

## OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Revised Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy – Effective July 1, 2013

#### REQUIRED READING

##### Overview

When students accept financial aid, they also accept responsibility for making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). This progress is based on the number of attempted and earned credits hours you enroll in per semester, your term and cumulative grade point average(s) as well as the length of enrollment at West Virginia State University in addition to any courses taken at another institution.

*Please read this information carefully. You are responsible for understanding these requirements.*

This summary is given as a convenience to students. We strongly suggest students read this to clearly understand the requirements mandated. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these requirements, please contact our office at (304)204-4369 or by emailing us at [fadocs@wvstateu.edu](mailto:fadocs@wvstateu.edu).

##### What is SAP?

Federal and state financial aid regulations require that recipients of federal and state aid make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward the completion of a degree. West Virginia State University student aid recipients, in addition to meeting other financial aid eligibility criteria, must be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress in their degree program.

West Virginia State University Office of Student Financial Assistance will monitor the progress of students toward degree completion requirements at the end of each semester. Students who fail to complete their degree requirements within the prescribed length of time and/or fail to maintain the required cumulative grade point average will not be eligible for federal, or state financial aid. (34 CFR 668.16(e), 34 CFR 668.34)

##### General Information

1. Students applying for financial assistance must be in compliance with the appropriate SAP Policy as a condition of initial or continuing eligibility.
2. Financial aid will be denied to students who fail to maintain progress under the SAP Policies. (GPA, Pace To Degree both term and cumulative, Maximum Time Frame – 150% Rule)

3. First-time or returning aid applicants who have previously attended WVSU must also be in compliance with the policy even though aid has not been received during periods of prior attendance.

### **Evaluation Period**

At the end of each term (fall, spring, summer), a review will be made to ensure compliance with the grade point average (GPA), maximum time frame limit, and pace to degree completion requirements of the policy.

### **Notification**

1. At the end of each term students who failed to meet the SAP standards will be notified of their SAP status.
2. Depending upon the severity of their SAP status, financial aid may be withheld.
3. SAP notifications are based on information that is subject to change. Therefore, it is the responsibility of students who have been notified of their SAP status to document any corrections to information (such as grade changes, consortium credits, etc.) used to determine their status.
4. Because of the limited amount of time between terms, a complete review of all aid recipients' status may not be possible before the beginning of the next term.
5. Any aid released to a student who is subsequently determined to be ineligible under the rules for SAP will be returned and the student will be billed.

## **SAP Requirements for Undergraduate Students**

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** Students who have earned 0 – 59 credit hours are required to have at least a 1.75 GPA at the end of each semester of enrollment. Students who have earned 60 plus credit hours are required to have at least a 2.0 GPA at the end of each semester of enrollment.

**Pace of Completion:** Students are required to complete 67% of attempted credit hours each semester. At the end of each semester, a student's pace/completion rate will be measured by comparing the number of attempted credit hours with credit hours earned. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Add/Drop period.

**Maximum Time Frame 150% Rule:** In addition to the GPA and Pace of Completion Components, the University is also required to establish the maximum number of terms a student may receive aid based upon the advertised length of any individual program. Students will not be eligible for financial aid that exceeds 150% of the published length of his or her program. All credits earned, regardless of where those credits were earned, are taken into consideration when reviewing this component.

**Examples of Maximum Time Frame hours to receive financial aid are below:**

Program	Hours Required	Maximum Hrs to receive Fin Aid
ART	121	182
Biology	128	192

The formula used to calculate maximum hours is, total number of hours required for degree program multiplied by 150% equals the total hours allowed to receive financial aid. Students who exceed the total hours allowed to receive financial aid will not be eligible to receive financial aid. However, a student who is within a semester of graduation may appeal this process and request financial aid for the one semester in which they will complete the requirements for graduation. Information concerning the appeals process will be address later in this material.

**Second Bachelor Degree:** Undergraduates who earned their first Bachelor degree within the maximum time frame and decide to work on a second Bachelor's will be granted an additional 75 credit hours of financial aid towards the second bachelor's degree. Graduate students may have program length reset if he or she seeks a subsequent graduate degree. Please note that when counting credit hours toward the 150% length of program, credit hours are counted regardless of aid status, received or not for that semester.

**Transfer Students:** The number of transfer hours accepted at the point of admission will be used to calculate the students remaining eligibility under the 150% calculation and will be included in the number attempted/number completed. Transfer students will also be reviewed for GPA and Pace of Completion under the SAP Policy.

**Graduate Student:** Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater to meet SAP. Total credit hours of aid will be monitored in the same manner as done for undergraduate students.

### **Students Who Do Not Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards**

- **Financial Aid Warning:** After any semester of enrollment, students below the required G.P.A or the pace of completion ratio requirement for the FIRST TIME will receive a **Warning Notice and placed on Financial Aid Warning**. Students who are on Financial Aid Warning will be able to receive financial aid for one semester subsequent after the semester they were given the warning status. During this subsequent semester a student must return to satisfactory academic progress standards.
- **Financial Aid Probation:** This is a status assigned to a student who was previously placed on Financial Aid Warning and did not meet the standards of academic progress. Students placed on Financial Aid Probation are not eligible to receive financial aid; however, they may file an appeal.

