



Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide Stephen F. Austin State University's procedure on satisfactory academic progress and the standards that are required.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all SFASU students.

Definitions

Satisfactory academic progress: denote a student's successful completion of coursework toward a certificate or degree.

Policy

Federal regulations mandate minimum standards of satisfactory progress for students receiving financial assistance. These standards apply to the student's entire academic history, whether financial aid was received or not, and to all types of aid. The standards for determining progress for continued financial aid at the university are composed of three separate measurements: grade point average (GPA), pace of completion, and maximum hours allowed for a degree level program. Standard rounding rules apply for all SAP measurements. SAP standards apply to all federal, state, and institutional financial assistance programs with exceptions as defined by applicable law.

Procedures

Satisfactory academic progress will be evaluated after each fall, spring and summer semesters. Summer SAP evaluations will only occur at the end of Summer II. Students will be notified of their financial aid eligibility via university email. If SAP is not met, loss of financial aid occurs immediately.

All students must be enrolled in a degree or certificate program to be eligible to receive state or federal financial aid. Students who are admitted to the university as non-degree, probationary, transient, career interest or self-improvement or course audit shall not be eligible to receive state or federal financial aid. The U.S. Department of Education does not recognize academic fresh start and requires an institution to count all courses applicable to a student's major in evaluating a student's SAP.

Financial aid probation/suspension is different from academic probation/suspension. Students on academic suspension, who are allowed by their academic dean to attend, may receive financial aid only if they meet the financial aid satisfactory academic requirements.

Grade Point Average (GPA)



For financial aid purposes, an undergraduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0, and graduate or doctoral students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Grade point averages are verified at the end of each semester.

Pace of Completion

For financial aid purposes, students must complete 67% of the cumulative hours attempted at the university, including accepted transferred hours. Pace of completion is measured at the end of each semester.

Students that are in subscription-based programs are exempt from the pace portion of SAP; however, a student in this type of program is not eligible for a subsequent disbursement until all prior credit hours have been completed.

Grades of A, B, C, D, RA, RB, RC, RP or P denote satisfactorily completed credit hours. Repeated and remedial courses are counted in the calculation of pace of completion. Grades of F, W, WH, WF, WP, RD, RF, RWH, RWP, RWF, RW, or QF are not satisfactory. Incompletes (grade of WH) do not affect a student's cumulative GPA for SAP but count as credit hours attempted toward both pace and maximum time frame.

Maximum Hours Allowed for Degree or Certificate

For financial aid purposes, the maximum number of hours allowed is one-and-a-half times the minimum program length for all degree programs. A student's entire current academic record is used in calculating maximum hours allowed. Students exceeding the allowable number of hours will be denied further financial aid and will not be eligible for a warning period. Maximum hours allowed are verified at the end of each semester.

Warnings

Students will be given a warning semester when the required GPA or pace of completion is not met. At the end of the warning semester, students not in compliance are not eligible for financial aid. Students who have reached the maximum hours allowed are not eligible for a warning semester.

Appeals

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress and have had a warning semester may file an appeal with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships within thirty (30) days after the first class day of the semester. Appeals must state why the student failed to meet satisfactory academic progress and what has changed that would allow the student to make satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next evaluation period.



Appeals will only be accepted in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as death in the family, illness or injury to the student or immediate family member, or mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control. Appeals based solely on financial and/or emotional needs without sufficient explanation or documentation will not be approved. Appeals must include documentation to support extenuating circumstances. All decisions on appeals are final. Students will be notified of the outcome of their appeal. A student who filed a financial aid appeal must be prepared to pay registration costs regardless of any pending appeal status.

If an appeal is granted, and the student can regain eligibility in one semester, the student is placed on financial aid probation. A student who is placed on financial aid probation may receive financial aid for one subsequent semester. If an appeal is denied or is not submitted, the student must meet the minimum SAP standards at the end of the next evaluation period in order to regain financial aid eligibility.

Academic Plan

Students may be placed on a financial aid academic plan if they cannot meet the minimum SAP requirements at the end of the next evaluation period. The plan will specify the number of hours that must be completed and/or the grade point average that will be necessary to bring the record back into compliance. Failure to meet the standards established in the academic plan will result in the denial of future financial aid eligibility.

Change of Major

Students are allowed to make changes in their course of study for purposes of this policy; however, all changes will count in a student's SAP calculation. Change of major can result in a possible overage of attempted credit hours which would impact the maximum time frame component.

Grade Change

Late posted grades or grade changes will not automatically change current SAP status. Students may request that the SAP status be recalculated after they have confirmed with the registrar that the grade change has been posted to their academic record.

Pass/Fail Courses

In some classes, students receive a grade of either pass or fail. A passing grade will be included in the student's pace of completion and maximum time frame calculations. A grade of F will be included in the student's GPA, pace of completion and maximum time frame calculations.

Financial Aid Probation

If an appeal is granted, the student is placed on financial aid probation. A student who is placed on financial aid probation may receive financial aid for one semester. At the conclusion of the financial aid probation period, the student must meet the SAP standards or will no longer be



eligible for financial aid.

Developmental Courses

Students are eligible to receive financial aid for developmental courses. These courses are included in the pace of completion and maximum time frame calculation.

Repeated Coursework

Students are allowed to repeat a course and, if passed, have it count toward enrollment for financial aid eligibility once. Each course attempt will count toward a student's pace of completion.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credit grades will not count toward a student's cumulative GPA; however, these will count toward pace of complete and maximum time frame calculations.

Withdrawals

Withdrawals do not count in a student's cumulative GPA, but count as credit hours attempted toward both pace of completion and maximum time frame. A withdrawal (grade of W) is different from a course which is dropped (no grade and no record of attempt). Students who withdraw prior to the first class date will not be penalized for SAP purposes.

Financial Aid Warning

Students will be given a warning semester when the required GPA or pace of completion is not met. At the end of the warning semester, students not in compliance are not eligible for financial aid. Students who have reached the maximum hours allowed are not eligible for a warning semester.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

20 U.S.C. 1091(a)(2), (c)
34 CFR 668.16(e), 668.32(f), 668.34

SFA HOP 04-112 Military Service Activation

Responsible Executive

Vice President for Enrollment Management

Forms



**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Handbook of
Operating Procedures

Policy Number: 04-115
Last Revised: N/A

None

Revision History

September 1, 2023