



# South Carolina State University

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) GUIDELINES FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

REVISED April 2016

The Higher Education Act requires recipients of Title IV funds which include the Federal PELL Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Direct Stafford Loan(s), and Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan for Undergraduate Students, to **maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress** as they move forward in earning a degree. Satisfactory academic progress applies to all payment periods (Fall, Spring, and Summer) regardless of whether the student received financial aid. All students are required to meet both Quantitative (PACE) and Qualitative (cumulative grade point average (Cum GPA) standards). A review will be made at the end of each payment period to determine if the student meets the criteria. These guidelines are derived from the University Satisfactory Academic Policy according to the guidelines set forth in Federal sections, HEA Sec. 484(c), 34 CFR 668.16 (e), 34 CFR 668.32 (f), 34 CFR 668.34

### Undergraduate Students

#### A. Quantitative (PACE)

In order to maintain financial aid eligibility, an undergraduate student must complete at least **67%** of the total credit hours attempted **cumulatively**. Courses that are accepted as transfer credit are added into the cumulative total of successfully completed credits when calculating PACE.

#### Cumulative number of credits a student successfully completed

#### Cumulative number of credit hours a student attempted

#### B. Qualitative (GPA)

In order to maintain financial aid eligibility, an undergraduate student is required to maintain the following GPA:

Credits Attempted	Cumulative GPA
3-39	1.4
40-59	1.6
60-99	1.9
100+	2.0

**\*\* Credit hours attempted must be congruent with PACE. \*\***

#### Maximum Allowable Time

A student pursuing an undergraduate degree at South Carolina State University (which requires at least 120 credit hours for completion) may register for a maximum of 180 credit hours or 150% of the length of the program during his/her tenure at the University. Full-time students are required to enroll in twelve (12) hours or more each semester. A full-time undergraduate student will be allowed six (6) years or 12 semesters to complete a four (4) year program. Part-time students are required to enroll in at least six (6) credit hours each semester to be eligible for consideration of federal aid. Students should contact the financial aid office if they plan to enroll

for less than six (6) hours. Students who have Pell Grant eligibility may be eligible for the Pell Grant if enrolled in at least 3 credit hours.

**Failure to meet either Quantitative (PACE) or Qualitative (Cumulative GPA) will result in the student being non-compliant with the SAP Policy.**

**If a student is suspended or expelled from the University, for any reason, the student will not be eligible for Federal aid until the minimum SAP standards are met.**

#### **FINANCIAL AID WARNING**

Students failing to meet the requirements of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy after a semester/term will be placed on financial aid warning for one semester/term. Students on warning are allowed to receive financial aid for the next enrolled payment period. While on warning, if the student does not make SAP for the second consecutive semester/term, they will lose their aid eligibility for the following enrolled payment period. **If the student becomes ineligible for Federal Financial Aid, the student can appeal the decision by following the guidelines as set forth in the Financial Aid Appeal Process. The equivalent to Financial Aid Warning may be Academic Probation, Academic Suspension or Academic Dismissal.**

#### **FINANCIAL AID INELIGIBILITY**

Students failing to meet the requirements of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy for two consecutive semesters/terms will be ineligible to receive Federal Title IV funds.

#### **FINANCIAL AID APPEAL PROCESS**

Students who have their federal financial aid canceled for failure to make SAP while in a warning status may submit a formal appeal. The appeal request will be considered if the student has suffered undue hardship such as death of an immediate family member, injury or illness, change of major, or other special circumstances as determined by the financial aid administrator or designee. Students requesting an appeal must submit the *Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form* with appropriate documentation to the Financial Aid Office explaining the circumstances which affected the student's academic performance.

