

Revised SAP Policy for 2011-12

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

The Higher Education Amendment Act of 1965, as amended, mandates institutions of higher education to establish a minimum standard of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" for students receiving financial aid. SUU makes this standard applicable to all federal, state and institutional financial assistance programs for the purpose of maintaining a consistent policy for all students receiving financial aid.

To be eligible to receive financial assistance while attending Southern Utah University, a student must be enrolled at least half-time (with the exception of the Pell Grant program, which currently allows less than half-time enrollment), be in good standing, and maintain satisfactory academic progress through a course of study toward a certificate or degree. A student must also be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen.

Review Period

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is reviewed at the end of the each semester for all students who were enrolled during that term. Failure to make Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of that payment period will affect financial aid eligibility for the following semester. Please note that if students did not attend SUU during the term being reviewed, their prior SAP status will still apply.

If a student is not in good standing after being reviewed, they may receive a 'warning' status for the following semester, but only if they were in good standing the prior semester. For example, if a student is in good standing at the end of summer, but failed to maintain an eligible GPA by the end of the Fall, he or she will receive a warning for the Spring semester. During a warning period, students are eligible to receive Title IV funds. The warning period is for one semester only, and does not require the student to submit an appeal form. If their SAP standing is ineligible the next time they are reviewed, they may submit an appeal at that time to request a possible probationary period for one additional semester. An appeal can be approved for one semester only. If more than one semester would be required to regain good standing, the student may submit an [Academic Plan](#) to request a probationary period that is longer than one semester. All students in a 'probation' or 'warning' status will be reviewed at the end of the each payment period, along with all other students who were enrolled.

To make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), students must meet all of the following standards:

- 1. Academic Standards**
- 2. Maximum Time Frames**
- 3. Enrollment Status**

1. Academic Standards (GPA)

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA minimum requirement, reviewed at the end of each payment period. For all credit hours attempted: undergraduate students must have a 2.0, or higher, cumulative GPA; graduate students must have a 3.0, or higher, cumulative GPA. If the cumulative GPA drops below the minimum requirement, the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid, although they may appeal based on extenuating circumstances.

2. Maximum Time Frames

Undergraduates: The number of credit hours an undergraduate student attempts may not exceed 150% of the number of credit hours required for graduation in his or her program of study, as published

in the University catalog. For example, if the published number of hours required for graduation is 122, a student may not attempt more than 183 credit hours ($122 \times 150\% = 183$) and continue to receive financial aid. All periods of enrollment must be considered, even those for which the student did not receive financial aid as well as hours transferred in from another school. If the number of attempted hours reaches 150% of the hours required for graduation, the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid. Upon reaching 160 earned credit hours, students are advised to meet with their academic advisor to review the remaining courses they must take to complete their degree within the 183 credit hour limit.

Upon reaching 160 attempted hours, students may receive a warning period for one semester. If they cannot complete the following payment period without exceeding the maximum time frame, they will be assigned the SAP status which indicates they have already reached the maximum time frame. For an undergraduate student, this is when they have attempted 172 hours, since it is not mathematically possible to complete one more semester without exceeding the 150% permitted. If students will only attend part-time during that payment period, they may submit an appeal for review by the SAP Committee. If it is determined that they can complete the term without exceeding 183 hours, they will be placed on probation for the semester, during which time they may receive Title IV funds.

Graduate Students: The number of credit hours a graduate student attempts also may not exceed 150% of the number of credit hours required for graduation in his or her program of study, as published in the University catalog. For example, if the published number of hours required for graduation is 36, a student may not attempt more than 54 credit hours ($36 \times 150\% = 54$) and continue to receive financial aid. (Thirty-six credit hours is the average number of credits required for the various graduate programs, which range from 30 to 42). All periods of enrollment as a graduate student will be considered, even those for which the student did not receive financial aid as well as hours transferred in from another school. If the credits required for a specific program are greater than 36, because the students' program require additional coursework, exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Enrollment Status

Students must successfully complete a minimum of 70% of all attempted course work. If the number of completed hours (cumulative) drops below 70% of attempted hours, the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid. They will receive one warning period to attempt to right themselves, after that they may submit an appeal for review of a possible probationary period for one more semester.

Examples:

1. If a student attempts (registers for) 30 credit hours in an academic year, he or she must complete a minimum of 21 credit hours for the year.

Note: All partial credit hours will be rounded down to the nearest hour.

2. If at the end of the second year a student has attempted 60 credit hours, he or she must have completed a minimum of 42 credit hours ($60 \times 70\% = 42$) to be making SAP.

Attempted hours include all registered hours per semester whether or not the student earns a grade or receives credit. The following are considered hours attempted, but not completed:

- a) "F" grades for undergraduate students
- b) "D" or "F" grades for graduate students
- c) "W" or withdrawal from courses
- d) "UW" or unofficial withdrawals from courses
- e) "I" or incomplete

Completed hours include all semester hours for which the student earns a grade:

- a) "A" through "D" grades for undergraduate students
- b) "A" through "C" grades for graduate students
- c) All transfer hours completed
- d) Remedial courses count as earned if passed, but the grade does not count toward the calculation of GPA.

Repeat courses that have been passed and retaken may not count as earned credits for financial aid purposes and should be taken in addition to the number of credits used to determine a student's financial aid award. Audited courses **are not** considered enrolled hours when determining financial aid eligibility.