**Please note: Students on Appeals and Academic Plans (prior to the revision of this policy) who did not meet SAP are not eligible to receive financial aid. (See Regaining Eligibility)**

**Termination of Financial Aid:** Students, who were placed on financial aid probation with an Academic Plan and did not follow the conditions of the approved appeal, will be denied financial aid. (See Regaining Eligibility)

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal**

**Financial Aid Appeal and Academic Plan:** The appeal process is for students who were on Financial Aid Warning and did not make SAP during their Warning semester and are now placed on Financial Aid Probation. The conditions of the appeal are as follows:

- **Receive Appeal Form from the Office of Student Financial Assistance.**
- **A hand-written or typed statement, signed and dated, from the student explaining in detail the reason for not meeting SAP standards and what steps are being taken to meet the standards going forward.**
- **Supporting documentation must accompany your extenuating circumstance(s).**

SAP Appeals are reviewed every Monday morning by the Office of Financial Aid Committee. The Director of Student Financial Assistance will be the final point of appeal if this final step is needed. The student will be notified within 5 days after the appeal has been reviewed whether the appeal was approved or denied.

If a student successfully appeals and is placed on an academic plan, the student is considered to be in a probation status. Students must follow the conditions of the plan and make SAP in order to continue eligibility for financial aid.

Students who have failed 2 or more academic plans are not eligible to file an appeal until they are in compliance with

the SAP policy. Only under extreme circumstances will an appeal be accepted for review from a student in this situation.

Review of an appeal is not a guarantee of approval. The SAP Committee will review a student's individual situation, assessing current and previous academic performance as well as any documentation submitted to determine whether there is significant justification to warrant an exception to the existing SAP Policy for the student's individual circumstance.

Students who are applying for an appeal must have extenuating circumstances that contributed to their poor performance in maintaining SAP. See below for a list of extenuating circumstances.

**Extenuating Circumstances which warrants an Appeal:**

- Death of an Immediate Family Member
- Serious Illness or Injury
- Military involvement/deployment
- Emotional problems supported by documentation from a counseling agency, counselor or psychiatrist
- Other circumstance(s) must be described in detail with supporting documentation.

**Regaining Eligibility:** A student must complete one full time semester (12 credit hours) or its equivalent at WVSU without financial aid or complete the same credit hour requirement at another institution, achieve the appropriate GPA for the amount of credit hours attempted and complete 100% of attempted credit hours for the semester/term. A student may be reinstated if he/she complies with the conditions for

readmission to the University with the intervention of an academic advisor. The credit hours need not be taken in consecutive semesters. With the approval of an academic advisor, the credits may be taken at another post-secondary institution.

**Maximum Time Frame 150% Rule Appeals Process:** A student who has exceeded the 150% Rule who is within a semester of graduation may appeal and request aid for the one semester in which they will complete the requirements for graduation.

- **All terms in which a student is enrolled count toward the maximum time frame and minimum credit hours completed requirement, even if the student completely withdrew from the University.**
- **Terms of enrollment in which no aid is received will count towards the maximum time frame limit. This includes any courses taken at another institution for which no aid was received.**
- **If it is determined that the student has completed the requirements for a degree, regardless of whether the student has applied to receive the degree, the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid for that degree.**

Students must submit an Academic Evaluation Form available in the Office of Student Financial Assistance. The form must be completed by the Dean or Department Chair Person. Student will be able to receive aid only for those classes included in the academic plan.

**Graduate Students** must meet with their academic advisor to devise a plan for degree completion within federally prescribed timelines that will meet all other program requirements. A copy of this plan must be presented to the OFA or Appeals Committee. This is the only manner in which a graduate student may obtain reinstatement.

### **Factors to Consider in Determining SAP**

**Impact of Grades on SAP Eligibility:** A,B,C, and D grades are acceptable in determining a completion rate. An F grade is considered a completed class for purposes of determining a completion rate of 67% or more,

and is calculated as a 0.00 in the cumulative grade point average calculation and 0 credits earned. Grades of I or W are used when calculating completion rate as hours attempted.

**Impact of Full Withdrawal on SAP Eligibility:** Any student who withdraws from all classes prior to the 60% period will have his or her aid for the enrollment period calculated under the “Return of Title IV Aid” regulations. Any student who fails to achieve a 67% completion rate due to withdrawal from a class(es) will be placed on Warning, Probation or Aid Terminated depending on their current SAP status.

**Impact of Repeated or Not for Credit Classes on SAP Eligibility:** Repeats due to Non-Passing Grade>a student may repeat, without penalty (may receive financial aid), coursework in which he or she previously received a failing grade. There is no limit on repeated coursework taken to remedy a failing grade. Repeats taken to Improve a Passing Grade> a student may receive financial aid for repeat coursework in which he or she previously received a grade of W or a passing grade a maximum of two times. In other words, a student may attempt a course a total of two times before losing eligibility for that specific course. Repeated Coursework and Completion Rate > repeated classes will not result in additional credit hours which will not improve the student’s completion rate.

**Impact of all Failing Grades on SAP Eligibility:** Reports are run after grades are posted for each term to locate any student who achieved all failing grades for that specific enrollment period. Students are placed in a “termination of aid” category until the attendance for that enrollment period is established. Any student documenting full attendance and “earned” failing grades will be subject to normal SAP review as outlined above and will be placed back into aid eligibility until the annual review occurs. Students who document unofficial withdrawal during the period of enrollment will be subject to the “Return of Title IV Aid” calculation based upon last date of documented attendance.