Alabama State University Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Handbook



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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.

The student is responsible for being aware of his/her SAP status.

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 The Office of Financial Aid SAP Coordinator at sap@alasu.edu or call (334) 229-4862.

Policy Summary

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 are responsible for confirming students are making Satisfactory Academic Progress before disbursing Title IV aid.

Satisfactory Academic 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.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements

Satisfactory Academic Progress status will be determined annually at the end of the Spring term, including the after-summer term that has ended. Students who do not meet the minimum SAP standards for the first time will be placed on Academic Probation. 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.

Satisfactory Academic Progress three (3) criteria's:

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** 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 Office of Accessibility and Veterans Affairs at 334-229-5134.

Suspension of Financial Aid

Failure to meet the GPA or Pace of Progress requirements of Satisfactory Academic Progress may result in the suspension of financial aid or the following conditions:

Undergraduate Students who fail to meet the SAP standards for their classification will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension for the subsequent semester. Undergraduate students must meet the GPA and Completion Rate Requirements for their classification on all coursework attempted to be cleared of the suspension. In alignment with the Graduate School's probation policy, Graduate students must maintain the requirements outlined in their graduate curriculum.

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

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 by completing the SAP Appeals Application via the University SoftDocs application form. Students who desire to appeal their suspension status for financial aid eligibility must submit an appeal online via SoftDocs using the link below:

https://alasu.etrieve.cloud/central/templates/67

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. Appeals are reviewed and approved based on extenuating circumstances, academic performance, and any documentation submitted in the appeals application.

Probation Period

All students granted probationary status will remain on probation until their overall (cumulative) GPA for their classification has been achieved AND at a completion rate of **67%** of all courses attempted. Additionally, students on probation are subject to SAP evaluation of progress at the end of every semester. Students on SAP probation who meet the financial aid probationary plan conditions at the end of the academic year can continue their probationary status into the next academic year.

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 a Financial Aid Probationary Plan for Improvement.

Cancellation

Students placed on Financial Aid Probation who fail to meet the criteria requirements set before them are subject to the cancellation of their financial aid, thus reverting to a suspension status. For example, a student placed on Financial Aid Probation in the Fall semester failed to meet the criteria outlined in their Academic Plan after the Fall term ended. The probationary status is subject to cancellation for the upcoming/next enrolled term.

Consultation

The Chief Aid Administrator/Associate Vice President of Financial Aid shall appoint an Appeals Committee of representatives from the Office of Financial Aid. 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 Chief Aid Administrator/Associate Vice President of Financial Aid; the student must submit a request to schedule an appointment. Once the decision has been made by the Chief Aid Administrator/Associate Vice President for Financial Aid, it is **final**.

SAP Policy Details

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

To encourage the completion of degree/certificate programs within a reasonable time frame 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. S*tudents who fail to meet the three SAP criteria standards outlined below will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. Satisfactory academic progress requires financial aid recipients to meet the following standards:

1. Meet minimum cumulative grade point averages (**GPA**) as listed below (Qualitative)

2. Must maintain at least a 67% cumulative completion rate or Pace of Progress (**POP**) (Quantitative).

3. Complete their degree or certificate within the maximum allowable timeframe (**MTF)** (Quantitative).

GPA Standards (Qualitative)

GPA Requirements		
Undergraduate		
Classification	**Requirement**	**Financial Aid Suspension**
1-30 credit hours ***1st Year Freshmen***	1.60 or greater	1.59 - Below
31-60 credit hours ***2ND Year Sophomore***	1.80 or greater	1.79 - Below
61-90 credit hours ***3rd Year Junior***	2.00 or greater	1.99 - Below
91-120 credit hours ***4th Year Senior***	2.00 or greater	1.99- Below
121-180 credit hours ***5th Year Senior***	2.00 or greater	1.99- Below
Graduate		
Master's, Graduate, or Doctoral Degree	3.00 or greater	2.99 - Below

PACE of Progress (Quantitative)

Minimum Completion Rate Requirements	
Undergraduate & Graduate	
Requirement	**Financial Aid Suspension**
67%	66.34% - Below
Example: If a student has completed 80 credit hours and attempted 120 credit hours, then 80/120 * 100 = 66.6%	

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 required for a student to complete their degree is 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.

