Office of Financial Aid
Revised Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy- effective July 1, 2020

Federal regulations: 34 CFR 668.16(e), 34 CFR 668.32(f), 34 CFR 668.34

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the term used to define successful completion of degree requirements to maintain eligibility for federal and state financial aid. As required by regulations, West Virginia State University (WVSU) must determine whether a student meets SAP requirements. SAP is evaluated prior to the start of each academic year. The fall semester is the start of each academic year. SAP evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students occurs annually at the conclusion of the spring semester. If a student begins attendance in the spring or summer semester they will have their SAP evaluated upon entry as well as at the conclusion of the spring semester. Financial aid eligibility determination for a future term of enrollment cannot be done until SAP evaluation occurs. The student’s entire academic history must be considered when determining SAP status irrespective of whether or not the student received financial aid.

Requirements of the SAP Policy

When students accept financial aid, they also accept the responsibility to make satisfactory academic progress. This progress is based on cumulative GPA (Qualitative measure) and on the number of attempted and earned credit hours you enroll in per academic year referred to as PACE of completion (Quantitative Measure), as well as the length of enrollment at West Virginia State University in addition to any courses taken at other institutions. The qualitative component measures the quality of the student’s SAP by conducting a review of the student’s cumulative grade point average (GPA). The quantitative component corresponds to the pace at which the student must progress through his or her program of study.

Qualitative Measure- Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)
WVSU undergraduate students must have a minimum overall cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0. Graduates students must maintain a minimum overall cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0. Credits accepted from other schools that may be applied to a West Virginia State University degree are counted in the calculation of the student’s GPA, thus, are included in the qualitative measure. (Specific external and institutional scholarships, assistantships, and grants may require a different minimum GPA for continued eligibility. This consideration is a separate and distinct factor in renewing or continuing eligibility for these specific financial aid funds.)

Quantitative Measure-- (PACE of Completion)
This evaluation is to ensure completion within the maximum timeframe (see below) permitted and provides for the measurement of the student’s progress at the end of each academic year. Pace of completion ratio is calculated by determining the cumulative number of credit hours the student has successfully completed divided by the number of cumulative credit hours the student has attempted. Credits accepted from other schools that may be applied to a WVSU degree are
counted in the calculation as both attempted and completed hours. To meet the quantitative requirement, the student’s completion ratio must be 67% or higher for both undergraduate and graduate students.

**Maximum Time Frame 150% rule**
Students must complete their degree within a specified amount of time. Students must complete their degree program within 150% of the published length of their program. The measurement for maximum time frame includes all attempted hours in adherence to the University’s Grading Policies. The 150% rule measures the maximum timeframe, which is a period no longer than 150 percent, of the published length of the education program as measured in credit hours. For example, in baccalaureate programs requiring 120 hours, students must obtain their degree within 180 attempted hours (120 x 1.5 = 180).

For students who are pursuing subsequent (second, third, etc.) degrees, the maximum time frame determination for a subsequent degree will be calculated based on the number of hours attempted for any prior degree and the number of hours needed to complete the current degree multiplied by 150%. The determination for the number of degree pursuant hours remaining for the subsequent degree will be obtained from the student’s academic advisor or by reviewing Degree Works.

**See the below criteria required to maintain SAP:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Overall GPA</th>
<th>Hours Passed vs. Hours Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Standing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman (0-29 hours)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore (30 to 59 hours)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior (60 to 89 hours)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (90 + hours)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Overall GPA</th>
<th>Hours Passed vs. Hours Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Standing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time and Continuing</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maximum Time-Frame (150% rule) cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the program.**

**Measurement of Satisfactory Academic Progress**
Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured at the end of the spring semester each year for students enrolled in the preceding summer, fall or spring semesters. If a student not enrolled in those semesters’ later files a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, a manual review is completed to determine the student’s SAP status. The measurement of SAP will be based on the
student’s current academic record at the time of the review. Students enrolling at the institution as a first time freshman are considered to be making SAP.

