

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) Handbook 2024-2025

Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Office of Financial Aid

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INTRODUCTION

Alabama State University is required by the Federal Student Aid Policy 34 CFR 668.34 to establish Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving assistance through the following Title IV programs: Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan programs (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS, and Graduate PLUS), and Federal College Work Study Program, as well as other State and Institutional Programs.

As written in this handbook, Alabama State University has adopted the following as its official policy governing all students' satisfactory academic progress. If students have any questions or concerns regarding the requirements as described in this handbook, contact Financial Aid Office at finaid@alasu.edu or (334) 229-4323 or the Academic Center for Educational Success (ACES) at (334) 229-5304.

It is imperative that students read the information carefully. Students are responsible for understanding these requirements and must meet the academic performance standards outlined in this SAP policy handbook as a condition of initial or continuing eligibility for financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of his/her SAP status.



Policy Summary

What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) defines Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as the progress required of a financial aid recipient in academic studies to fulfill a specified educational objective. SAP contains both a grade, or its equivalent (qualitative) and a pace (quantitative) measure. It also must be the same as or stricter than academic standards used for students not receiving Title IV aid.

Students must meet general student eligibility requirements for receipt of federal student aid. Likewise, schools have the responsibility of confirming students are making satisfactory academic progress before disbursing Title IV aid.

Satisfactory progress is not to be confused with “good standing”. A student can meet the Alabama State University standards of "good standing" and be allowed to enroll but may not meet the minimum “Satisfactory Progress” standards to receive financial aid while enrolled.

When is Satisfactory Academic Progress Determined?

Satisfactory Academic Progress status will be determined on an annual basis. Students who do not meet the minimum SAP standards for the first time will be placed on Academic Suspension. At that point, the student will have to file an appeal with the Office of Financial Aid. If the appeal is approved they will go on Academic Probation. If the appeal is denied, the student will remain in the Academic Suspension status.

How is Satisfactory Academic Progress Determined?

Alabama State University determines Satisfactory Academic Progress using three (3) distinct criteria:

1. Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) (Qualitative)
2. Minimum Pace of Progress or Completion rate (Quantitative)
3. Maximum Time Frame (MTF) (Quantitative)

Students must maintain all THREE (3) criteria at all times to be eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid. Students who receive certain Veterans and Military Affairs (VMA) benefits may be subjected to SAP standards. For more information about VMA benefits and SAP standards, please contact the VA benefits office at 334-229-4991.

What is the SAP Notification process?

Students who initially (for the first time) DO NOT MEET the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress will be notified via their ASU email. Students on SAP probation and/or returning from academic suspension/dismissal must contact the Office of Financial Aid for an update. Students who fail to contact the Office of Financial Aid while on SAP probation may be subjected to the suspension of their aid in the subsequent semester. All students are responsible for utilizing their ASU email for notifications from the Financial Aid Office and ACES.

What is the SAP Appeals process?

Students who do not meet the academic standards of SAP at the end of the Spring semester are automatically suspended from receiving financial aid funds in the subsequent semester. Students on financial aid suspension have the right to appeal their suspension through completing the SAP Appeals Application via the University SAP Appeal submissions' link: Go to: <https://www.alasu.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid-forms/financial-aid-forms> then scroll down to the Satisfactory Academic Appeals Form.

GOT HORNETMAIL?



EMAIL FOR STUDENTS

Your student email account is an important tool for keeping you connected to campus announcements, news, events, alerts, student discounts and more. You will receive your student email account at the beginning of your first semester. **It is very important that you use your ASU email account for all University-related matters.**

Accessing Your Student Email

- To access your ASU email, please visit: www.alasu.edu and click on Hornets Access or go to www.office.com
- You will be required to enter your entire ASU email address as your user name when logging on.

Your Student Email address consists of the first initial of your first name + your full last name + the last four digits of your Student ID Number.

Example Name: John Smith

Student ID: 12345**6789**

John's email address would be: Jsmith**6789**@myasu.alasu.edu

Your Email Password The default password for your student email account will be your entire student id number.

John's password would be: 123456789

PLEASE NOTE: If your student ID number consists of a leading zero, do not include this zero. (Ex: Student ID Number is 010000001, your password would be 10000001)

Once you have successfully logged in, you will have the option to change your password. If you get locked out or cannot access your HornetMail, contact OTS at (334) 229-4560.

