

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Federal Financial Aid Recipients

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Congress, mandates that institutions of higher education establish minimum standards of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP) for students receiving federal financial aid. These standards apply to all Federal Title IV aid programs including the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, TEACH Grant, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans and Federal Work-Study. The Satisfactory Academic Progress standards apply to all students seeking federal financial aid, regardless of whether a student has received federal financial aid in the past.

Process of Determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

Each student will be measured for satisfactory academic progress annually in May after spring semester grade processing. This evaluation will determine if the student has made sufficient progress to be eligible for future federal financial aid. Students who have not met the minimum SAP requirements will be notified that they are not eligible for federal financial aid.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Measurement:

Qualitative Measure, cumulative grade point average (GPA):

Undergraduate students:

- who have earned 30 credits or more must have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA;
- who have earned fewer than 30 credits must have at least a 1.5 cumulative GPA;

Graduate students (including Law, P6 Pharmacy, and Level 5 and beyond Health Sciences Majors) must achieve at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

Quantitative Measure

Completion Rate/Pace: Students must keep pace with their academic program in order to complete their degree within the maximum timeframe, which is defined as 150% of the published length of the program. Pace is calculated by dividing the number of cumulative credits the student successfully completed by the number of cumulative credits the student has attempted. This calculation includes all attempted credits, both at Duquesne and those accepted in transfer that count toward the degree; courses for which a student receives academic credit, withdraws, receives incomplete or repeat grades and/or fails are used in the calculation of the completion rate/pace.

Students must successfully complete at least 67% of the total cumulative attempted credits;

Maximum Timeframe (completing program of study within 150% of program length):

Undergraduate students may receive federal aid for up to 180 cumulative credits attempted (assumes a program length of 120 credits and includes both Duquesne credits attempted and those accepted in transfer).

Graduate students (including Law, P6 Pharmacy, and Level 5 and beyond Health Sciences Majors) may receive aid for all credits attempted up to 150% of the specified number of credits required by their specific degree program.

Students who change majors are responsible for completing the degree requirements within the timeframe specified above.

Readmitted Students:

If a student is readmitted to the University, satisfactory academic progress will be based on the student's previous attendance at Duquesne and credits accepted in transfer. Students who have not met the minimum requirements will be notified of their ineligibility for federal financial aid and informed of the options to regain eligibility.

Special Grades and their Use in Satisfactory Academic Progress Determination:

I – Incomplete: Student will receive no credit for an “I” grade although the “I” is counted as attempted credits. If, however, the incomplete grade is resolved and a passing grade is received, the credits earned will be counted.

W – Withdrawal: No credit received; however counted as attempted credit.

AUD – Audit: No credits received; not counted as attempted credits.

P – Pass: Student receives credit but GPA is not affected.

H – Honors: Student receives credit but GPA is not affected.

N – Not Passing: No credit received; however counted as attempted credit.

IP and * – In Progress: No credit received; however, when the incomplete grade is resolved and a passing grade is received, the credits earned will be counted.

Repeat of Course:

The last grade earned is always used in calculating the GPA. If the student failed the course the first time but passes it the second time, the appropriate number of credits will be received after the second attempt. If, however, the student passed the course the first time, repeats it in an attempt to improve the cumulative GPA but receives a failing grade, the appropriate number of credits will be deducted from the cumulative credits earned total. Maximum hours earned for any course cannot exceed the number of credits listed for that course.

Regaining Eligibility:

If a student fails to meet the satisfactory academic progress standards, but meets the standards later at some point, the student can once again be eligible to receive federal aid. In such cases, financial aid eligibility will begin with the academic semester after which the student re-establishes progress.

It is the student's responsibility to contact Duquesne's Financial Aid Office after completing coursework that allows the student to regain eligibility for aid. If taking coursework at another institution to regain eligibility, students should be aware that:

1. Any courses to be taken elsewhere must have prior written approval by the academic adviser to be transferred back to the student's program at Duquesne.
2. Only "credits" transfer back to Duquesne, actual "grades" do not. If the student's deficiency is in cumulative GPA, taking courses at another institution will not resolve that deficiency. Credits taken elsewhere must be accepted as transfer credits in order to be counted towards satisfactory academic progress.

Appeal Process:

Students whose federal financial aid eligibility has been suspended may appeal that status if they have experienced extenuating circumstances that affected their ability to meet the academic progress standards. In general, extenuating circumstances can include, but are not limited to, illness, injury, death of relative or friend, difficulties with accommodations for students with disabilities, and adversity due to unforeseen events. Students interested in appealing their termination of federal financial aid eligibility can request a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form from the Financial Aid Office. The completed form and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Academic Progress Appeal Committee c/o the Duquesne University Financial Aid Office.

In the appeal, the student must address the reason for failing to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP in the next evaluation. Students should submit the appeal prior to August 1st for Fall semester consideration or prior to December 1st for Spring semester consideration.

The student will be notified via email and/or in writing of the Committee's decision. A student whose appeal is approved is considered to be on Financial Aid Probation and may receive federal aid for one term, after which he/she must meet the SAP standards or be successfully following an Academic Plan for Financial Aid Eligibility.

As part of the appeal process, the student may be required to agree to an Academic Plan to Regain Federal Financial Aid Eligibility. The purpose of such a plan is to assure the student is on track to successfully complete his/her program.

State Grant Academic Progress:

Academic progress requirements for state grant programs can vary from the federal academic progress policy. As an example, academic progress requirements for the Pennsylvania State Grant are communicated directly to recipients with their state grant notification from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA).

COVID-19 Impact

If a student does not complete attempted credits due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this results in the student not meeting the quantitative component of the SAP policy, Duquesne University will exclude these attempted credits from the quantitative measurement without requiring an appeal.

If after disregarding these attempted credits, the student meets the SAP policy, the student is eligible for federal financial aid.

If after disregarding these attempted credits, the student still does not meet the SAP policy, the student would need to submit an appeal, if appropriate.

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