

FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS

Federal regulations require South Dakota State University (SDSU) to define and evaluate **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** for federal student financial aid applicants. The purpose of the review process is to ensure that the federal aid given to a student is used in a constructive manner and that the student is maintaining satisfactory advancement toward achieving a degree.

Although the SAP standards are similar to those set by SDSU or the Academic Departments for all students, the financial aid SAP standards are not exactly the same due to the specific federal requirements. In addition to meeting the academic standard for registration, a student must also meet the requirements of the financial aid SAP in order to be considered eligible to receive federal, state, and need-based institutional financial aid assistance.

SDSU evaluates Satisfactory Academic Progress **at the end of each academic term**. If there are **late posted grades or grade changes**, the SAP status will be recalculated once notification is received from the Registrar's Office of grade changes.

In order for a student to maintain his or her federal financial aid, the student must meet the following standards of academic progress. Students who do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards will initially be issued a **warning**, allowing financial aid to continue for **one (1) academic term**. If the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress are not met in that following academic term the student will be **suspended** from receiving federal financial aid. Suspended students can **appeal** to have financial aid eligibility reinstated by submitting a Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress Appeal Form to the SDSU Financial Aid Office. If the appeal is approved, that student will be placed on financial aid **probation** for the following academic term. The student then has one term in which to meet the standards and regain eligibility for financial aid.

SAP standards:

1. Minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA)

All students receiving financial aid must maintain the following SDSU cumulative GPA. The cumulative GPA includes credits earned in the South Dakota Board of Regents System and transfer credits.

- A. Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or above.
- B. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above.

2. Minimum pace of progression (PACE)

All students must successfully complete a minimum 67% of cumulative credits attempted. Pace is calculated by dividing the total number of cumulative credits completed by the total number of cumulative credits attempted.

Credits completed = all coursework where credit is earned with a grade **A, B, C, D, RS, S,** and **EX.**

Credits attempted = all coursework where credits were completed **PLUS** all coursework with a grade of **F, I, IP, NP, TR, LR, CR, NG, NR, RI, RU, SP, AU, U, W, WD, WW,** and **WFL.**

Repeating Course Policy for Financial Aid

A new federal regulation limits the number of times a student may repeat a course and receive financial aid for that course.

If a student gets a 'W' or an 'F' in a course, that student is allowed to repeat the course and receive financial aid (assuming he/she is meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress) until he/she receives a 'D-' or better. Once the student has received a 'D-' grade or better, he/she can repeat the course one additional time and still receive federal aid.

When a course is repeated the most recent final grade will be used to determine eligibility. The prior grade is no longer calculated into the GPA at SDSU, however, the previous hours attempted will be counted as hours attempted when reviewing SAP completion rate and maximum time frame.

3. Maximum credits attempted to complete degree program

All students must complete their degree program with credits attempted that are no greater than 150% of the number of credits required to earn the degree. The maximum attempted units is calculated by multiplying the minimum units required for the academic program by 150%. For example, most undergraduate degrees require a minimum of 120 credits, so that student can attempt a maximum of 180 credit hours before being suspended from financial aid ($120 \times 150\% = 180$). A graduate program that requires 48 credits would allow for a maximum of 72 credits before the student would be suspended from financial aid ($48 \times 150\% = 72$). Students can pursue additional academic objectives and receive financial aid as long as they do so within the units allowed for in their primary major.

If you are unable to fulfill the requirements for your degree before reaching this maximum timeframe your aid will be suspended from financial aid.

*Doctoral students are expected to complete the requirements for their degree in a reasonable length of time, as monitored by Graduate School policy.

Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress:

Failure to meet either the rate of completion requirement and/or the grade point average requirement will result in the following:

1. Financial Aid Warning

Students who are not meeting the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of one term of enrollment will be placed on "financial aid warning" and will be notified of this status through their Jacks email. Note that the financial aid warning only applies to students

who have just completed their first academic term of their program, or who were meeting the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress in the prior academic term.

During the term of financial aid warning, students will continue to be eligible for federal financial aid. This gives the student time to become compliant with the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. It is recommended that students who are issued a financial aid warning meet with their advisors in order to re-evaluate their course of study and take advantage of the many student support services available to them at SDSU. [Student Services](#)

2. Financial Aid Ineligibility

Students who fail to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards in the semester after receiving a financial aid warning will be found ineligible to receive federal financial aid and their financial aid will be suspended at that time. Students will receive notification of their federal aid suspension through their JACKS email.

