Policy: Satisfactory Academic Performance Policy
Subject: Satisfactory Academic Performance Standards and their Application
Rev.: 1

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)
May 1, 2013

Section 1. Process Overview & Responsibilities

To be eligible for Title IV/Federal Financial Aid, a Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) student must maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP). VTCSOM established, publishes, and applies reasonable standards for measuring whether or not students are maintaining SAP. The financial aid satisfactory academic progress standards are the same as the standards the school uses for students who are not receiving Title IV aid (see section 2).

SAP is a responsibility that is shared throughout VTCSOM. Those offices include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Interoffice Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Reports grades to Assessment</td>
<td>Electronically or hand delivered within 48 hours after the final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Reports Grades to Office of Medical Education</td>
<td>Reports BLOCK grades within 48 hours of the end of exam/special studies period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Medical Education</td>
<td>Reviews grades and submits them to the Registrar for entry on the Transcript</td>
<td>Hand delivery of the grades to the Office of Enrollment Management and Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Enrollment Management and Registrar</td>
<td>Enters grades on the transcript; prepares report for Office of Financial Aid Administration and Third Party Servicer</td>
<td>Securely transmits report to Third Party Servicer, with a copy to Office of Financial Aid Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Servicer</td>
<td>Provides Financial Aid notice(s) to students and ED, where applicable</td>
<td>Electronically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Medical Education</td>
<td>Reviews summer session remediation grades and submits them to the Registrar for entry on the Transcript</td>
<td>Hand delivery of the grades to the Office of Enrollment Management and Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Enrollment Management</td>
<td>Enters grades on the transcript; prepares report for Office of Financial Aid Administration</td>
<td>Securely transmits report to Third Party Servicer, with a copy to Office of Financial Aid Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because there is more than one condition that VTCSOM monitors to determine a student’s SAP, administration uses an *If/Then Decision Table* to chart the implementation of the policies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If</th>
<th>Then</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student has made acceptable quantitative progress for the payment period or year being measured</td>
<td>Review the student’s qualitative progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has made acceptable qualitative progress for the payment period or year being measured</td>
<td>Review the student’s quantitative progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has failed either quantitative or qualitative progress</td>
<td>Put the student on financial aid warning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 2. “Same As” Policy**

VTCSOM’s SAP policy for Title IV students is the same as the school’s standards for students enrolled in the same educational program who are not receiving Title IV aid. The minimum Title IV requirement for a student in his or her second academic year is a passing grade in all Blocks (academic standing consistent with requirements for graduation). The Title IV SAP policy is reviewed, evaluated and approved by the Medical Curriculum Committee (MCC) on a three year basis.

**Procedures**

1. The Office of Financial Aid Administration (FAA) reviews the SAP policy to ensure it meets all federal requirements.
   a. This is achieved by referencing the latest information provided by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) at [http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/).
   b. Other sources of information include Dear Colleague Letters, and national organization publications.

2. Following review and revision, where applicable, the FAA electronically forwards the draft to the Associate Dean for Medical Education for academic requirements review, editing (where applicable), and presentation to the MCC.

3. Once approved, the final version of the policy is provided to the VTCSOM leadership team, particularly the Offices of Medical Education, Student Affairs, and Financial Aid.

**Section 3. Categories of Students Policy**
VTCSOM has only full-time students enrolled in the M.D. program, and the school does not offer second degrees. Therefore, only one SAP standard is used. The student category is monitored by the Associate Dean for Medical Education and the Office of Enrollment Management and Registrar, and they are responsible for notifying Enrollment Management and the FAA.

