Satisfactory Academic Progress 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 in their selected course of study as set forth in this policy.

Students are notified of the SAP policy in the GSU on-line Catalog, which is available at http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/registrar/resources/catalogs/. In addition, the SAP policy is sent to students’ GSU email account and postcards are mailed to the home address. Further, copies of the SAP policy, the SAP Appeal Form, and a SAP calculator are available in the University’s Financial Aid Office and on our website at http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/finaid/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap/.

Programs affected are: Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Stafford Direct Loan Programs, Federal Work Study, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and Federal PLUS Loan, Federal TEACH Grant, Georgia HOPE Scholarship, Zell Miller Scholarship, and HERO Scholarship.

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 time frame.

Financial aid standards of satisfactory academic progress for students will be checked at the end of each payment period, i.e., at the end of Fall, Spring, and Summer (if the student is enrolled for Summer) terms.

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):
     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:
     Undergraduate Education Majors 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 programs (i.e., B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education, Health and Physical Education, Middle Grades Education, or Special Education) and have been formally declared an Education Major are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 from the time of the formal declaration as an Education Major – which cannot happen until a student has been accepted into one of the Bachelor of Science in Education programs – until graduation. As a result, the cumulative GPA required for Education Majors to maintain SAP at each evaluation is 2.50.

     Under the University’s academic policy, students who have been accepted into the Education Major but do not maintain the required cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 may not continue as Education Majors. However, these students may choose to switch to another major in order to complete their degree. If an Education Major 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 to the Bachelor of Science in Education programs (i.e., B.S. Ed. in Early Childhood Education, Health and Physical Education, Middle Grades Education, or Special Education). In order to be accepted into the Education programs, 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 GSU and any transfer credit accepted by GSU). As a result of these requirements, students generally are not accepted into the Education programs until after they have completed at least four semesters of coursework. Students who have expressed an interest in the Education programs but have not been accepted into the Education programs are classified as “pre-education” and are evaluated using the 2.0 GPA standard for non-Education Major undergraduate students. Students are not treated as Education Majors unless and until they are accepted into one of the Bachelor of Science in Education programs and have been formally declared an Education Major.

   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 and PhD programs must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the end of each term.

2. PACE of Progression (Credit Hour Completion)

   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 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 at least 67% of all attempted hours registered for during each academic term.

3. Maximum Time Frame

   Students must progress through their educational programs at a pace that will allow the student to complete the program within the maximum 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, 126-credit program who have attempted more than 189 semester credit hours will become ineligible to receive financial aid. Degree programs that require more than 126 hours for graduation will have the 189 hours maximum timeframe increased proportionally by the number of hours above 126 required to receive the degree. A student must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average and be projected to receive his/her degree the term immediately after earning the 189 hour maximum
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:**
Learning support students will have their first 30 credit hours of learning support course work excluded from the maximum time frame calculation defined above. Learning support credit hours in excess of 30 credit hours will be included in the calculation of the maximum time frame and the required percentage of credit hour completion. Grades earned through learning support course work will be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA.

**Dropped and Repeated Courses:**
All credit hours attempted during each term in which a student is enrolled and receives aid will count toward the maximum time frame and minimum credit hours completion. A student is considered enrolled based on the number of credit hours registered after the second day of each academic term. Students who drop courses or completely withdraw from the University during the 100% refund period will not have those hours considered in determining total hours registered. Students who drop courses or completely withdraw from the University after the 100% refund period will have those hours considered in determining total hours registered, which will count toward the maximum time frame 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 satisfactory academic progress.

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 I, IP, K, NR, S, U, V, or WM are not included in this calculation. 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 became 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.

**Withdrawal from School:**
A financial aid student who withdraws from school during the 100% refund period of any term will not have their registered hours included in the maximum time frame calculation nor be required to meet the minimum credit hour completion percentage. However, any student withdrawing from school after the 100% refund period will have their registered hours included in the maximum time frame calculation and be required to meet the minimum credit hour completion percentage.

**Effect of Grades on GPA:**
Grades of A, B, C, D, or S are included in determination of GPA for purposes of satisfactory academic progress. Grades of I, IP, K, NR, S, U, V, W, or WM are not included in this calculation. 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 became 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 time frame and credit hour completion percentage. Credits transferred from other institutions will not count toward 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 satisfactory academic progress 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.