Satisfactory Progress

Title 5, section 55023 includes SP as an official grading designation. This evaluative symbol is defined as “Satisfactory Progress towards completion of the course (used for noncredit courses only and is not supplanted by any other symbol).” The adoption of this new grading designation was preceded by a substantial vetting process that was initiated in 2009 when the effort of establishing a grading system for all noncredit providers began. The SP designation completes the list of noncredit progress indicators, which already includes P (passing) and NP (no pass). These two grade indicators have been in existence but were insufficient on their own because the progress of noncredit students cannot be divided into passing and non-passing cohorts without losing track of efforts made towards attendance and course completion by students who, for a variety of reasons, cannot complete their courses in a single academic term.

Noncredit apportionment is based on positive attendance, which means that noncredit institutions are reimbursed by the state only for students who are attending classes. Because of the open entry - open exit system of noncredit institutions, students are free to come and go from the class of their choosing. Students with the fewest hours of attendance earn an NP grade because they are not able to achieve the course outcomes in the limited time they attend. Students with P grades normally attend school more consistently and are able to achieve the course outcomes. The SP designation shows that students are progressing and have acquired some of the skills and knowledge needed to achieve course outcomes but still have work to do. The SP designation is therefore a reflection of student progress and success.

A grade of SP may be awarded to a student who has met at least one of the following criteria:

- Did not attend enough class meeting (e.g. added to class too late) to adequately learn the materials
- Demonstrated improvement/making progress, but not enough to pass
- Showed consistent effort, but overall low scores
- Has imbalanced skills
- Missed several class meetings for a legitimate reason and exhibits potential for successful completion of program level when able to attend for the duration of the term