Section 4. Qualitative Measure

Policy

The VTCSOM uses a “pass-fail” system of grading. The minimum acceptable qualitative measure for SAP is that a student must receive a grade of “Satisfactory (S)” in each area of the curriculum. In order to achieve a passing grade in each area of the curriculum, the MCC has established the following fixed measurements:

Phase-1

Success in achieving the stated learning objectives of the Phase-1 curriculum will be measured at regular intervals using both objective and subjective measures. Each interval evaluation (Block) exam will be comprised of six (6) individual component evaluations: four Domain Assessment Tools, an Integrated Case Exam and the Patient Centered Learning Case Facilitator Evaluation. Individual elements of each component are indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of the Learning Assessment Plan</th>
<th>Component Passing Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Science Domain</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MCQ Exam (NBME Questions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Laboratory Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Science Domain</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MCQ Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clinical Skills Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Domain</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Written/MCQ Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interprofessionalism Domain</td>
<td>75%**</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preceptor Evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team Action Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Written/MCQ Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Case Exam</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Case-Based Short Answer Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Patient Centered Learning Case Facilitator Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*NOTE: (TBD): the passing score for the Basic Science Domain is determined based on individual block exam format and the use of NBME cut-score standards.
** NOTE (75%): the passing score in some blocks for Inter-professionalism may be different than 75% to be congruent with other Interprofessional School grading standards.

Phase-2 (years three and four of the curriculum)

Success in achieving the stated learning objectives of the Phase-2 curriculum will be measured at regular intervals using both objective and subjective measures. Each clerkship or elective will determine the components that comprise the final assessment, although all rotations (clerkships or electives) will, at a minimum, utilize a composite of evaluations.

The six (6) core clerkships (Emergency Medicine, Family and Community Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Surgery) will administer a written examination with questions similar to those on the USMLE Step II Clinical Knowledge examination. At the conclusion of five (5) of the core clerkships (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics and Surgery), there will be a two-station Clinical Skills Examination. All grades are S/U.

Policy Summary:

1. Grade measurements are fixed.
2. All students are enrolled in a program of more than two academic years in length.
3. At the end of the second academic year the student must have achieved all satisfactory grades in order to advance to the clerkship years (academic standing consistent with the school’s requirements for graduation).
   - The end of the second academic year is defined as the student being at the school for four semesters regardless of a student’s enrollment status.
4. VTCSOM does not accept transfer credits.
5. The consequence of not meeting the qualitative standards is that the student is put on financial aid warning.
6. The Associate Dean for Medical Education measures qualitative progress.

Procedure

1. Qualitative progress is checked by the Associate Dean for Medical Education at the end of every semester.
2. The financial aid office/third party servicer receives this information from a report of the registrar’s office for Title IV students.
3. Qualitative progress is documented by a notation in the student’s file.
4. Students are informed of qualitative progress or lack thereof with the electronic release of grades.

Section 5. Quantitative Measure
Policy

The VTCSOM quantitative measure of SAP includes two parts: maximum timeframe and pace.

1. Maximum timeframe. The first part of the quantitative measure of SAP sets a maximum timeframe, measured by attempted credit hours, by which a student must complete an academic program.
   a. The maximum time frame a student must complete the M.D. educational program is six years.
   b. VTCSOM enrolls only full-time students.
   c. Attempted hours are counted for all terms, hours for which the student did not receive financial aid as well as those usually waived under academic amnesty policies.
   d. The consequence of exceeding, or being unable to complete, program requirements within the maximum time frame is that the student is denied future Title IV aid.
   e. A student who exceeds the maximum time frame is ineligible for financial aid warning or financial aid probation.
      i. VTCSOM allows students to appeal the maximum time frame.
         1. Students must submit their request to the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs.
         2. The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs reviews and, if appropriate, forwards the request for appeal to the MSPPC.
         3. The decision of the MSPPC is final.
      ii. Students may be placed on an academic plan if the appeal is approved.