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.

Maximum Time Frame Requirements	
Undergraduate	
Requirement	**Financial Aid Suspension**
Less than 180 Credit Hours	+180 Credit Hours
Graduate	
Program Hours x 150% Credit Hours	Graduate students, if your graduate program requires 60 credit hours, then 60X150% =90 credit hours.

Other Policy Highlights

Limited Exemptions to the Maximum Time Frame (MTF)

Undergraduate Students

- **Remedial Courses:** Undergraduate students will be allowed to exempt up to 30 credit hours of Remedial courses from their pace of progress.
- **Major Change:** Undergraduate 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.

Graduate Students

- **Change of Academic Plans**

  Changing Academic Plans in Graduate school is highly discouraging. 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**

Second Baccalaureate Students: Students seeking a **second baccalaureate degree** in an eligible curriculum may receive time frame eligibility of 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 120 attempted credit hours, they will only be eligible for 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 36 attempted credit hours, depending on eligibility, may receive additional time frame eligibility up to 60 credit hours toward the second Master's Degree.

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 classes completed at other institutions since their last ASU enrollment are expected to be submitted to ASU's Registrar's Office.

GOT HORNETOUTLOOK?



EMAIL FOR STUDENTS	Your student email account is a useful tool that we use to keep you connected to campus announcements, news, events, alerts, student information, and more. Your Hornet Outlook is the most utilized method of communication that Financial Aid uses to update you regarding your SAP requirements, standards, and statuses, announcements, alerts, events and more. **It is 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** • You will be required to enter your entire ASU email address as your username 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**. **Example Password:** 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, an option is given to change the password. If you get locked out or cannot access your Hornet Outlook, contact OTS at (334) 229-4560.

SAP FAQ's

SAP Notifications: Students who initially (for the first time) **DO NOT MEET** the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress will be notified via their ASU email. All students, including those who do not meet SAP requirements or the conditions of their probation, will be informed of their status through their ASU email. All students are responsible for utilizing their ASU email for notifications from the Financial Aid Office.

Appeal Submission Confirmation: Students who have submitted an appeal will receive a confirmation email from SoftDocs.

SAP Appeal Turnaround Time: Please allow 10-14 business days for your appeal to be reviewed. You will be notified regarding the decision of your SAP appeal via your Hornets Access account and/or ASU email address. Follow up with the Office of Financial Aid via email address sap@alasu.edu for questions regarding your appeal.

Can I still attend school if I am not meeting SAP? Yes, not meeting SAP does not stop a student from attending school; SAP only affects the student's financial aid eligibility.

Why am I not able to register for classes? Student Account Hold. If a student has a hold on their account, it is due to a previous outstanding balance. Students can talk with Student accounts to discuss payment plan options. If student accounts' payment plan options do not work, students may explore other options such as a private loan.

Definitions

1. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – Maintaining the required cumulative GPA and completion of courses at a rate that meets the standards defined in this policy.
2. **Financial Aid Termination/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.
3. **Appeal** – A process by which a student not meeting SAP standards petitions the school for reconsideration of her/his financial aid eligibility.
4. **Attempted Course** – A course which remains on the student's record after the first fourteen days of the term.
5. **Financial Aid Probation** – A period in which a student is 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 must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress and/or Academic Plan requirements or continue receiving financial aid.
6. **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).
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 time frames 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 a period of two academic years of undergraduate study maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).
10. **Quantitative Measure** – *Maximum time frame* the student must complete their academic progress studies and a minimum number of credits they must satisfactorily complete at each increment (Pace).