Hernan.

Hernan:

Hi. So, let's get this started and Kathryn, what do students need to know about SAP?

Kathryn:

OK, so essentially SAP measures a student's successful completion of coursework towards their degree. When students are evaluated for compliance with our SAP Policy, our office is looking at three things.

The first thing being the GPA. Depending on where exactly a student is in their career, there are different GPA requirements.

- Undergraduate students with less than 24 credits earned need to have a minimum GPA of a 1.8. Once an undergraduate student has earned more than 24 credits, the minimum GPA is bumped up to a 2.0.
- Our graduate students have a bit of a higher standard, their minimum GPA is a 3.0, regardless of how many credits they have earned.

The second thing that students are evaluated on is what we refer to as pace. All students, both graduate and undergraduate, need to earn at least 67% of their cumulative attempted credit hours. Any grade that results in a student not earning credit for a course, so, for example, an incomplete grade, a withdrawal from a class, or an F grade, negatively impacts a student's pace, because it counts as credit hours attempted, but not earned.

The final thing that our office is looking at is each student's maximum timeframe. So, students are expected to complete their degrees within a specific timeframe. The undergraduate maximum timeframe is 150% of its public, of its published length. So, for the majority of our students, who are able to graduate after earning 120 credit hours, if they exceed 180 attempted credit hours, they will have reached their maximum timeframe, and will not be eligible for most forms of aid.

So, now that we've discussed the basics, I'd like to share some details about our upcoming fall 2022 SAP Evaluation. So, this evaluation is scheduled to take place on December 29th, so after the fall term grades have posted. One thing to note, about the fall evaluation is that it is a little bit different from the annual spring evaluation, since we are only evaluating students who are currently on a Financial Aid Eligibility Plan. So, these are the students who were cited for SAP, likely during our evaluation that occurred in May of 2022, or if they took summer classes, during our September evaluation, and were placed on a financial aid eligibility plan.

So, the students who did not meet the terms of that plan and if anyone needs a reminder of the plan's standards, they can visit our website, they will be cited again, and will be notified via their university email on the evening of December 29th. So, it's super, super, super important for students to read the instructions in this email very carefully, as it will guide them through their next steps.

So, just because a student finds themselves cited maybe again for SAP, not all hope is lost. Our student does have an appeal option available to these students. In the appeal process there is essentially two parts. The first part is the SAP appeal form. So, this form is available in our 2022-2023 Forms Portal, on our website and when completing the form, students should be detailed enough to explain three things. The first is what prevented them from meeting the SAP standards, what has changed in their situation, and what they will do differently in order to succeed.

The second required piece of the appeal is the third-party documentation. So, this third-party documentation should really be something that supports the students appeal, depending on their circumstance, it could be something like a letter from their advisor, a letter from the Dean of Student's office, a faculty member, or even a doctor. Our office does not accept letters from family members as third-party documentation.

It's really important for students to know that appeals that are submitted without documentation are considered to be incomplete and will not be reviewed. If documentation is not received by our deadline, the appeal will be denied, and the student will not be eligible for spring aid.

The deadline for SAP Appeals is January 7, 2023.

Like I mentioned before, all of this information can be found, on our website, and that is financialaid.uconn.edu/sap.

And just a side note, students who might want to estimate their SAP status prior to the evaluation, can do so by utilizing our SAP calculator that's available on our website just under the understanding that this information is only as accurate as what has been provided, so it is truly, only an estimate.

Hernan:

Wow Kathryn. That's quite of bit of information. I'm going to let you catch your breath for a second there. But no, thank you that's very vital information for students to know. So please students as Kathryn mentioned you want to check your emails especially by mid-December after grades have posted or excuse me in late December to ensure that if you are required to appeal that you do by the appeal deadline of January 7.

So, Kathryn on another topic, is Academic Engagement. What can you tell the students about that.

Kathryn:

Right, like our SAP evaluation, our office will also evaluate students for academic engagement on December 29th. This process will impact all federal financial aid recipients who did not receive any passing grades during the fall semester, and this is because our office is required to comply with the Title IV regulations to ensure that anyone who received federal student aid completed academic credit for which that aid was awarded.

Affected students will receive an email from our office informing them that they have been cited and must submit an Academic Engagement appeal in order to keep their financial aid for the Fall 2022 semester.

This appeal form will also be available on our website and the link will also be in the citation email. So, in addition to the appeal form, students will be required to provide documentation proving that they were academically engaged throughout the semester.

So, there is a couple of different things that students can submit as supporting documentation and it is spelled out on the form. Some of this documentation can include:

- Confirmation from a professor. So, if a student selects this option, they must have the professor complete and sign the academic engagement form in ink or the professor can email the student with their selection from their university email account.
- The next option for documentation is a dated and graded assignment. So, an assignment must include the date of submission and the grade received. If the date or grade are missing or it's not clear, the appeal is considered incomplete. So, it's very important that whatever is submitted to our office the date and grade are clear.
- And the third option is proof of participation in an online discussion where the date of participation again is also clear. So, this would be something maybe through their Husky CT/ Blackboard website.

Hernan:

Yeah, Yeah, Yes

Kathryn:

Students should really be aware that they should be demonstrating that they were engaged past the 60% point in the semester in order to remain eligible for 100% of their aid. The 60% point for the Fall was October 30, 2022. So, any supporting documentation, like an assignment, should be dated on or after that date in order for aid not to be adjusted.

The appeal deadline for academic engagement is January 7, 2023. Unfortunately, given the strict deadlines for return of funds, our office cannot make exceptions to this deadline.

So, like the SAP info, the Academic Engagement information can also be found on our website at financialaid.uconn.edu/academic-engagement.

Hernan:

Thank you, Kathryn. Thank you. Quick question, can a student be cited for both SAP and Academic Engagement?

Kathryn:

Yes

Hernan:

If they are, do they have to appeal for both separately.

Kathryn:

Yes, and we see this happen sometimes where students are cited for both. They do have to submit these appeals separately. They are separate appeals, that require separate documentation.

Hernan:

Great, great thank you. Again Kathryn, thank you for this vital critical information for students to know. But students you know just a quick some quick reminders or one quick reminder don't forget you still have time to fill out your 2022-2020, I said that wrong, 2023-2024 financial aid applications through either studentaid.gov or for our Institutional Aid Application, you can go and visit our site. Definitely make sure you get that done, you have until February 15, 2023, to do so, but don't wait until the last day.

Also, as you know already the fee bills have come out already from the Bursars office and they are due on January 8 so make sure that you are moving forward in getting that paid by the deadline or else you will incur a \$150 late fee that will be administered by the Office of the Bursar.

So, with that in mind or with those things in mind I want to thank Kathryn for being here and sharing that vital information to you for you all.

And I want to wish you all a Happy Holiday Season and enjoy the end of your so semester and we'll welcome you back in January.

So, with that, take care and best of luck. Bye, bye.