2. Pace. The second part includes determining whether a student is on pace to complete the academic program within that set maximum time frame. As soon as it becomes apparent to the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs that a student will be unable to complete their academic program within the maximum time frame, either by falling below the pace standard or when it becomes mathematically impossible to complete their program within the maximum time frame, the student is ineligible for Title IV aid.
   a. Calculation. A student’s pace is measured at each evaluation. The Assessment Director monitors a student’s pace, which is an automated calculation determined by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has completed by the cumulative number of hours the student has attempted.
i. VTCSOM includes summer session/remedial courses in the calculation of a student’s pace.

b. The pace at which students are expected to progress toward degree completion is M.D. educational program is defined as, “Completion of the first two years of the curriculum by the end of the third year after initial enrollment.” A student not making progress will be ineligible for financial aid until he/she has successfully completed course requirements to enter the third year of studies.

c. VTCSOM enrolls only full-time students.

d. VTCSOM does not accept transfer credits.

e. The Third Party Servicer maintains student financial aid records and documents a student’s pace with a notation is the student’s file.

Procedure

1. At a minimum, SAP is manually reviewed by the Associate Dean for Medical Education at the end of each Semester (corresponding to payment period).
   a. As soon as it becomes apparent to the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs that a student will be unable to complete their academic program within the maximum time frame, either by falling below the pace standard or when it becomes mathematically impossible to complete their program within the maximum time frame, s/he notifies the Office of Enrollment Management and Registrar of the SAP status of the students.

2. SAP is manually reported by the Associate Dean for Medical Education to the Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar.

3. The Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar reports SAP to the FAA/Third Party Servicer.
   a. The Third Party Servicer and financial aid office receives quantitative information about Title IV recipients (registrar’s office provides a report with quantitative data for Title IV recipients).

4. The Third Party Servicer electronically notifies the student that s/he is ineligible for Title IV aid, with copies to the FAA.

5. A student who exceeds the maximum time frame is ineligible for financial aid warning or financial aid probation. However, VTCSOM allows students to appeal maximum time frame.
   a. Students must submit their request to the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs.
b. The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs reviews and, if appropriate, forwards the request for appeal to the MSPPC.

c. Decisions of the MSPPC may be appealed to the Dean.

d. The decision of the Dean is final.

e. Students may be placed on an academic plan if the appeal is approved.

Section 6. Evaluation Periods

Policy

To ensure the student is making sufficient progress both quantitatively and qualitatively, regular evaluation is calculated on a semester basis (corresponding to the end of the payment periods). The minimum pace for SAP is defined as, “Completion of the first two years of the curriculum by the end of the third year after initial enrollment.” A student not making progress will be ineligible for financial aid until he/she has successfully completed course requirements to enter the third year of studies.

VTCSOM evaluates SAP after every payment period, and places students who fail to meet either the pace component, the grading component (Satisfactory), or both, on financial aid warning for one payment period. Students on financial aid warning remain eligible to receive Title IV funds.

1. The length of financial aid warning is one payment period.

2. A student is automatically put on financial aid warning the first time he or she fails to make SAP.

3. It is the student’s responsibility during a financial aid warning period to meet SAP standards by the end of the warning period.

4. A student will be denied future aid until regaining eligibility by meeting VTCSOM’s Title IV SAP standards.

5. Student’s are limited to four allowable financial aid warning periods during a student’s enrollment.

Procedures

1. Evaluation periods are defined by semesters, as detailed on the Academic Calendar.

2. Semesters correspond to the payment periods.

3. SAP is calculated at the end of:
a. For the M.D. program:
   i. Block II
   ii. Block IV
   iii. Block VII
   iv. M2 Research
   v. Clerkship Rotation 4
   vi. Clerkship Rotation 8
   vii. Elective Rotation 6B

4. Steps taken to put a student on financial aid warning:

   a. The Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar forwards a SAP report to the Third Party Servicer and the FAA.

   b. The Third Party Servicer’s financial aid staff records a code in the EDExpress/Banner computer system.

   c. The VTCSOM FAA monitors this process, and periodically surveys for compliance by checking not fewer than ten (10) percent of records on at least an annual basis.

   d. The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs monitors that students meet any required conditions.

   e. The student is sent a letter by the Third Party Servicer explaining warning and the consequences of not making SAP after the next payment period.

      i. At a minimum, VTCSOM requires counseling with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

      ii. If the student fails to make SAP, s/he is placed on financial aid probation and is ineligible for Title IV funding.

      iii. Students are eligible to file an appeal of the financial aid decision to the Financial Aid Administrator.

      iv. The decision of the Financial Aid Administrator can be appealed to the Dean.

      v. The decision of the Dean is final.

