

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is defined as the successful progression through an academic program. All students of the 900-hr Professional Massage Therapy Program at Zion Massage College (ZMC) are required by the U.S. Department of Education to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward the completion of the massage therapy certificate. The following SAP policy has been established to ensure student success and accountability as well as to promote timely advancement toward completion of the program. SAP guidelines are based on reasonable expectations of academic progress throughout the program and as such should not be difficult for any student to maintain. In order for students enrolled at ZMC to receive Title IV funding they must meet all qualitative and quantitative SAP requirements. The Financial Aid Office may change SAP policies at any time to ensure continued compliance with changes in federal and state regulations regarding student financial aid. As a result, students must refer to the current catalog regulations. Changes in regulations, policies and procedures are immediate and supersede those in any prior catalog. Satisfactory progress is measured throughout the program every 450 hours and a progress report is given. Educational Improvement Plans will be given after the grace period at the end of any course where SAP is not met. For those students on Title IV funding, those times are at the end of each payment period (term).

*This policy applies to the following financial aid programs:*

### Federal and State Programs Subject to Financial Aid SAP Policy

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Direct Loans
- G.I Bill® (G.I Bill® is a registered trademark of the Veterans Administration (VA))

### Programs Subject to Financial Aid SAP Policy

- Any scholarship or Tuition Discount awarded

### Programs Not Subject to Financial Aid SAP Policy

- None. All programs at ZMC are subject to the Financial Aid SAP Policy.
- Any award or scholarship awarded by outside agencies may have their own requirements. Students must check with those agencies for rules regarding retention of those awards.

## Definition Of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

**Satisfactory Academic Progress is defined by the following criteria:**

1. Qualitative Requirement: Students must meet a minimum cumulative grade point average requirement (GPA) at points throughout the program (assessed every 450 hours).
2. Quantitative/Pace of Progress Requirement: Students must attend a minimum number of hours per each course and overall in the program.
3. Maximum Time-Frame: Students must complete the entire program within a maximum number of hours.

The first time a student on Title IV Funding does not meet one or more of the criteria as defined above, they will be placed on a SAP Warning for the remainder of the term and will receive an Educational Improvement Plan (EIP). A student will only be placed on a SAP Warning one time per term. If SAP criteria is not met by the end of the SAP Warning Period (term/payment period), the student will be given the opportunity to file an appeal to be put on Probation for the duration of the next term (payment period).

At the end of a Probation term, if the student has not met the SAP criteria they will then be placed on a SAP Termination (ie. immediate loss of Title IV eligibility). If the student is on financial aid, they will be eligible for Title IV funding during the Warning and Probation periods but will be ineligible for funding after financial aid termination.

Any student who falls below SAP and is not receiving Title IV funds will be placed on an Educational Improvement

Plan for 30 days or for the duration of the EIP. If a student who is not on Title IV funds fails to meet the EIP requirements by the end of the determined warning period will be given the opportunity to file an appeal they will be placed on probation for the duration of the term. At the end of the probation term, if the student meets SAP, they will remain eligible for Title IV Funding. If, at the end of the warning period, the student does not meet SAP, they will be given the opportunity to file an appeal, which if granted will allow the student to go to Title IV Probation and remain eligible for Title IV funds for the duration of the Probation. If the student's Appeal is not approved, the student will lose eligibility for Title IV funds and will be placed on a Title IV termination.

**1. Grade Point Average Requirement**

All students at ZMC must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 80% (2.67) overall and a minimum GPA in each course of 72% (1.67).

*Only the following grades are counted in the cumulative grade point average:*

- Grading System:

% Range	Grade	GPA
94 - 100	<b>A</b>	4.00
90 - 93	<b>A-</b>	3.67
86 - 89	<b>B</b>	3.00
80 - 85	<b>B-</b>	2.67
77 - 79	<b>C</b>	2.00
72 - 76	<b>C-</b>	1.67
70 - 71	<b>D</b>	1.00
0 - 69	<b>F</b>	0

*The following grades are not counted in the grade point average:*

- Any courses that receive an incomplete (I) or official withdrawal (W)
- Any courses that are audited (V) for better understanding of material
- Any courses that receive a Pass/No Pass (P/NP)

*The following course types will be counted in your grade point average calculation:*