Effects of Repeated Courses
If the student repeats a course, those credits are counted again when calculating attempted credits. However, if the student repeats a course in which he or she has earned a D or F grade taken no later than the semester or summer term during which the student attempts the 60th semester hour, and before he or she earns a baccalaureate degree, the student may have the D/F Repeat rule applied. When the D/F Repeat rule is applied, the original grade shall be disregarded, and the new grade (excluding a W) shall be used in determining the student’s GPA. (Coursework that a student repeats may be included when determining a student’s enrollment status for Title IV-federal student aid purposes as long as it is not a result of more than one repetition of a previously passed course, or any repetition of a previously passed course due the student failing other coursework. This rule is not related to SAP but is a general financial aid eligibility requirement.)

Effects of Withdrawal, Incomplete and CR/NC Grades
If the student withdraws from a course after the first week of classes during any given semester (i.e., student receives a grade of “W” for the course), the course credits are included in the count of attempted credit hours. Thus, withdrawn courses are calculated in the quantitative and maximum time frame measures. Credits for an incomplete course (i.e., student receives a grade of “I” for the course), are counted as credits attempted for quantitative and maximum timeframe measures, but are not included in the GPA or the credits earned count until the incomplete grade changes to a passing or failing grade. “NC” grade(s) are counted as attempted for quantitative and maximum timeframe but not included in the GPA or credits earned. “CR” grade will be counted in attempted, maximum timeframe and credits earned but will not be included in the GPA.

Effect of Change in Major
If a student changes his or her major, all the credits the student earns toward any WVSU degree will be included in the calculation of qualitative, quantitative and maximum time frame measures.

Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
Students who are NOT maintaining SAP standards will lose eligibility for financial aid and placed on Financial Aid Suspension until they come back into SAP compliance. Students who can document extenuating circumstances which occurred during their enrollment period that led them to their current SAP noncompliance, have taken steps to address those circumstances, and can become compliant and/or complete their degree objective within three semesters should and are eligible to submit a Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal. If a student chooses to continue after not maintaining SAP standards and cannot appeal, they must do so without federal aid.
SAP Appeal Procedures
Students who are not meeting SAP standards when the annual SAP review is completed (end of each Spring semester), the Financial Aid Director shall notify them that they are on financial aid suspension and no longer eligible for federal and state financial aid. Students are then informed of their opportunity to submit an appeal. To be removed from financial aid suspension, students may attend WVSU at their own expense, provided they are eligible academically, until the minimum grade point average or PACE of completion hours passed is reached or have an appeal approved. Simply attending and paying for one’s classes or being out of college one or more semesters does not automatically qualify students to receive financial aid again, but may be considered during an appeal if other extenuating circumstances exist. Students entering a second degree or who have changed majors will be evaluated under these standards.

Students may appeal their financial aid suspension by submitting a Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form. The completed appeal form must include: (1) an appeal letter/ signed statement explaining the specific circumstances that caused the student to not meet the policy and what has changed in the situation that would allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the end of the next semester of enrollment and be in complete SAP compliance within 3 semesters (2) the completed Academic Plan which collects documentation that the student has consulted with an academic advisor and developed an academic plan that will allow the student to meet the standards along with (3) relevant documentation of the situation to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

Appeals may be based on situations such as:

Medical: If a personal medical problem contributed to your failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress, attach documentation from a medical professional from whom you have received advice or treatment.

Death/Illness: If the death or illness of an immediate family member contributed to your lack of satisfactory academic progress, please attach appropriate copies of medical records, death certificate, obituary etc.

Divorce experienced by you or your parent: Provide a letter from the attorney on the law firm’s letterhead or copy of divorce decree.

Significant trauma in student’s life that impaired the student’s emotional and/or physical health: Provide a detailed explanation regarding the specific circumstances of your condition. Include dates and what you have done to overcome your condition. Attach supporting documentation from a third party; physician, social worker, counselor, police, attorney, etc.

Other circumstances: Please clearly state the circumstances (not listed above) in your appeal letter and provide supporting documents for extenuating circumstances that led to your SAP noncompliance.
Appeals should be submitted as soon as possible and are not excepted after the Add/Drop date of the term the Appeal is required to obtain aid. An electronic response will be provided within ten working days of the committee’s decision. Students whose appeal requests are denied by the Committee must pay out of pocket. Student with an approved appeal will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. While on Financial Aid Probation students must be enrolled in courses listed on their Academic Plan. Students on Financial Aid Probation may be referred to Academic Coaching and are required to complete at minimum 3 Academic Coaching sessions. Failure to comply with the terms of your Appeal can lead to financial aid suspension.