5. Financial Aid Probation.

   Policy

   If a student successfully files a SAP appeal, the student will be placed on financial aid probation for one payment period. Students on financial aid probation are eligible for Title IV aid. If the student will require more than one payment period to reestablish
eligibility with SAP standards, the student can also be placed on an academic plan. The student will be on financial aid probation during the first payment period of the academic plan.

a. A student is placed on probation for one payment period after successfully appealing a determination he or she is not making SAP.

b. It is the student’s responsibility during probation to make SAP standards at the end of the payment period (or term) or meet the conditions of his or her academic plan.

c. The student will be denied future aid until regaining eligibility by meeting the school’s Title IV SAP standards.

d. VTCSOM does not limit the number of probationary periods.

Procedures

6. Steps taken to put a student on financial aid probation:

   a. The Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar forwards a notice of the successful SAP appeal to the Third Party Servicer and the FAA.

   b. The Third Party Servicer’s financial aid staff records a code in the EDExpress/Banner computer system.

   c. The VTCSOM FAA monitors this process, and periodically surveys for compliance by checking not fewer than ten (10) percent of records on at least an annual basis.

   d. The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs monitors that students meet any required academic conditions.

   e. The student is sent a letter by the Third Party Servicer explaining probation and the consequences of not making SAP after the next payment period.

Section 7. Appeals

Policy

VTCSOM allows an appeal procedure for students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress. In order to approve a student’s appeal, VTCSOM must determine that the student will be able to meet its SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period or develop an academic plan for the student which, if followed, ensures he or she will be making SAP by the end of the next payment period.
All SAP standards may be appealed. Students are informed of the appeal process in the Student Handbook, and individually if a determination of insufficient SAP is made. All requests for an appeal must be in writing. It is the responsibility of the FAA to address all financial aid appeals. Students are not limited in the number of appeals they may submit for separate instances of failure to meet SAP standards. Students must file an appeal within ten days after receiving notification of a warning or probation from the Third Party Servicer. A student may expect a response to the appeal within ten days.

Examples of some mitigating circumstances by which an appeal include a family member’s death, or a student’s illness.

Procedures

- All students receiving a financial aid warning or notice of financial aid probation are electronically informed that all SAP standards may be appealed.

- All requests for a financial aid appeal must be in writing to the Associate Deans for Medical Education and Student Affairs.

- The Associate Deans for Medical Education and Student Affairs provide a written recommendation to the Financial Aid Administrator.

- It is the responsibility of the FAA to address all financial aid appeals in writing and to ensure compliance with all federal requirements.

- Students must file an appeal within ten days after receiving notification of a financial aid warning or probation.

- A student may expect a written response, with a copy forwarded electronically, to the appeal within five days.

- It is the responsibility of the FAA to notify the Third Party Servicer of the results of the appeal. Copies of the notification will be provided to the Associate Deans for Medical Education and Student Affairs, and the Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar.

Section 8. Documentation

Policy

Adequate documentation is critical. A student who appeals must submit information explaining why he or she failed to meet SAP standards and what has changed in his or her situation which will allow him or her to be making SAP by the next evaluation. Additionally, since third parties may be used to document the mitigating circumstances surrounding a SAP appeal, some examples might include but are not limited to:
• Newspaper obituaries or death certificates to substantiate deaths
• Physician’s written statement to substantiate illness or accident
• Written statement from clergy, family member, or other third party who knows the student’s situation
• Written statement from academic advisor or professor

Procedures

1. Electronic confirmation of receipt of a written request for financial aid appeal shall be provided by the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and/or the Financial Aid Administrator.
2. If a written request for an appeal is submitted without appropriate documentation, the request for an appeal will be returned to the student within five days.
3. If documentation is submitted with a written request for an appeal, it will be returned to the student.
4. The FAA and the Third Party Servicer document the action taken in the student’s financial aid file.

