



I. Title:
Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress

II. Policy Statement:
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, Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National “SMART” 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.

III. Scope:
The purpose of the recommended revised Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy is to ensure that all elements of the US Department of Education’s requirements are incorporated in ASU’s SAP policy. Alabama State University is proposing the following as its official policy governing all Title IV recipients’ satisfactory academic progress.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS

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, Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National “SMART” 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. Alabama State University has adopted the following as its official policy governing all students’ satisfactory academic progress.

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 standards of "Satisfactory Progress" to receive financial aid while enrolled.

Satisfactory Academic Progress status will be determined at the end of each semester, OR for

Undergraduate students, after the first 24 credit hours are completed at ASU.

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 as listed below (Qualitative);
2. Complete their degree or certificate within the maximum allowable time frame (Quantitative);
3. Complete and earn credit for a reasonable number of credit hours (at least 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted) towards a degree or certificate, measured incrementally; and complete courses at an overall “pace” which will, once again ensure graduation within the maximum allowable time frame, measured in total cumulative hours attempted. In determining the 67% earned/pursued ration, hours will be rounded up to the nearest whole number (Quantitative).

SAP GPA STANDARDS BY CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Minimum GPA	Financial aid suspended
Undergraduate Degree		
24-31 credit hours	1.60 or greater	1.59-Below
32-62 credit hours	1.80 or greater	1.79-Below
63-120 credit hours	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		
Masters and Doctoral Degrees		
Program hours x 150% = Max. credit hours	3.00 or greater	2.99-Below
151%+ Ineligible for Financial Aid		

PACE of PROGRESS (Quantitative Measure)

Completion Ratio. All students must successfully complete a minimum of 67% (Rounded up to the nearest whole number) of the cumulative credit hours attempted. This calculation is done by dividing the total cumulative earned credits by the total cumulative attempted credits. A

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

- The following shall be considered as credits completed: “A through D” grades
- The following shall not be considered as credit completed:
 - a. “F”
 - b. “W” – Withdrawal
 - c. “WF”- Withdrawal/Failure
 - d. “I or IP”- Incomplete or In Progress (may be counted after the “I” or “IP” is changed to another letter grade).
 - e. “AU”-Audit – No Credit

Students with withdrawals, incompletes, failing grades, repeated classes, and transfer credits that **exceed 30 hours** will count toward the number of hours attempted.

Maximum Time Frame Requirement (MTF):

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 credit hours x 150% = 180 credit hours. Your maximum time frame to receive financial aid is your first 180 attempted credit hours (15 semesters).

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.

NOTE: All grades earned for the exempt courses will still be calculated in the cumulative GPA for SAP purposes.

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:

SAP Warning

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

PROBATION PERIOD

UG students who fail to meet the conditions of FA warning 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 FA 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 fails 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.

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 one of the preferred private lenders found at the following link (insert link). A student who desires reinstatement of their "probation status" can pay out of pocket or through a private lender for a minimum of six (6) credit hours in a subsequent semester and show progress by earning a minimum of a 2.0 GPA and successfully completing 100% of all attempted courses for the semester. Once the conditions have been met to regain probation, students may appeal for reinstatement.

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 (insert link here). The appeals submission must include the following: A letter to explain mitigating circumstances that affected the student's ability to make satisfactory academic progress **AND** 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 member), severe psychological/emotional distress, and/or military deployment. Mitigating circumstances must occur during the time in which the student 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.

Appeals Committee. The President shall appoint an Appeals Committee to consist of representatives from the A.C.E.S. Office, Registrar's Office, and 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 Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management within five working days. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management has five working days to render a decision and respond to the student in writing. The decision of the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management 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 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 one of the preferred private lenders found at the following link (insert link). Students who paid out of pocket or through a private lender and desire reinstatement of their federal aid must take a minimum of six (6) credit hours in a subsequent semester and show progress by earning a 2.0 or above GPA and complete 100% of all attempted courses for the semester.

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.

IV. Effective Date:

This policy is effective upon official approval by the ASU Board of Trustees

V. Audience (Designated Responsibilities and Applicability of Policy):

All ASU students who are Title IV recipients are expected to adhere to this policy. The Office of Financial Aid is charged with the enforcement of the policy as approved.

VI. Policy Management:

- Responsible Office: Financial Aid
- Responsible Executive: Chief of Staff
- Responsible Officer(s): VP and AVP of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Director of Financial Aid

VII. 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.

VIII. Procedures

- The Office of Financial Aid shall adhere to and execute the approved policies as stated.

Document History

Approved by BOT: September 18, 2019