****Please be sure to update your email address in Blackboard to your newly created ASU student email address.***

SAP Policy Details

ASU's STANDARDS FOR SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

To encourage the completion of degree/certificate programs within a reasonable timeframe and to comply with federal and state requirements, financial aid recipients

attending Alabama State University (ASU) must maintain satisfactory academic progress as a condition for receiving financial aid. Satisfactory academic progress requires financial aid recipients to do the following:

1. Meet minimum cumulative grade point averages (**GPA**) as listed below (Qualitative);
2. Complete their degree or certificate within the maximum allowable timeframe (**MTF**) (Quantitative);
3. To maintain eligibility for financial aid, each student must maintain at least a 67% cumulative completion rate or Pace of Progress (**POP**) (Quantitative).

SAP GPA STANDARDS BY CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Minimum GPA	Financial aid suspended
Undergraduate Degree		
0-31 credit hours <i>Freshman</i>	1.60 or greater	1.59-Below
32-62 credit hours <i>Sophomore</i>	1.80 or greater	1.79-Below
63-120 credit hours <i>Junior-Senior</i>	2.00 or greater	1.99-Below
MAXIMUM Time Frame (MTF) 180 credit hours	2.00 or greater	1.99-Below
181+Ineligible for Financial Aid		
Graduate Degrees		
Program hours X 150% credit hours	3.00 or greater	2.99-Below
151%+ Ineligible for Financial Aid		

PACE of PROGRESS (Quantitative)

Completion Ratio. All students must successfully complete a minimum of 67% (Rounded up to the nearest whole number) of the cumulative credit hours attempted. The minimum completion rate that is required for a student to complete their degree within

the 150% Federal eligibility requirement. To calculate their pace of progression (completion rate), a student can divide their overall completed credit hours by their overall attempted credit hours. Students who drop below the 67% cumulative requirement may be placed in "Suspension" status.

A student must earn a minimum number of credit hours each semester to complete requirements for graduation.

*Example: A student has **completed** 60 credit hours with a letter grade C or above, but has attempted 100 credit hours; therefore, $60/100=60\%$ completion rate.*

**See policy on Limited Exemption to the Maximum Time Frame*

Maximum Time Frame Requirement (Quantitative)

A reasonable length of time for the completion of a program is defined as no more than 150 percent of the normal time to complete a degree program.

Example: If your degree requires that you complete 120 credit hours, a reasonable length of time will be $120 \text{ credit hours} \times 150\% = 180 \text{ credit hours}$. Your maximum timeframe to receive financial aid is your first 180 attempted credit hours (15 semesters). Likewise, for Graduate students, if your graduate program requires 60 credit hours, then $60 \times 150\% = 90 \text{ credit hours}$.

Other Policy Highlights (Effective Fall 2019)

Limited Exemptions to the Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

Undergraduate (UG) Students

- **Remedial Courses:** UG students will be allowed to exempt up to 30 credit hours of Remedial courses from their pace of progress
- **Major Change:** UG students will be allowed to change their Academic Major one (1) time and exempt up to 30 credit hours of their original major courses from the MTF. Students who change majors must present the new curriculum plan to the financial aid office immediately upon officially changing their major in the Records office.
- **Transfer Credits:** UG students will be allowed to exempt up to 30 hours of "passed" courses and courses (that are passed) but not accepted (e.g. technical courses from a community college) from their Maximum Time Frame.

UG students who have courses exempt from their MTF for any reason, e.g. remedial, major, etc, will be allowed to only exempt up to 60 aggregate hours.

Graduate (GR) Students

Change of Academic Plans

Changing Academic Plans in Graduate school is highly discouraged. Graduate students who change academic plans will have all attempted hours from their original academic plan included in the Maximum Time Frame calculation. See below for information on pursuing 2nd or advanced Graduate degrees.

Additional Degrees: Students seeking additional degrees beyond the first undergraduate or graduate degree are limited as follows:

Bachelors..... 45 credit hours beyond prior degree

Masters..... 60 credit hours beyond prior degree Teacher

Certification..... 55 credit hours beyond prior degree

Second Baccalaureate Students: Students seeking a **second baccalaureate degree** in an eligible curriculum may receive financial aid for an additional 45 attempted hours and must maintain a 2.0 GPA for hours taken toward the second degree. For example, if a student completed the first undergraduate degree with 200 attempted credit hours, then he or she will only be eligible to receive financial aid for an additional 45 credit hours toward the second Baccalaureate degree.