Appeal Process:

Federal regulations limit circumstances for which a suspension of financial aid may be appealed to the following: death of a family member; illness or injury to the student; or other special circumstances beyond the student's control.

To appeal a financial aid suspension, a student must submit a completed Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress Appeal Form to the SDSU Financial Aid Office. The [appeal form](#) must explain why the student failed to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards and what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards by the next evaluation period. The student must also include documentation to verify the stated circumstance that prevented the student from meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Required documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Death of a family member (a photocopy of a death certificate and/or obituary and the name and relationship of the deceased to you).
2. Illness or injury to the student (an explanation of the nature of the illness or injury and the dates you were affected by the illness or injury **AND** a statement from a physician or health care professional and/or a copy of medical bill or discharge forms).
3. Other special circumstance (a detailed explanation of the specific traumatic event or unexpected circumstance and what you have done to overcome the event or circumstance such that you can go on to meet the standard of Satisfactory Academic Progress **AND** supporting documentation from a third party, i.e. physician, social worker, counselor, police).

The Financial Aid Office will review the appeal form and notify the student by letter of the outcome.

If a student's appeal is approved, the student will be placed on **financial aid probation**. This means that the student will be awarded financial aid for the subsequent academic term, contingent upon the student meeting the conditions specified in the approval letter.

- a. Students for whom it is determined that circumstances are such that it is unlikely they will be able to meet the standards by the next evaluation period will need to have a **student academic plan** put

into place in order to demonstrate that the student will meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards by a specific point in time.

- b. Students on probationary status who succeed at meeting the Standards of Academic Progress during the subsequent academic term will be considered fully eligible for federal student aid.
- c. Students who, at the end of the probationary term, continue to fail to meet the standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress will be suspended from financial aid eligibility. Students who are suspended may submit a new appeal form to the Financial Aid Office, however, the new appeal cannot be for the same reason any former appeal was granted.

Reinstatement of Eligibility:

Suspended students who subsequently meet all three of the Satisfactory Progress Standards and are in good standing regain their eligibility for federal financial aid.

Students whose appeals are denied may consider non-federal sources of student financial aid. Please contact the SDSU Financial Aid Office if you have any questions.

Academic Circumstances that Affect Your Status:

- **Changes in major, double majors or minors** may cause you to reach your maximum attempted hours, and lose your eligibility before earning a degree.
- **Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, course withdrawals** all reduce your completion ratio, because they are counted as attempted, but not earned credits. They also count against your maximum attempted hours.
- **Repeated courses** count as attempted credit hours each time you register for them. They also count against the allowed maximum. This can also reduce your completion ratio because repeated credits count as earned credits only once. Only the last completed attempt is included in the GPA calculation.
- **Transfer credits, credits taken while cross-registered, enrolled in study abroad, transient study** count toward your maximum attempted credits and your completion ratio.
- **Remedial courses** count as attempted and earned credits, but are not included in the GPA calculation.
- **ESL Courses** are considered remedial courses, and will count as attempted and earned credits, but are not included in the GPA calculation.
- **Late posted grades or grade changes.** Once notification is received from the Registrar's Office of grade changes, the SAP status will be recalculated.
- **Dismissal and Return.** Students who are suspended academically or choose not to attend because of SAP Failure will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon their return. Student must meet both qualitative and quantitative standards of SAP. If below standards, a student must appeal or use means other than financial aid for educational expenses. Absence does not restore eligibility for financial aid. It remains the responsibility of the student to be

knowledgeable of their SAP standard when returning to school after dismissal or choosing not to return because of SAP Failure.

- **Summer Term Courses.** All hours attempted and completed in the summer terms are treated as any other semester hours in determining SAP status. SAP will be checked following the summer term as well.
- **Students pursuing dual bachelor's degrees.** Students who are pursuing dual degrees are subject to the maximum time frame rules but may be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Office of Student Financial Aid. The Office of Student Financial Aid reserves the right to review denied appeals, cumulative GPA's and completion rates on a case by case basis.
- **Credits while not receiving Title IV** all credits appearing on student transcripts will be counted in calculations for determining SAP status, including those that may have been during terms in which a student was not receiving Title IV Aid.

Helpful Links

[Satisfactory Progress Appeal Form](#)

[Counseling services](#)

[Wintrode tutoring program](#)

[Advising](#)

[Supplemental instruction program](#)

[Writing center](#)