- All required core courses that are required for the 900-hr Professional Massage Therapy Program taken for a letter grade
- Any course that receives an Unofficial Withdrawal (UW)
- The most recent grade of any course that has been retaken (previously failing grade)
- Transferred coursework from an Institution which is Accredited by a Federally Recognized Accrediting Agency

*The following course types are not counted in the grade point average calculation:*

- Any additional Continuing Education (CE) courses taken while at ZMC
- The original grade of any course that has been retaken for a letter grade.
- Any courses taken for better understanding of material where a passing grade was previously given

*Grading Policy:*

- If a student fails a course, they must retake the course within normal time, must pay for the additional course, and will be placed on a SAP Warning with an EIP until the retaken course is complete.

- If a student retakes a course, the new grade will replace the incomplete or unsatisfactory grade previously earned.
- A student will have up to three chances to pass a final exam with 72% or better. Any retake exams will be scheduled outside of regular class time. If the student does not pass an exam by the third attempt, then they will automatically fail and will need to retake the course. If a student retakes a course and does not pass the course, they will be dropped from the program. On the first two attempts, the actual score is taken. On the third and final attempt, the student will be given a grade of 72% no matter how well they perform above 72%.
- Any withdrawal from an ongoing class that results in an incomplete grade, must be retaken entirely.
- The student must complete all coursework and attendance requirements within 2 weeks from the last day of the course unless a predetermined time has been set by the course Instructor/syllabus. Failure to do so will result in an Educational Improvement Plan (EIP) to put the student on a plan to get back on track in the program.

### *Transfer Credits*

- ZMC will accept anywhere from 0 to 500 hours of education from approved schools. Once it is deemed that the hours in any course meets ZMC requirements, the grade may be added to the Transcript as the final grade in a course. No partial hours are given in a course. The Clock hour to Credit hour conversion is 1 credit for every 10 hours per NCBTMB standard conversion.
- For example, if a student transfers in the equivalent of 300 hours towards the 900 hour program. The student will be required to complete the 600 hours of the program in 32 weeks (600/18.75 hours per week on average). Maximum Time Frame in this example is calculated by 32 weeks \* 1.5 = 48 week maximum time frame to complete the 600 hours remaining.

## **2. Pace of Progression Requirements**

- The entire program is designed to be completed within 48 weeks. Each student must meet the minimum number of hours each week to ensure completion of the program within the maximum time frame. The following guidelines are in accordance with 34 C.F.R. §668.34(a)(6).
- To calculate the Pace of Progression, divide the cumulative number of hours successfully completed by the cumulative number of hours attempted.

Pace of Progression =	Cumulative Hours Completed
	Cumulative Hours Attempted

- Each student is required to complete a minimum of 90% of each course to successfully complete the program.  $900 \text{ hours} * 0.9 = 810$  hours of the program must be completed to meet the minimum 90% attendance requirement. Please see the minimum hours required to attend each course as defined in the Student Catalog.
- Each student is expected to maintain an average pace of 18.75 hours per week within each 24-week cycle (hereafter defined as Term). The average hours attempted within each term should average to:
  - Term 1 (week 1 - 24) = 450
  - Term 2 (week 25 - 48) = 450
- Each student is required to complete 100% of the 180 clinic internship hours.
- If the student receives an Incomplete (I) grade in a course(s):
  - The student must retake the appropriate course(s) within a 150% maximum time frame from their start date in the program.
  - The student must pay to retake the course and must pass the course.
  - A student is ineligible (via the maximum time frame element) when it becomes mathematically impossible for them to complete the program within 150% of its length. A

student may appeal. Please refer to the appeal process below.

- The original hours attempted in the incomplete course do not apply towards the completion of the 900-hour program.
- If a student withdraws from the program and later re-enrolls or if they are transferring from an Institution which is Accredited by a Federally Recognized Accrediting Agency, they must fill out a petition to have the previous earned hours accepted.
  - If the previous hours meet ZMC transfer requirements, they will be added to the transcript and the pace of progression calculation will reflect where they should be in the program. The student will be responsible for maintaining the pace of progression with the correlating cohort.
  - For example, if a student transfers 250 hours towards the 900-hour program and is enrolled for an average of 20 hours per week, the student will be required to complete the remaining 650 hours in approximately 32.5 weeks. Maximum time frame in this example is calculated by  $32.5 \text{ weeks} * 1.5 = 48.75$  week maximum time frame to complete the 650 hour initial requirement.

