

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Recipients of both federal (Title IV) funds and institutional funds must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degrees in order to remain eligible for financial aid assistance. SAP is defined both qualitatively and quantitatively. Federal regulations state that the SAP standards for students receiving Title IV aid must be the same as or stricter than the school's standards for a student enrolled in the same educational program who is not receiving Title IV aid. American University's SAP standard mirrors that of the University's academic standards.

### GPA Rule

Qualitative standard is measured by reviewing the cumulative GPA of the student.

### Credits Completed Rule

A quantitative standard is measured by comparing attempted credits to successfully completed credits. Credits are considered attempted when a student enrolls and attends the class even if the student withdraws. Credits are considered to be successfully completed when a student earns a grade of A, B, C, D, P, or SP. A credit has NOT been successfully completed when a grade of F, I, L, N, W, FZ, FX, ZL, ZF, ZX or UP has been received for that course.

### Maximum Time Frame Rule

Another quantitative measurement is the maximum time frame a student can receive federal aid while earning a degree. Bachelor's degree students must complete their degree program within 180 credits **and** within 6 years of beginning attendance. Students enrolled in Three Year Bachelor's programs within 180 credits **and** within 4.5 years of concurrent enrollment.

The maximum time frame for completing a *graduate degree* is established in the AU academic regulations. Master's degree students must complete their degree program within 6 years and PhD students within 9 years. Graduate certificate students must complete their program within 4 years.

### Minimum Standards for Progress

#### *Undergraduate AU Grant Funds and Federal Aid Funds*

To remain eligible for AU Grant and Federal financial aid funds, an undergraduate student must...

- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better, and
- Complete at least two-thirds (66.67%) of all cumulative attempted credits, and
- Complete the degree program within the maximum timeframe as defined above.

**Note: AU Grant funds are renewable for up to a total of 5 years or 10 semesters for undergraduate study. AU Grant funds cannot be used for graduate study.**

#### *Undergraduate AU Merit Scholarship Funds*

To remain eligible for merit scholarships, an undergraduate student must...

- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, and
- Complete at least two-thirds (66.67%) of all cumulative attempted credits, and
- Complete the degree program within the maximum timeframe as defined above, and

**Note: Undergraduate merit scholarships are renewable for up to a total of 4 years or 8 semesters for undergraduate study. Undergraduate merit awards cannot be used for graduate study.**

#### *Graduate Federal Aid Funds*

To remain eligible for Federal aid funds, a graduate student must...

- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, and
- Complete at least two-thirds (66.67%) of all cumulative attempted credits, and
- Complete the degree program within the maximum time frame as define in the AU Academic Regulations.

Graduate students include any students enrolled in a Masters, PhD, or Title IV eligible graduate certificate program.

***Graduate AU Merit Scholarship Funds***

The Financial Aid Office does not monitor renewal eligibility requirements for graduate merit awards. These awards are evaluated separately within the academic units.

**Frequency of Monitoring**

The financial aid office monitors the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) of each aid recipient annually. This occurs at the end of the spring semester once all grades for the year have been submitted. Except for summer aid, SAP review is completed prior to awarding continuing students. Written notification will be sent to those students who are not meeting requirements as stated above.

**Summer Award Letters & SAP Review**

Because the summer session begins before spring grades are available for review, students requesting financial aid for the summer session will be awarded aid prior to SAP being evaluated in May. However, if a student is failing SAP as of the end of the fall semester, processing of summer aid will be suspended until spring grades have been received and evaluated. All students receiving summer aid are still subject to the official SAP evaluation in May, and aid will be cancelled at that time if the SAP requirements have not been met.

**Transfer Credits**

All credits listed in the students record such transfer, AP, or IB credits are included in the total attempted and total completed credits in determining whether a student is maintaining SAP requirements.

**Freshman Forgiveness (Academic Amnesty) and Remedial Course Work**

Per federal regulations, all course work must be included in the evaluation of SAP. Grades assigned for remedial course work and the original grades forgiven through Freshman Forgiveness will therefore be included in the cumulative GPA along with all other grades in determining whether a student is maintaining SAP requirements. In rare instances, this may result in the student failing SAP due to a lower calculated cumulative GPA than what is indicated on the student's academic transcript.

