

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Requirement and Definition

Federal and state regulations require the University to establish and apply reasonable satisfactory academic progress standards and to review applicable student records to ensure students receiving financial assistance under the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act or Georgia state law are complying with these standards. Georgia Southern University students who wish to receive financial aid must maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in their selected course of study as set forth in this policy.

Students are notified of the SAP policy in the Georgia Southern University online Catalog, which is available at em.georgiasouthern.edu/registrar/resources/catalogs/ (<http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/registrar/resources/catalogs/>). In addition, the SAP policy is sent to students' Georgia Southern email accounts. Further, a copy of the SAP policy, instructions for the SAP Appeal Form, and a SAP calculator are available in the University's Financial Aid Office and on our website at em.georgiasouthern.edu/financialaid/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap/ (<https://em.georgiasouthern.edu/financialaid/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap/>).

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for evaluating satisfactory academic progress of students receiving financial assistance from all federal and state programs, and certain alternative loan programs.

Institutional SAP Policy

Financial aid academic progress standards for students are evaluated on the basis of grade point average (GPA), credit hour completion (PACE), and maximum timeframe (MAX).

Financial aid standards of SAP for students will be checked at the end of each semester.

The Financial Aid SAP Policy is totally separate from the policies of the Registrar's office regarding Academic Standing and Academic Renewal along with separate appeal processes. All grades previously received will be considered when determining financial aid eligibility, as stated in this policy.

Georgia Southern University's SAP policy requires maintaining academic standards based on the following three criteria:

1. Grade Point Average (GPA)

Undergraduate students (other than students who have been accepted into the Education Major teacher certification programs):

Undergraduate students will be evaluated at the end of each term on the basis of cumulative GPA. The cumulative GPA required to maintain SAP for the total number of attempted hours is 2.0.

Undergraduate Education Majors in the Teacher Education Program (TEP):

Undergraduate education majors in certification programs will be evaluated at the end of each term on the basis of cumulative GPA. Under the University's academic policy, students who have been accepted into one of the Bachelor of Science in Education certification programs and have been formally admitted into the Teacher Education Program are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50.

Under the University's academic policy, students who have been accepted into the education major's certification programs but do

not maintain the required cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 may not continue in a certification program. However, these students may choose to switch to another major in order to complete their degree. If an Education Major certification student is determined not to be making SAP because he or she has not maintained the required 2.50 GPA, and he or she subsequently chooses to switch to another major, at the next SAP evaluation, the student's GPA will be evaluated as compared to the requirement for the new major (i.e., 2.0). For purposes of that evaluation, all grades earned to date will be included in the GPA calculation.

Note: Students must apply and gain acceptance into the Teacher Education Program (TEP). In order to be accepted into the Program, a student must satisfy several requirements, including having completed a minimum of 50 semester credit hours (including completion of certain specified coursework), and having earned a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 (including all coursework completed at Georgia Southern and any transfer credit accepted by Georgia Southern).

Post baccalaureate students:

Post baccalaureate students will be evaluated at the end of each term on the basis of cumulative GPA. The cumulative GPA required to maintain SAP for the total number of attempted hours is 2.0.

Graduate students:

Graduate students will be evaluated at the end of each term. Students enrolled in master's degree, specialist, and PhD programs must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the end of each term.

Failure to maintain the required minimum cumulative GPA standards will result in the loss of eligibility to receive financial aid.

2. Credit Hour Completion (PACE of Progression)

All students will be evaluated at the end of each term to determine if they are making satisfactory pace of progression in their academic program. PACE is calculated by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has successfully completed (earned) by the cumulative number of hours the student has attempted. Undergraduate, post baccalaureate, and graduate students who enroll for full-time, three-quarter time or part-time course work throughout each academic year must complete (earn) at least 67% of all attempted hours registered for during each academic term.

3. Maximum Time Frame (MAX)

Students must progress through their educational programs at a rate that will allow the student to complete the program within the timeframe allowed for their program.

Undergraduate:

Undergraduate students must be projected to complete their program in a period of time that is not longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program, as measured in credit hours. For example, students in a 4-year, 124-credit hour program who have attempted more than 186 semester credit hours will become ineligible to receive financial aid. Degree programs that require more than 124 hours for graduation will have the 186 hours maximum timeframe increased proportionally by the number of hours above 124 required to receive the degree. If at any time, the student has more credits remaining to finish his/her declared program than he/she has left in remaining maximum credit, the student will become ineligible for financial aid.

Post Baccalaureate:

Post Baccalaureate students must be projected to complete their Post Baccalaureate program in a period of time that is not longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program, as measured in credit hours. Post Baccalaureate students must be enrolled in a bachelor's degree program in order to receive financial aid. The degree program must be different than one already completed at Georgia Southern University or Armstrong State

University. Post Baccalaureate students adding a major, taking courses to increase GPA, or not enrolled in a degree program are not eligible to receive financial aid.

Graduate:

Graduate students must be projected to complete their program in a period of time that is not longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program, as measured in credit hours. For example, students in a 60-credit graduate program who have attempted more than 90 semester credit hours will become ineligible to receive financial aid. Degree programs that require more than 60 hours for graduation will have the 90 hours maximum timeframe increased proportionally by the number of hours above 60 required to receive the degree. If at any time, the student has more credits remaining to finish his/her declared program than he/she has left in remaining maximum credit, the student will become ineligible for financial aid.

Institutional SAP Status

Students not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress are notified of their SAP status and related consequences in writing by the Financial Aid Office. At the end of each SAP evaluation period, one of the following SAP statuses will be assigned:

SATISFACTORY:

Student is making SAP, as measured by all of the following requirements: GPA, PACE, and/or MAX Time Frame. Student is eligible to continue receiving financial aid.

FINANCIAL AID WARNING:

Student is not making SAP as measured by one or both of the following requirements: GPA and/or PACE. For the next term in which the student is enrolled, the student remains eligible to continue receiving financial aid. The student must make SAP at the time of the next SAP evaluation period, or the student will be deemed ineligible to receive financial aid and will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension (unless and until he or she appeals that determination successfully and is placed subsequently on Financial Aid Probation).

FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION:

Student is not making SAP based on one or more of the requirements (i.e., GPA, PACE and/or MAX Time Frame) after (1) attempting the maximum number of credit hours allowed for the student's degree program, (2) being on Financial Aid Warning status (for GPA and/or PACE) for one term and failing to meet the required SAP standards, or (3) not satisfying the requirements of the academic plan developed for the student when he or she was placed on Financial Aid Probation. Financial aid eligibility is terminated until the student has achieved the required minimum standards to make SAP, or the student has obtained an approved appeal.

FINANCIAL AID PROBATION:

A student on Financial Aid Suspension has the right to appeal to have financial aid reinstated. If the appeal is approved, the student is placed on Financial Aid Probation. Students with approved SAP appeals are monitored by the Office of Financial Aid every term of enrollment to determine if they have achieved the goals of their academic plan. Failure to make progress as set out in the academic plan will result in the loss of eligibility to receive financial aid (i.e., Financial Aid Suspension).

Special Circumstances Affecting SAP Criteria

Learning Support Classes:

The first 30 credit hours of learning support course work will be excluded from the calculation for maximum timeframe and from the calculation for the required percentage of credit hour completion. Learning support credit hours in excess of 30 credit hours will be included in both the calculation of maximum timeframe and the required percentage of credit

hour completion. All grades earned through learning support course work will be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA.

Dropped and Repeated Courses: (see below for complete withdrawals)

All credit hours attempted during each term in which a student is enrolled will count toward the maximum timeframe and minimum credit hours completion. A student is considered enrolled based on the number of credit hours registered after the drop/add period of each academic term. Students who drop courses during the drop/add period will not have those hours considered in determining total hours registered. Students who drop courses after the drop/add period will have those hours considered in determining total hours registered, which will count toward the maximum timeframe calculation.

Repeated courses will count in the calculation of attempted hours. All grades earned in repeated courses will be used to calculate the GPA for purposes of SAP.

Grades of A, B, C, D, or S represent satisfactory completion of a course. Grades of F, I, W, WF, U, or Audit represent unsatisfactory completion of a course. Grades of IP or V will not be included in the number of hours earned toward the completion of a degree.

Complete Withdrawal from School:

A financial aid student who withdraws from school during the 100% refund period of any term, which runs through the first day of classes, will not have their registered hours included in the maximum timeframe calculation nor be required to meet the minimum credit hour completion percentage. However, any student withdrawing from school after the 100% refund period (after the first day of classes) will have their registered hours included in the maximum timeframe calculation and be required to meet the minimum credit hour completion percentage.

Effect of Grades on GPA:

Grades of A, B, C, D, F, or WF are included in determination of GPA for purposes of SAP. Grades of I, IP, K, NR, S, U, V, W, WT, W% or WM are not included in this calculation. Appeals will not be reviewed until "I" (incomplete) grades have been changed. For HOPE scholarship recipients, "I" grades could affect HOPE eligibility status when the grade for the incomplete is eventually submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Students who had been awarded HOPE, but later become ineligible with the grade change, will have HOPE awards canceled until the next checkpoint, and will be responsible for the repayment of any HOPE funds received while not eligible.

Transfer Credits:

Credits transferred from other institutions will count toward maximum timeframe, credit hour completion percentage, and the cumulative GPA calculation for SAP evaluation purposes.

Consortium Agreements:

Credit hours earned through consortium or contractual agreements (contracts with other higher education institutions) will count toward maximum time-frame, credit hour completion percentage, and cumulative GPA.

Reestablish Financial Aid Eligibility

A student seeking to reestablish eligibility of financial aid may do so by:

- achieving SAP standards towards their course of study, as set forth in this policy, at the time of a future SAP evaluation, or
- acquiring a successful appeal through the appeal process and being placed on Financial Aid Probation status.

SAP Appeal Process

Students who have been placed on Financial Aid Suspension due to failure to progress toward academic degree completion have a right to

appeal to have their financial aid reinstated. The appeal process is as follows:

- Students must complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Financial Aid Appeal Form. Instructions on how to access the appeal form are found on the Georgia Southern University Financial Aid website under the Policies tab. **Deadlines to appeal are the 5th day of the semester appealing for aid.**
- The completed SAP Appeal Form along with all appropriate documentation must be submitted online to the Office of Financial Aid as early as possible for review. The documentation submitted must include:
 - a. A statement explaining the circumstance(s) which prevented the student from making satisfactory academic progress (e.g., serious injury, illness, or mental health condition of student or immediate family member; birth or adoption of a child; death of an immediate family member; divorce/separation; military service; personal difficulties; academic difficulties beyond the student's control; or other circumstances related to exceeding maximum timeframe).
 - b. Documentation that supports the student's statement (e.g., physician's statement, birth or death certificate, divorce decree, military papers, letter of support from someone aware of the student's academic difficulties).
 - c. Information about what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation.
 - d. A detailed coursework plan for completing your degree requirements which includes confirmation you have met with your academic advisor.
 - e. A detailed academic improvement plan that includes upcoming semester goals and GPA calculations that will place you back in good standing. For undergraduate students, the improvement plan must be created with, and approved by, the Academic Success Center. Graduate students should contact the College of Graduate Studies for this documentation.
- Students completing the SAP appeal process are required to pay current term tuition and fees by the fee payment deadline to avoid class cancelation. Classes will not be held while an appeal is being reviewed. Questions regarding student tuition and fee payments should be directed to the Enrollment Services at (912) 478-3675 or bursar@georgiasouthern.edu.
- Notification of the appeal decision will be sent by email to the student's Georgia Southern email.