All appeals should be submitted in writing with supporting documentation to the attention of the Director of Financial Aid, South Carolina State University, 300 College Street NE, P.O. Box 7386. Appeal letters must be received by the Office of Financial Aid no later than **July 15th for the Fall semester and January 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Spring semester**. **If a student has not met SAP at the end of the Spring semester and has intention of attending Summer school, the student should submit their appeal by May 15th.** In some instances, an interview may be scheduled for the student to address any questions concerning the appeal request. The appeal request will be handled by the Financial Aid Office and/or its designee and all decisions made are final. The financial aid appeal letter should:

- Be properly addressed and grammatically correct
- Include the student's name, address, phone number, student ID number and Major
- Include the appropriate documentation relating to the situation that caused the student not to meet the SAP guidelines (injury or illness, death of family member, or other special circumstances)

- Clearly state why the student was not able to make SAP
- State what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate his/her ability to meet SAP in the next payment period
- Detail what the student will do differently academically *if* they are granted an appeal to continue matriculation at SCSU.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on *Financial Aid Probation* for one semester. During the student's matriculation, the student will not be allowed to successfully appeal more than two (2) times. Once a decision has been rendered, no further information will be considered. As part of the appeal approval process, the student will be required to develop an *Academic Success Plan (ASP)* that is completed between the student and his/her academic advisor or department chairperson and have final approval signature by the Dean or Associate Provost. The original signed copy of the ASP must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office prior to any aid being disbursed. The ASP must be followed as it is written. Modifications to the ASP will only be accepted with appropriate signatures, and must be delivered to the Financial Aid Office and approved by the Director or designee, prior to the change being implemented. Among other reasons, the ASP can be modified if the courses listed are not offered in the coming semester or cancelled, or if there are time conflicts with courses on the ASP. In those cases advisors and chairpersons are to notify the Financial Aid administrator promptly by email and a new signed ASP must be given to the Financial Aid Office. If the student is on an ASP, grades of F, I, NG, W, WF, WP, U, UF do not count towards successful completion.

#### **FINANCIAL AID PROBATION**

Only students whose appeals have been granted will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. Once on Financial Aid Probation the student must follow the ASP. In addition, the student should meet with their Advisor regularly to discuss their progress and meet with the Student Success and Retention Program (SSRP). Financial Aid Probation *is for the next enrolled payment period only unless it is determined by the academic plan that the student may need a longer probation period.* At the end of the next payment period, all enrolled students on probation will have their academic record reviewed to determine if they have met the requirements for SAP and/ or the requirements of their ASP.

#### **RE-ESTABLISHING SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Students must meet the guidelines established for SAP as stated above in order to regain eligibility to receive Federal Financial Aid. The Cumulative Grade Point Average can only be increased by completing courses at South Carolina State University. Sitting out for a semester is *not* sufficient to re-establish aid eligibility. Eligibility is only reestablished when the student becomes compliant with the quantitative and qualitative measures required for Federal SAP guidelines.

**WITHDRAWALS (W, WO, WF) and UC Grades which are recorded on the student's transcript, will be included as credits attempted and will have an adverse effect on the student's ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Students who officially withdraw from the University must make up the hours and are encouraged to attend Summer School.**

**INCOMPLETE (I GRADES)**, which are recorded on the student's transcript until removed, are processed in the SAP calculation as attempted courses and may affect eligibility. If the Incomplete grade causes a student to lose financial aid eligibility, the student will not be awarded aid until the Incomplete grade is removed.

**REPEATED COURSES** - will be counted as attempted hours each time the course is taken and the student is receiving financial aid for that course. Financial aid recipients may repeat a failed course as many times as necessary to pass the course, but each course repeat will count as an attempted course in the quantitative calculation for SAP. A financial aid recipient may repeat a passed course only once and receive financial aid for that repeated course.

**CHANGE OF MAJOR** - A student may change from one major to another during attendance at the University. Students who change from one major to another are still expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and complete the course work within the time frame or hour limitation stated unless an appeal is approved.

#### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Summer School will be based on the student's current eligibility status. Financial aid for summer school is not available to students who failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Evaluation of financial aid for Summer School is not an automatic process; therefore, students should contact the Financial Aid Office.

#### **CLASS LOAD**

The number of hours in which a student is enrolled on the day following the published last day to add or drop a class or the University's census date whichever is later will be used as the official enrollment date for financial aid purposes. Full-time status is 12 hours or more.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS** will be evaluated on the number of semester hours transferred in plus the hours and the GPA earned while in attendance at South Carolina State University. Student's who are ineligible to receive financial aid for failure to maintain SAP, must attend South Carolina State University to remove their academic deficiencies at their own expense or via private education loans.

These guidelines are subject to change and the newest version will be emailed to all students' school email addresses and posted on the SCSU website - financial aid section.