

## **STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) FOR STUDENTS**

To receive funds administered by the Financial Aid Office at Augusta University (Augusta), students must be making measurable academic progress toward completion of an eligible degree or certificate program. Federal regulations require evaluation of both quantitative and qualitative academic progress.

All periods of enrollment at Augusta will be included in the measurement of satisfactory academic progress. Terms in which the student enrolled but did not receive financial aid are also included in the measurement.

### **Guidelines for Academic Progress**

The academic year at Augusta consists of fall, spring, and summer enrollment periods. Fall begins the academic year and summer concludes it. The measurement of academic progress is made at the end of each enrollment period and the status is effective with the next enrollment period.

Students enrolling at Augusta University for the first time (including transfers) are considered initially to be meeting SAP. The measurement of academic progress will be made at the conclusion of the first enrollment term and will include all acceptable transfer credit that the Augusta academic record contains.

Students who have been academically suspended from Augusta and who are re-admitted are not eligible for financial aid unless meeting the SAP standards. Students who are re-admitted may follow the appeal policy if consideration for financial aid is desired.

### **SAP Notification**

SAP notices to students in Satisfactory, Warning, and Termination categories are sent in batch via institutional email every semester after grades are posted. Students who submit SAP appeals are also notified of the Appeals Committee's decision via institutional email. Students' status can also be viewed online via the student information system, POUNCE.

After midterm each semester, students who are approaching Maximum Allowable Time Frame (MATF) are sent a Financial Aid SAP Timeframe Reminder email. This email informs them of the number of hours they have attempted through the current semester. It is sent to students who are within 30 hours of reaching MATF.

### **Qualitative Standards:**

Students must meet a qualitative standard of academic progress measured through term and cumulative grade point average.

Any undergraduate, associate, or bachelor's student whose cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the conclusion of any semester is below 2.00, is determined to not be making satisfactory academic progress and shall be placed in a "Financial Aid Warning" status for a maximum period of one semester. If any student does not has a cumulative 2.00 GPA by the end of the semester of "Warning" they will be

placed on “Financial Aid Suspension” status and will be subjected to the provisions of the suspension policies described in subsequent sections of this policy. Undergraduate students at Augusta University who appeal their suspension status and are placed on “Financial Aid Probation” may continue to receive Title IV aid at Augusta only if they meet the following minimum academic standards, which are based on progression levels.

| Progression Level | Term GPA | or | Cumulative GPA |
|-------------------|----------|----|----------------|
| 0 - 29            | 1.50     |    | 1.00           |
| 30 - 59           | 2.00     |    | 1.60           |
| 60 – and above    | 2.00     |    | 2.00           |

***Graduate and professional students must have a 3.0 overall GPA at the conclusion of each term, with the exception of those students enrolled in programs which have the minimum required cumulative GPA lower or higher than 3.0.***

**Quantitative Standards:**

Students must meet a quantitative standard of academic progress measured by a percentage completion rate. Students must successfully complete 67 percent of all attempted credit hours. The calculation is made as follows: earned credit hours divided by attempted credit hours = completion rate.

Courses with grades of F, WF, W, U, I, IP/CP and NR are included in attempted credit hours but are not included in earned credit hours, (courses with grades of I, IP/CP, and NR count as hours pursued, but do not count as hours earned until the course is satisfactorily completed according to the provisions in the university catalog). Courses with grades of “S” would be included as hours attempted **and** earned but would not have a value in the qualitative calculation.

***Graduate and professional students who earn IP/CP grades for dissertation/thesis/ research credits will be evaluated on a case by case basis separate from the initial SAP review process.***

If a student is granted Academic Amnesty/Renewal, all hours are still subject to the overall standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

- Course Repeats – Repeated courses count towards a student’s enrollment status thus possibly changing eligibility for federal aid based on the enrollment criteria. An institution can pay a student for only one retake of any previous passed course or its equivalency.
- Withdrawals – All institutional withdrawals are factored into the completion rate and the time frame allowance.
- Incompletes – All institutional incompletes are factored into the completion rate and time frame allowance.

**Maximum Time Frame for Degree Completion:**

Students must graduate within 150 percent of the normal time frame for their program. This applies to all associate, bachelor, and graduate or professional programs of study. For example, majors requiring **120** hours will be allowed up to **180** attempted hours ( $120 \times 1.5 = 180$ ).

The total number of credits required for degree completion will vary by program and by student's area of emphasis. The GRU catalog will provide initial information on the number of required credits for program completion but in instances where additional research hours are required, the student's academic advisor/department chair can indicate if the student is making satisfactory progress toward the degree objective.

***When determining eligibility for graduate and professional students who complete one graduate degree program and switch to another graduate degree program, hours from the prior degree are not calculated.***

All acceptable transfer credit, attempted credit hours and all earned grades at Augusta University will be considered as part of the evaluation of academic progress for financial aid unless documentation is provided by the student from their academic advisor or departmental faculty member as to what transcribed courses count towards the student's degree. Maximum timeframe can be recalculated using the degree hour information provided by the advisor or departmental faculty.

**Financial Aid Warning:**

A student who fails to meet SAP (**excluding maximum time frame**) at the end of an enrollment period will be automatically placed on "financial aid warning," not to exceed one enrollment period. During the "financial aid warning" enrollment period, the student may receive federal financial aid despite the determination that the student is not meeting SAP standards. The student must meet SAP standards at the end of the financial aid warning period or will be suspended from further financial aid until such time as the student meets SAP standards (student must pay for any additional course enrollment after the financial aid warning period through personal or private funds) or the student must appeal and have the appeal granted.

**Financial Aid Termination:**

A student becomes ineligible for all federal student aid funds if a SAP review indicates he or she does not meet the required GPA, is not maintaining the required pace, or has exceeded the permitted maximum time frame. Students who lose their aid eligibility have an opportunity to appeal.

