

NEW FEDERAL STUDENT ASSISTANCE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS

The U.S. Department of Education has revised their Satisfactory Academic Progress Standard (SAP), effective Summer 2011.

The new Federal Student Assistance Satisfactory Academic Progress Standard requires colleges and universities to conduct three types of monitoring for students to remain eligible for student financial aid:

- 1) Degree status
- 2) Time to degree limits
- 3) Pace – completion rate of attempted courses

Programs impacted by this standard include the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), Federal Graduate PLUS for graduate and professional degree students, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program, some alternative educational loans, some private scholarships, and many institutional aid programs.

Degree Program

Federal regulations require that a student have a grade point average of at least a “C” or its equivalent by the end of their second year of enrollment, or have academic standing consistent with the college’s or university’s requirements for graduation. Students who are in a degree-seeking status (and students who are enrolled provisionally for the first year or two) are considered to be meeting this requirement.

Consequences of failure to meet this requirement are that the student will not be eligible for student aid. However, credits attempted and credits earned during non-degree-seeking enrollment do count toward credit completion rate calculations as well as toward the maximum time limit for degree completion.

Maximum Time Limit Requirement

Students must complete their degree or certificate within a maximum time frame measured by attempted credits equal to 150% of the number of credits required for their primary degree program. Examples:

Degree Program	Credits Required	Maximum Credits Allowed
Associate’s	60 credits	90 credits
Bachelor’s	120 credits	180 credits
Master’s	30 credits	45 credits

Attempted hours are accumulated at the end of each semester. Attempted credits include all transfer credits, credit by examination, and credit by portfolio assessment in addition to all credits attempted at the undergraduate or graduate degree levels while enrolled. Students must enroll in courses that are required by their degree programs.

Consequences of failure to meet this requirement are that students will be notified by their schools as they reach the end of their eligibility. Students exceeding the maximum time limit for their program are denied further financial aid at that level.

Completion Rate Requirement

Students must complete (earn) 67% of the total cumulative credits attempted as a condition for continued student aid eligibility. Attempted credits are defined as the credits students start as of the first day of classes each semester. For example, students attempting a total of 60 credits must complete 40 credits ($60 \text{ credits} \times .67 = 40.2$).

Consequences of failure to meet this requirement risk loss of eligibility for student financial aid. Undergraduate students (as well as PA Teacher Certification Programs) who fail to complete a minimum of 67% of their cumulative attempted credits at the end of a semester will be placed on a one semester financial aid warning for their next semester of enrollment. If such students then fail to meet the required 67% completion requirement after a semester on financial aid warning they will, in future semesters, be denied student financial aid until their completion rate is back to 67% or more. Students are allowed only one financial aid warning semester.

Appeals

There are no appeals for failure to meet the Degree Program Requirement. The Maximum Time Limit Requirement may be appealed for change of majors or concurrent majors, change of degree program, and transfer credits that do not apply to their degree. Appeals for Completion Rate Requirement are considered for 1) completion of 100% of attempted credits during a semester on financial aid warning; 2) completion of 100% of attempted credits during a period of enrollment at the current or another institution during a period of financial aid denial (student must complete a minimum of 12 credits with a GPA of 2.01 or above with no drops, late drops, and no failing grades); 3) death of a relative; 4) injury or serious illness of the student; or 5) other extenuating circumstances.

Lastly, under the previous SAP standard, schools had some freedom as to when and how often each year they completed SAP reviews. Under the new standard, SAP reviews must be completed every semester.