### 3. Maximum Time-Frame

- Each student is expected to complete the program within 150% of the program length (1.5x the number of hours in the program) in order to maintain SAP standards.  $1.5 * 900 = 1350$  hours.
  - The program length = 48 weeks/336 days/900 hours
  - Maximum Time-Frame = 72 weeks/504 days/1350 hours
- Transfer credits are included in the maximum time-frame.
- A Leave of Absence is not included in Maximum Time-Frame.
- Withdrawals are included in Maximum Time-Frame if previous hours earned meet transfer requirements and are approved.
- Pace of Progression calculations assist in helping students complete the program in Maximum Time-Frame.
- Students who exceed the Maximum Time-Frame will not complete the program satisfactorily. A petition must be submitted by the student within 5 days of the determination by ZMC requesting to stay in the program.
- Students who reach the Maximum Time Frame of 150% of the program are no longer eligible for financial aid. There is no additional funding for the period between 49 to 72 weeks. Students who cannot complete within the Maximum Time Frame may be dropped from the program.

## Monitoring of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory academic progress is monitored for all students at ZMC regardless of payment plan, at the end of every term in the program. For students on financial aid, the Financial Aid Officer monitors grade point average, Pace of Progression and the Maximum Time-Frame Allowance. Any student who does not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements will be notified by the Financial Aid Officer via e-mail. Any delay in an official grade being given in a course may result in delayed disbursement of financial aid. There is no exception to this process. It is important to note that financial aid may not be disbursed until SAP has been evaluated.

## When Satisfactory Academic Progress Is Not Maintained

### *Warning and Probation Periods:*

- Any student who falls below the SAP requirements in any course will have 2 weeks (unless a predetermined time has been set by course Instructor/syllabus) to complete all hours, coursework, and finals before being placed on a SAP Warning Period for the duration of the term.
- The student will be required to meet with ZMC's Director to establish an Educational Improvement Plan (EIP). The student will have the duration of the term or the timeframe set within the EIP to make up for any GPA or Pace of Progression deficiencies and complete the plan. Failure to meet the EIP will lead to an Incomplete and the student will be required to retake the course. Any course retaken will result in

additional tuition. See student handbook for individual costs for each course. Any special circumstances will be considered only through the appeal process with a petition.

- Once the requirements of the EIP are met, the student will be taken off EIP and the student's Satisfactory Progress will resume. The SAP Warning Period will continue for the duration of the term.
- If the requirements of the EIP are not met by the end of the EIP period they will continue on SAP Warning until the end of the term. If a student fails to follow their EIP and fails to meet SAP during the Warning period, they may choose to file an Appeal to request that they be placed on SAP Probation. If the student meets or exceeds the SAP standards at the beginning of the next term, the student will be moved back into good standing and satisfactory SAP. If the student does not meet SAP at the end of the probation period, they will be placed on Title IV termination and will lose funding for the duration of the term.
- If the student fails to meet SAP after a Warning and Probation, they may also be considered for dismissal from the program and must submit a petition within 5 days of being notified by email for consideration to continue in the program.
- Students are allowed to continue enrollment in the program without financial aid until they meet the requirements of this policy. It will be the student's responsibility to pay for all tuition and charges incurred while on financial aid suspension.

*Dismissal:*

- If the student does not meet Satisfactory SAP after the Probation period, they will be moved to financial aid termination and are not eligible to receive financial aid for the duration of the term. Students placed on termination are notified via email.
- Students may be dismissed from the program if it is deemed that there is no possible way to meet SAP calculations and regain the minimum requirements.

*Federal Financial Aid during the SAP Warning, Probation or Suspension:*

- The student will remain eligible to receive federal financial aid if the student is making Academic Progress while on a SAP Warning or SAP Probation (after receiving an approved appeal).
- Students must meet all SAP requirements by the end of the SAP Probation to remain eligible for financial aid.
- Any student not meeting SAP is required to participate in any plan and advising that is set forth by ZMC. Failure to participate in the academic plan set forth may result in dismissal from the program regardless of the SAP standing. The student is responsible for any additional fees incurred for retake/makeup hours/courses. .