Second Master's Degree Students: Students seeking a **second master's degree** in an eligible curriculum may receive financial aid for an additional 60 attempted hours and must maintain a 3.0 GPA for hours taken toward the second degree. For example, if a student completed the first Master's degree with 52 attempted credit hours, then he or she will only be eligible to receive financial aid for an additional 60 credit hours toward the second Master's Degree.

Teacher's Certification Students: Students seeking **Teacher's Certification** may receive financial aid for 55 attempted hours and must maintain a 2.5 GPA for hours taken toward the Certificate program.

Double Majors: Students seeking double majors must complete their degree program for the primary major within the limits set for that major. Additional hours will not be allowed for double majors. The student may, however, petition the appeals committee for consideration.

Former ASU Students Returning to Complete Their Degree:

Former ASU students who were not enrolled at ASU for the most recent regular semesters (fall or spring) will re-enter at the SAP status earned at the end of their last ASU semester. Complete academic transcripts for work attempted at other institutions since their last ASU enrollment are expected to be submitted to ASU's Registrar's Office.

SUSPENSION OF FINANCIAL AID

Failure to meet the GPA and Pace of Progress requirements of satisfactory academic progress may result in the suspension of financial aid or the following conditions:

UG Students who fail to meet the SAP standards for their classification will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension for the subsequent semester and assigned to an Advisor in the Academic Center for Educational Success (A.C.E.S.). UG students must earn the minimum overall GPA for their classification and a completion rate of 67% on all coursework attempted to be cleared of the suspension. In alignment with the Graduate School's probation policy, GR students will not be afforded warning semesters.

PROBATION PERIOD

UG students may be granted financial aid probation upon successfully appealing their financial aid suspension. UG students granted probation will continue to meet with their A.C.E.S. Advisor and must achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA and complete 100% of all classes attempted each semester during their probationary status. Additionally, UG students must meet the conditions of their Academic Improvement Plan prescribed by their A.C.E.S. Advisor.

GR students who do not meet SAP standards at the end of a semester may be granted Financial Aid probation upon successfully appealing their financial aid suspension. GR students who are granted a Probationary semester must achieve a minimum 3.0 GPA and complete 100% of all classes attempted for the semester.

SUSPENSION OF AID

Any student (UG and GR) who fail to meet the conditions of their probation or who have unsuccessfully appealed their SAP will have their federal aid terminated for the subsequent semester.

CONDITIONS FOR REINSTATEMENT

All students who have been granted probationary status will remain on probation until their overall (cumulative) GPA for their classification has been achieved AND a completion of 67% of all courses attempted. Additionally, students on probation are subject to SAP evaluation of progress at the end of every semester.

SAP PROBATION EXTENSION

Students who are currently on SAP Probation and meet the SAP standards at the end of the Spring semester / term may request a review from The Office of Financial Aid for an extension of probation for the subsequent semester. Please complete the following Probation Extension Request form if the following conditions apply: Your semester GPA is a 2.0 or above AND you did not fail, withdraw (W), or receive an Incomplete (I) in any course that you attempted during the semester. The option is only available for students who are on SAP Probation Status.

APPEAL OF FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

Students who desire to appeal the termination of their financial aid eligibility must submit an appeal online via the University SAP link at <https://www.alasu.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid-forms/financial-aid-forms> then scroll down to the Satisfactory Academic Appeals Form.

The appeals submission must include the following: An explanation of mitigating circumstances that affected the student's ability to make satisfactory academic progress accompanied by official documentation to substantiate the circumstances explained in the letter. Acceptable mitigating circumstances include death in the immediate family (e.g. mother, father, sibling, child, or grandparent), medical emergencies (student or immediate family), severe psychological/emotional distress, and/or military deployment. Mitigating circumstances must occur during the time in which the students failed to meet SAP. Official documentation includes a copy of an obituary (no web links to online memorials, funeral announcements, etc.), medical documentation from a physician's office to include dates of medical treatment or length of stay in a hospital facility, letter from a professional counselor, and/or military orders. **Students must also show proof of obtaining a University Excuse for excessive absences due to mitigating circumstances. University Excuses must be submitted online within ten (10) days of student's extended absence. To submit an online request go to the following link or QR Code: <https://tinyurl.com/3pvrdc53>**



SAP APPEALS DEADLINE DATES

Students must adhere to the following deadline dates to appeal their financial aid suspension.