**Repeated Courses**

Students may repeat courses for better grades. Each attempt is recorded, and the grade for each attempt is computed into the cumulative GPA. Effective July 1, 2011, when repeating a previously passed course, a student may receive financial aid only once for retaking that course. A course is considered to have been previously passed if it received a grade of A, B, C, D, or P.

**In Progress Grades and Satisfactory Progress Grades**

In Progress and Satisfactory Progress grades are considered to be successfully in progress and will not result in students failing the percentage of credits completed rule. However, students may still fail the maximum time frame rule while receiving IP or SP grades.

**Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete grades are attempted but not completed and may result in a student failing to maintain SAP requirements.

**Missing Grades**

The Financial Aid Office is unable to evaluate a student's SAP status if the student is still awaiting grades for course work. The SAP review will be conducted once all missing grades have been submitted. For students who have studied semester through AUAbroad, it is the student's responsibility to follow-up with AUAbroad to ensure that all requirements have been met for the AUAbroad grades to be posted in a timely manner. Provided that the student has met all necessary requirements, the student will not be penalized for delayed grades.



### Re-Establishing Financial Aid Eligibility

For a student who has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress, eligibility for financial aid funds may be re-established through the following ways: the changing of a grade or the reporting of a missing grade. A student may also opt to attend without receiving Federal or institutional financial aid while completing courses to regain their SAP standing.

### Multiple Programs of Study

Coursework for a program previously completed (degree earned) will not be included in the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) evaluation for the current program of the student. Previous coursework in which no degree was earned will count as part of the total GPA and credits attempted when evaluating SAP and may result in a student failing to maintain SAP requirements.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals

Students who are not meeting the SAP requirements for aid eligibility will be notified in writing of the loss of aid eligibility. Students with extenuating circumstances may submit an appeal in writing to the Financial Aid Office to request a reinstatement of financial aid. Appeals will be considered on a case by case basis. The appeal letter must include the following:

- Explanation of extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the SAP requirements
- Course of action that has been taken and/or will be taken to address the extenuating circumstances described.
- When possible, supporting documentation should be provided to verify the occurrence of extenuating circumstances.

For example, if the extenuating circumstances were an illness, then the student would attach a note from his doctor confirming the illness took place, that treatment was/is under way, and that the student is now able to successfully return to school.

- For **graduate** students exceeding the maximum time frame, a copy of approved extension of candidacy from the academic department.
  - Plan of study indicating what courses will be taken over the next year, how many credits are needed to graduate, and the anticipated graduation date.

All appeals must be submitted in writing by the student and addressed to: "Financial Aid Office Re: SAP Appeal." Appeals must include the AU ID#, a current phone number, and may be faxed to 202-885-1025 or mailed to our office Attn: AU Financial Aid Office, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20016-8001. Appeals will not be accepted from parents or other third parties.

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee will only review complete appeals, so all required documentation must be attached. Once a **complete appeal** has been received, a written response will be rendered within 7-10 business days of the appeal deadline.

### Denied Appeals

If an appeal is denied, a student may attend without financial aid in order to re-establish aid eligibility. A student may be able to receive non-federal aid from outside resources while reestablishing aid eligibility. A period of non-enrollment is insufficient to re-establish aid eligibility.

### Approved Appeals

A student with a successful appeal will be allowed to receive aid for ONE SEMESTER only. At the end of that semester, an additional review will be conducted to ensure that the student is meeting the terms of the approved appeal. A written response will be provided to the student indicating the approved **Academic Plan** that must be completed by the student over the next semester to remain eligible for financial aid. The written response will also indicate the date the next review will take place. At the end of the semester, if the student is found to be meeting the terms of the approved appeal, then aid will be awarded for an additional semester. This review will take place on a semester basis until the next scheduled annual review occurs, or the student successfully completes the **Academic Plan** to once again meet the SAP requirements.

If the student does not meet the terms of the **Academic Plan** as outlined in the appeal approval, then the student will be notified in writing of the loss of aid eligibility and no additional aid will be awarded until the student re-establishes SAP towards degree completion.