Section 9. Academic Plans

Policy

VTCSOM allows the option of developing an academic plan for a student who does not meet SAP standards, but successfully files an appeal. While financial aid probation is an option for students who could meet SAP standards at the end of the next payment period, an academic plan is appropriate for a student who would require more time to be in compliance. Academic plans must be approved by the MSPPC on a student-by-student basis, and designed in such a way that, if followed, the student will be meeting SAP standards by a specified point in time. The academic plan may specify that the student will be evaluated more frequently than other students.

• The decision by the MSPPC to use an academic plan is made on a case-by-case basis.
• There is no requirement that the MSPPC use an academic plan.
• Examples of academic plans include:
  o Block-by-Block or Rotation-by-Rotation plan for degree completion, or
  o Mathematical calculation which specifies the student’s new pace.

The financial aid office staff and other institutional staff do not have a role in developing and monitoring academic plans.

If the MSPPC approves an academic plan, the new SAP metrics are reported to the Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar.

The Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar is responsible for notifying the Third Party Servicer and FAA of the interim SAP standards determination.
It is the responsibility of the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs to measure compliance with the academic plan.

Procedures

1. MSPPC determines a student should use a plan, and determines the length of time the plan will be in effect.

2. The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs measures compliance with the academic plan and determines when the student is meeting VTCSOM’s SAP standards.

3. The student is notified by the Associate Dean for Medical Education that s/he has met the school’s SAP standards.

4. Students who could benefit from the use of academic plans are identified by the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Assistant Deans for Clinical Sciences and Skills, the Domain leaders, the Block Directors, or the Senior Deans for Academic Affairs or Research.

5. Plans are developed by the Associate Dean for Medical Education in conjunction with input from the respective Block Integration Committee.

6. Student compliance with academic plans is monitored on at the midpoint of a Block or rotation, and at the end of the Block or Rotation using fixed qualitative and quantitative measures.

Section 10. Regaining Eligibility

Policy

A student not making SAP may re-establish eligibility on his or her own, either because an appeal was denied, or because an appeal was not submitted. Other than when an appeal is granted, a student can regain eligibility only by taking action that brings him/her into compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components of VTCSOM’s academic progress standard. Neither paying for one’s classes nor sitting out for a Block/Rotation/semester affects a student’s SAP standing, so neither is sufficient to re-establish eligibility.

If the student meets SAP standards during the next payment period, s/he can re-establish eligibility. The student will resume receiving aid during the period s/he re-establishes eligibility.

Procedures

The Senior Dean for Academic Affairs is responsible for notifying the Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar that s/he has re-established eligibility because of making acceptable SAP.

The Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar is responsible for notifying the FAA and Third Party Servicer that the student has re-established eligibility.
VTCSOM reinstates a student’s Title IV eligibility by notifying the Third Party Servicer of eligibility, and provides documentation for the student file.

Section 11. Treatment of Non-punitive Grades, Repeated Courses, Audited Courses, Withdrawals, & Incompletes

Policy

All grades earned in courses that apply towards fulfilling a student’s program requirements must be included in SAP calculations.

The maximum number of allowable repeated courses, withdrawals, and incompletes (if any) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of allowable repeated Blocks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of allowable withdrawals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of allowable audited courses</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of allowable incompletes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A grade of incomplete must be cleared within the following block/rotation, or the student is referred to the MSPPC.

All grades are tracked by the Director of Enrollment Management and Registrar.

Section 12. Remedial, Enrichment, and English as a Second Language Courses.

Policy

The VTCSOM does not offer Remedial, Enrichment, and English as a Second Language Courses.

Approvals and Revisions

This policy shall be subject to review at least once every three years, or upon curriculum revision, whichever occurs first.

Responsible position:
VTCSOM Secretary-Treasurer

______________________________  ______________________
F. Terri Workman, J.D., M.B.A.    Date