Semester/Year Submittal Date

SPRING July 31st

SUMMER June 1st

Submission of an appeal does not guarantee approval. **If you enroll in classes before your appeal is reviewed or after the deadline for SAP Appeal Submission dates, you are responsible for payment of tuition and other education expenses out-of-pocket.** Appeals are reviewed and approved based on individual extenuating circumstances; individual academic performance and any documentation submitted.

Appeals Committee. The Associate Vice President shall appoint an Appeals Committee to consist of representatives from the Financial Aid Office, ACES Office, Office of Records and Registration, and Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Appeals Committee shall meet at the end of the Appeals submissions' deadline to determine if the student's federal aid should be reinstated. The student shall be notified in writing via their ASU email of the Committee's decision. The student may appeal the Financial Aid Appeals Committee's decision to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management/Financial Aid within five working days. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management/Financial Aid has five working days to render a decision and respond to the student in writing. The decision of the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management/Financial Aid is final.

Any student (UG and GR) who fail to meet the conditions of their probation after their first appeal will have their federal aid terminated for the subsequent semester. Students who have unusual mitigating circumstances, i.e. circumstances that are not similar to/same as the previous circumstances from the first appeal, may appeal their suspension of aid for the second time. Students' who successfully appeal their FA suspension will be placed on probation and must meet the conditions of their probation until their overall GPA for the classification is achieved and have completed at least 67% of all coursework attempted. No student will be granted an opportunity to appeal for a 3rd time in the event the conditions of the second reinstatement are not met."

ASU's Financial Aid Office shall determine and publish deadline dates for appeal submissions and a timeline for appeal notifications each semester.

Students who are denied probation at any time based on the final decision of the appeals committee can choose to pay out of pocket or seek financial support from a private lender. A student who desires reinstatement of their Title IV funds, must meet all three (3) SAP Criteria and adhere to an Academic Plan for Improvement as prescribed by an Academic Center for Educational Success (A.C.E.S.) Advisor.

SAP NOTIFICATION

Students who meet or exceed SAP requirements will not be notified. Students who do not meet SAP requirements or the terms of their probation will be notified via students' ASU email.

Definitions:

1. **Academic Suspension** – Students are ineligible for financial aid while suspended. An explanation of cumulative grade point averages and their effect on enrollment is found in the Alabama State University catalog.
2. **Appeal** – A process by which a student who is not meeting SAP standards petitions the school for reconsideration of her/his eligibility for financial aid.
3. **Attempted Course** – A course which remains on the student's record after the first fourteen days of the term.
4. **Completed Course/Earned Credit** – A course in which a grade of A, B, C, D, or P was received. (Note: Withdrawal (W), blank grades, incomplete grades (I), failures (F) and (WF) are not considered "earned credit" for meeting progress requirements).
5. **Financial Aid Probation** – A period in which a student who has been identified as not meeting one or more of the standards in this policy may continue to receive financial aid. At the end of the probationary period, a student is expected to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress and/or Academic Plan requirements or in order to continue receiving financial aid.
6. **Financial Aid Termination/Suspension** – The point at which a student is no longer eligible to receive financial aid as defined in this policy.
7. **Incomplete** – A grade of "I" received for an attempted course; no credit will be applied until the course is completed. However, the hours will be counted in determining a student's "Pace" toward degree completion.
8. **Maximum Timeframe** – Time limit set for receipt of financial aid that is specific to a student's program of study. For undergraduate and graduate programs, federal law defines this limit as 150% of the normal program's length. This policy sets specific timeframes for both undergraduate and graduate programs of study.
9. **Qualitative Measure** – Measurement of student's academic standing consistent with the requirement for graduation for their program of study. It is required that students who have attended for a period of two academic years of undergraduate study maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).
10. **Quantitative Measure** – Maximum timeframe the student has to complete their program of student and a minimum number of credits the student must satisfactorily complete at each increment (Pace).
11. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – Maintaining the required cumulative GPA and completion of courses at a rate that meets the standards defined in this policy.
12. **Transfer Credit** – Course accepted for credit at ASU from another institution. Questions regarding Transfer Credit should be addressed to the Admissions Office at (334) 229-4291.