**Financial Aid Probation:**

"Financial aid probation" is the status assigned to a student who fails to meet SAP standards and who has appealed and had the appeal granted. A student on financial aid "probation" may receive financial aid for one enrollment period. At that point, the student must meet SAP standards. If the student was given academic performance stipulations as a condition of the approved appeal or placed on an academic plan (maximum time frame standard only), the student must satisfactorily complete all hours attempted in order to receive future financial aid.

Academic performance of students on Probation is monitored after end of term grading. Students who violate their probation status and remain below the standards will be placed back in Financial Aid

Termination and aid will be removed. In rare cases, some students may meet SAP standards regardless of unacceptable grade. These students will be placed in satisfactory status and become eligible for aid.

### **Appeal Process:**

There may be extenuating circumstances encountered by a student which impact on his or her ability to be successful during an enrollment period. These circumstances include personal injury or illness which occur during an enrollment period; death of an immediate family member or legal guardian during an enrollment period; or other documented circumstances that were unexpected in nature and beyond control of the student. In these cases, cumulative grade point average or completion rate may decline resulting in the student not meeting the minimum qualitative and quantitative standards previously described.

If this occurs and the student wishes to appeal the suspension from financial aid eligibility, a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form must be submitted. The appeal must include why the student failed to meet SAP, and what has changed in the student's situation to make SAP in the future.

An appeal form **must** contain appropriate documentation regarding the extenuating circumstance. The following may be considered acceptable documentation to support reason for appeal:

- Statement from physician or health professional reflecting condition, dates of occurrence, treatment and resolution.
- Copy of death certificate, obituary or statement from physician.
- Documentation that support circumstances and resolution.

The appeal will be reviewed by a Financial Aid Appeals Committee whose members are appointed by the Director of Financial Aid. Only three (3) appeals may be submitted during the student's enrollment at Augusta University.

Appeals that are incomplete, and/or lack support documentation are not reviewed and the student is notified. It is preferable that letters of explanation accompanying the appeal form be typewritten.

**Students appealing Maximum Allowable Time Frame must complete and submit the SAP Appeal Form along with an academic plan. Academic Plans must be completed and signed by the student's academic advisor.**

A review will be done at the end of each enrollment period to insure that the student is meeting the terms of the academic plan. If the student is not meeting those terms, further eligibility for aid is suspended immediately.

### **SAP Academic Plan**

The Academic Plan is available on the OSFA website and must be completed with the student's academic advisor. The plan must specify the course work necessary to complete the degree requirements and the projected graduation date. It serves as a guideline to assist students in planning out a schedule of coursework that can be handled successfully.

## Categories of Students

- New Transfer Students – For the first term of enrollment at Augusta University, transfer students will be considered initially to be meeting SAP. SAP standards will then be monitored after each term and will include all acceptable transfer credit that the Augusta University academic record contains.
- Double Majors – Students will be monitored after each term. Students will be allowed an additional 45 attempted hours not to exceed a total of 231 attempted hours and must also maintain the minimum required cumulative GPA based on attempted hours.
- Post-Baccalaureate Students – Students are required to submit the Post Baccalaureate Certification Form, completed with their academic advisor. Students will be allowed an additional 45 attempted hours not to exceed a total of 231 attempted hours and must also maintain the minimum required cumulative GPA based on attempted hours. Post Baccalaureate students include those working on a second degree, or taking preparatory coursework (not enrolled in a degree or certificate program), or enrolled in teacher certification.
- Learning Support Students – Financial aid is available for thirty (30) attempted hours of learning support coursework (including Augusta attempted hours and transfer attempted hours). Students required to take learning support coursework will be monitored each semester after grading. Students who volunteer for learning support coursework are ineligible for Title IV aid. Any student who registers for learning support coursework, knowingly or unknowingly, in excess of the maximum allowable attempted learning support hours must repay all funds received.
- Post Graduate Students – Post Graduate students are typically not eligible for financial aid. Exceptions may be made if the student can prove he/she will earn a degree or certification as a result of the courses taken.
- Professional Students – SAP standards will be calculated at the end of each academic year.
  - Quantitative Standards - The maximum time frame to complete the four year medical/dental school program is six years from the date that the student starts the program. The student must have completed two years successfully by the end of the fourth year of enrollment. If the student is not maintaining the required pace to complete the degree within six years, the student becomes ineligible for financial aid. Any exceptions due to extenuating circumstances must be granted through the SAP appeal process.
  - Qualitative Standards - The Professional programs evaluate students at the end of each academic year. In order to meet SAP, students must be deemed by their Professional program to meet satisfactory academic progress toward the program goals and objectives.
  - Medical students' academic, clinical and professional performance is reviewed by the College of Medicine on a regular basis. During the Annual Evaluation, each student will be reviewed to determine the student's preparedness for advancement to the next level of medical study and to ensure that they have met all academic, clinical and professional requirements. M.D. students do not receive calculated grade point averages. The outcome of each student's Annual Evaluation is shared with the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA). Academic progress for financial aid purposes occurs at the end of

every year, coinciding with the College of Medicine Annual Evaluation. The M.D. Program's academic term is equal to one academic year.

**Regaining Eligibility**

Students not making SAP may reestablish eligibility on their own by taking action that brings them into compliance with the standards. In most cases, this mean students are paying out of pocket and performing well academically.

**Availability of SAP Policy**

The SAP policy is available to students on the OSFA website. Office staff may also print copies of the policy for students in the office if a request is made. The policy is updated as needed or whenever changes in regulations occur.

The OSFA also promotes awareness of the policy by conducting workshops for Augusta University Orientation classes throughout each semester. The SAP policy is also addressed in new student orientations several times throughout the year.