*Summary of Progression of Disciplinary Action:*

- A student falls below SAP at any point in the program → Educational Improvement Plan (EIP) for a predetermined amount of time. SAP Warning Period begins at this time (first time EIP only). ○ A student fails to comply with the EIP → SAP Warning Period continues until the end of the term; still eligible for Title IV aid disbursements.
  - A student complies with the EIP Requirements → Student returns to good standing yet SAP Warning Period continues until the end of the term; maintains eligibility for Title IV aid disbursements.
- A student fails SAP at the end of a term → SAP Warning Period (first time only) OR SAP Probation, after an approved Appeal (any subsequent times) for the next term (payment period); still eligible for Title IV aid disbursements. ○ Students on Warning or Probation are required to meet with the Program Director, Financial Aid Advisor, and Clinic Manager to determine an academic plan (EIP).
- A student fails SAP at the end of the Probation Period → Title IV Termination; ineligible for Title IV funding..
- Students may submit a written SAP Appeal to be approved to be placed on Probationary status
  - If approved, Title IV disbursements will continue.
  - If denied, the student's Title IV Financial Aid will be Terminated.

Example: A student has failed Anatomy I in the 6th week of the program and has not met SAP requirements for the

course within the allotted time. They receive an EIP and enter the SAP Warning period for the duration of the term. The student is still eligible for financial aid. At the end of the term the student has not met the SAP requirements, is given an opportunity to file an Appeal to be placed on Title IV Probation for the next term. The student is still eligible for financial aid. The student does not meet the SAP requirements at the end of the SAP Probation Period determined in the EIP and goes into a Title IV Suspension with no financial aid disbursement. If a student continues to not meet SAP they will be evaluated for dismissal from the program.

### **Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility**

- Once the requirements of SAP have been met or exceeded, the student should notify the Financial Aid Office. The update in GPA, letter grade, or Pace of Progression will be evaluated and financial eligibility reinstated once successful.
- A student may petition to return to ZMC if they were previously dismissed for not meeting SAP. The petition must be detailed and include the circumstances that prevented their success in the program, how the circumstances have been resolved so they can succeed in the future, and the reasons why they should be readmitted to the program.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeals**

- If a student is placed on Warning status and does not meet SAP by the end of the payment period, the student may choose to file an Appeal to be placed on Probation for the following payment period.
- To file an Appeal, the student must fill out a Petition and provide supporting documentation to the Financial Aid Officer **writing within five (5) business days** of receiving notification of suspension or dismissal. All petitions must include a thorough explanation of the circumstances of what affected their academic performance and how it has been resolved. Any and all documentation necessary must be attached to the petition. The petition is reviewed by the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) as well as the Program Director, Financial Aid Officer, Clinic Manager, and Admissions Personnel at ZMC. The student will be notified within 5 days by email of the determination. The determination of the PAC is final.
- If additional time is needed to complete the program, the student must schedule a meeting with the Program Director and Financial Aid Officer as well as fill out an Appeal Petition.
- Any appeal that includes an academic plan must meet the requirement of completion within 150% of the program time in order to be considered for approval.
- The Financial Aid Officer may increase the Maximum Time Frame due to one-time extenuating circumstances such as extended illness or injury that has since been resolved.
- The written appeal petition must address the following:
  - The dates that the circumstances occurred (one time, ongoing, short time period)
  - What are the circumstances that caused SAP to fall below acceptable standards.
  - Include the steps taken to resolve the conflict or circumstances.
  - Explain how and what the commitment will be moving forward to be successful in the program and to maintain SAP.
  - Supporting documentation from a physician, instructor, counselor, social worker, lawyer, religious leader, employer, death certificate, birth certificate, divorce decree, etc.
- The student may only submit an appeal after proper notification by the Financial Aid Officer that they are ineligible for financial aid because of a SAP deficiency. This appeal and all documentation must be received within 5 business days of receipt of the official notification.
- SAP appeals for Maximum Time-Frame Allowance may be submitted at any time.

#### *Approved Appeals*

- If an appeal is approved, the student will become eligible for financial aid for the duration of the term and are placed on financial aid probation for that payment period. The student is also required to meet with the Program Director, Financial Aid Officer, and Clinic Manager to make an academic plan. A copy of the signed plan will be placed in both the paper and electronic files of the student's financial aid record. Any expenses incurred while ineligible for financial aid will be the responsibility of the student.