

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy
For Title IV Financial Aid Recipients

Section 668.34 of the Higher Education Act states that a student must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward a degree or certificate to be eligible for Title IV Student Aid. **Title IV aid includes Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study, and the TEACH Grant.** There are three components of satisfactory academic progress which must be met in order to remain eligible for Title IV aid. SAP is evaluated at the end of each term. Failure to meet any section of this policy will result in a loss of financial aid. The three components of SAP are as follows:

I. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COURSE WORK: Students are required to complete a minimum of 67% of the hours attempted, to meet the Pace of progression (PACE) requirement. Cumulative completion rates will be reviewed at the end of each term. All acceptable hours appearing on transcripts from prior schools will be counted in the overall attempted hour's calculation. Hours are included in the calculation whether or not Title IV financial aid was received, and all of the hours for repeated courses are included from each time the course was taken. Successful completion is defined as a passing grade. Grades of "W" (withdrawals), "IP" (incomplete), "F" (failing) and changes from "credit" to "audit" will cause a course to be considered not complete. However, these hours will be used in computing attempted hours. If a grade is changed from an "IP" to a passing letter grade, contact the financial aid office to recalculate the satisfactory academic progress status. The same applies for letter grade changes. In addition, remedial course work is counted toward the completion rate just as any other course.

Once a student falls below a completion rate of 67%, they will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next term of enrollment. While on Financial Aid Warning, students may continue to receive Title IV assistance. Additionally, a student will remain on Warning for one term and must be making SAP by the end of that term. Failure to meet this requirement will result in Financial Aid Suspension and ineligibility for further assistance through federal financial aid programs until the completion rate is 67% or above. If the minimum requirements are met the "Warning" status will be changed to "Clear".

II. MINIMUM GRADE POINT AVERAGE: You must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in order to receive Title IV Aid. For repeated courses, only the most recent grade will be used in the GPA calculation, but all of the hours each time the same class is taken are included towards the PACE and Maximum Time Frame requirements. If a student meets the PACE requirement for SAP, but not the GPA requirement, they will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next term of enrollment, for the duration of one term. Failure to make SAP at the end of that term will result in Financial Aid Suspension and the student will be considered ineligible for further assistance through the Federal Student Aid Programs. If SAP requirements are met, upon completion of the "Warning" term, the status of "Warning" will be changed to "Clear". The GPA from transfer credits is not included in the GPA calculation.

III. MAXIMUM TIME FRAME: Title IV financial aid recipients will be allowed an average of 150% of the hours required for their degree or certificate program. If a student completes a certificate program and moves into an associate's or bachelor's program, the hours completed for the certificate will be applied toward the total allowed for the higher degree. All acceptable hours appearing on transcripts from prior institutions will be included in the attempted hour's calculation. Remedial courses, withdrawals, and repeated courses will be included in the total number of attempted hours. A student may request an extension of attempted hours based on a change of major. At the time of request, a student must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better, a completion rate of at least 67% overall, have not changed majors more than once if pursuing a certificate or associate's degree and/or have not changed majors more than twice in pursuing a bachelor's degree.

IV. Complete Withdrawals and All F's: Students who withdraw from all classes, receive all F's in a term or a combination of the two will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and receive a status of "Manual Suspension". Title IV eligibility can **only** be regained with an approved Financial Aid Suspension Appeal.

INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC SUSPENSION Any student whose name appears on the institutional suspension list will also be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and will be ineligible to receive Title IV Student Aid.

APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION A student on Financial Aid Suspension may appeal if the circumstances causing the student to fall below minimum standards were out of the student's control and warrant special consideration. **An appeal should be submitted using the appropriate form, available at the Financial Aid Office and online at <http://uafs.edu/financialaid/financial-aid-forms>.** The appeal should contain an explanation and/or reason for poor academic performance and include supporting documentation such as, letters from doctors, lawyers, employers, etc. Some examples of extenuating circumstances include: severe illness or injury, hospitalization, or death of an immediate family member. The appeal should address each term that the student's performance was below the minimum requirements. Additionally, an appeal should also contain an explanation of the steps that the student intends to take to ensure that future academic progress will be acceptable if the appeal is approved. If an appeal is approved, the student will be required to complete an Academic Plan with the help of an Academic Advisor which must be approved by a Financial Aid Advisor. The Academic Plan will contain a projection of the courses the student will take each term up to the term that they again meet SAP requirements. The Academic Plan will be reviewed at the end of each term and students will be strictly held to the requirements of the plan. Failure to adhere to the Academic Plan will result in Financial Aid Suspension and the student will lose eligibility for Title IV student aid.

- If the appeal is not approved, a student may attend at their own expense until they meet SAP at which time they regain eligibility for Title IV Student Aid.

All students who submit a financial aid appeal will be notified by email of the determination of the Appeal Committee whose decision is final. Furthermore, no Financial Aid will be paid retroactively for a term in which the student did not meet the minimum requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress.