

Standards of Academic Progress (SAP)

Based on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No. 116-136, and guidance provided by the US Department of Education (USDOE) on May 15, 2020 (updated on June 16, 2020), Berkeley College has adopted an Interim Satisfactory Academic Progress (34 CFR 668.34) policy of waiving “WF” and “WP” grades (occurring on or after March 12, 2020) for the winter 2020 semester. Based on updated guidance, we have adopted a somewhat different policy for students who withdraw from classes during the spring 2020 and fall 2020 semesters.

According to USDOE guidance dated May 15, 2020: “Section 3509 of the CARES Act allows institutions to exclude from the quantitative component (pace measurement) of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) attempted credits a student was unable to complete as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency. It is not necessary for a student to have filed an SAP appeal for an institution to exercise this flexibility. However, to exclude attempted credits from SAP, an institution must have reasonably determined that the student’s failure to complete those credits was the result of a COVID-19 related circumstance. Allowable circumstances include, but are not limited to, illness of the student or family member, need to become a caregiver or first responder, economic hardship, added work hours, loss of childcare, inability to continue with classes via distance education, inability to access Wi-Fi due to closed facilities...For example, the pace of a student who has completed 78 of 120 attempted hours is 65 percent (78/120), below what is necessary to be making SAP. However, if the 12 credits the student attempted but was unable to complete in (winter) of 2020 are excluded due to a COVID-19 related circumstance, the pace becomes 72 percent (79/108) and he or she is making SAP.”

Berkeley believes that every student enrolled in at least one onsite class was adversely impacted by the pandemic and resulting suspension of onsite classes. This is consistent with USDOE guidance dated May 15, 2020 that states “Any institution that moved students from ground-based instruction to distance learning, closed campus housing or other campus facilities, or experienced other interruptions in instruction may consider all withdrawals from students enrolled in ground-based instruction during the covered period to have been the result of circumstances related to the COVID-19 national emergency.” Therefore, for the winter 2020 semester, Berkeley considers every withdrawn course, on or after the first day of suspension of onsite classes (March 12, 2020), to be COVID-19 related except for 100% online students. **For withdrawals by 100% online students to be considered COVID-19-related, the student must submit an attestation to that effect.** Based on June 16th guidance, we have extended this policy through spring 2020 and fall 2020 assuming the national emergency is still in effect. For these two semesters every student will require an attestation to receive the SAP waiver.

Attestation Process

The College is sending all appropriate people an email that will include a link to an eform attestation. The attestation should be completed by the deadline indicated. Those past the deadline may or may not be considered for waivers.

If the College denies a student’s eligibility for waiver, based on the guidelines from the US Department of Education referenced above, the student will be given the ability to appeal via the appeal committee’s email address. The committee’s determination is final.

Original Report dated Summer 2020