In accordance with federal regulations, the standard is "cumulative" and credits earned without the receipt of financial aid or at other institutions must be counted. These policies may be appealed on a case-by-case basis for students with extenuating circumstances or a qualifying disability. Disabilities must be documented with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Support Center (ST 206F). Each request for appeal, and the supporting documentation, will be carefully considered by the Financial Aid Review Committee.

Review Policy

After grades are posted at the end of each semester, the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships will review the SAP progress of every enrolled student, regardless of whether or not they received financial aid. Students will be reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the following criteria:

1. Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher (undergraduates) or Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher (graduates).
2. Successful completion of at least 70% of all attempted course work for all periods of enrollment (cumulative), even those for which the student did not receive financial aid.
3. Total attempted hours does not exceed 150% of the published length of the program of study.

Financial Aid Warning and Financial Aid Probation

A student will be placed on financial aid *warning* for one semester immediately following a payment period when they are determined to be in an ineligible SAP status for the first time. Students on financial aid warning may continue to receive assistance under the Title IV programs for one payment period despite a determination that they are not making SAP. Financial Aid Warning Status may be assigned without an appeal or other action by the student, and should be used by the student to attempt to correct their ineligible status.

Students may be placed on financial aid *probation* as a result of an appeal. An appeal may only be approved for one semester. A student on Financial Aid Probation may receive Title IV program funds for one payment period. Further, while students are on financial aid probation, the SAP Committee may require the them to fulfill specific terms and conditions such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific courses. At the end of one payment period on financial aid probation, they must meet the SAP standards to qualify for further Title IV program funds. If students would be unable to correct their ineligible status by the end of a one semester probation, they may complete an Academic Plan to extend the time they are allowed to be on financial aid probation. They must meet the requirements of the academic plan by the end of the approved time frame. Students may not request a second probationary period based on the same extenuating circumstance.

Financial Aid Suspension

In the event students do not meet the requirements for SAP after one warning period, or a probationary period resulting from appeal, they will be placed on financial aid suspension for the following semester. This means that the student will not be eligible for any type of federal, state or institutional aid until he or she returns to satisfactory academic progress.

Students who have been placed on Financial Aid Suspension, because they do not meet the GPA or Enrollment Status requirements, may do the following if they decide not to appeal, or if their appeal is not approved:

- Students may attend the next semester without Title IV aid or apply for alternative loans to cover their balance.
- If at the end of that semester the student meets the SAP requirements, they may submit an appeal to have their aid reinstated for the following semester.
- Students will be reviewed again at the end of each semester to determine if they meet the SAP requirements and eligibility for aid will be reviewed during the regular review process.

Conditions for Reinstatement and Appeal Process

Students whose eligibility for financial aid has been terminated may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships if they believe that they had extenuating circumstances that led to their unsatisfactory progress. The student must fully complete and submit the signed Suspension Appeal form explaining the reasons they failed to make SAP. Students must also describe what has changed in their situation that will allow them to demonstrate SAP at the next evaluation. The SAP Review Committee will review each appeal and notify students in writing of the decision. A completed form must include:

1. A letter from the student documenting the extenuating circumstances. For example, personal illness or medical problems, death in the family, etc. This letter should provide a detailed explanation of the situation.
2. If the student has exceeded the maximum time frame and is appealing based on a change of major, a second major or an additional degree, he or she should state the reason for the change and indicate the number of hours remaining to be taken in the new major. The student must also have his or her academic advisor complete the advisor section of the form indicating the number of credit hours required for the major or degree and the number of hours remaining.
3. The student's name, T Number and email address.

The status of each aid recipient will be monitored for satisfactory academic progress and written notification will be sent to the last known address of those students who are placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

Students who fail to complete the requirements for a degree or certificate within 150% of the normal, published timeframe are entitled to submit an appeal for an extension. The SAP Review Committee may grant timeframe extensions under certain circumstances.

A student may request an exception to any of the above policies, due to extenuating circumstances, including disability, by submitting an appeal to the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office. The appeal must include a letter of explanation with supporting documentation and the completed Suspension Appeal form. Documentation for a low GPA should include a letter from the appropriate academic advisor. Documentation for low percentage of completion (at least 70%) should be in line with the cause of the

low hours. An appeal may be approved for one semester only. If it will take longer than one semester for students to meet the SAP requirements, an Academic Plan will be required.

Examples of exceptions that may be made on a case-by-case basis include situations such as: a documented disability or serious illness, death in the family, change of major, remedial courses taken as preparatory coursework, or other unexpected and extenuating circumstances that can be appropriately documented. Verification of disability should be provided to the Committee by the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. The Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities may recommend that the Committee grant an extension if such is among the reasonable accommodations that would be appropriate for the student.

Each request for an exception is reviewed anonymously by the SAP Review Committee, and will be carefully considered based solely on the individual situation presented by the student and the supporting documentation provided. Before the appeal is presented to the Committee, it is stripped of all personally identifying information about the student who has appealed. The Committee will make its decision based solely on the information presented. It is the intent of the Committee to review each appeal fairly and justly, and the committee will not use information presented in the appeal to discriminate in any way on age, national origin, disability, sex, religion, or any other legally recognized category.

Students will be notified in writing of the status of their appeal, including an explanation that supports the determination of the committee.