

**Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy  
Austin Peay State University**

**Federal Policy 34 CFR 668.34  
(Effective for the 2023-2024 aid year)**

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# Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

## Austin Peay State University

Federal regulations require all student financial aid recipients to make satisfactory academic progress toward achieving a degree. The review of satisfactory academic progress must include both quantitative and qualitative components. This is measured by the student's cumulative grade point average and pace of credits earned in relation to those attempted and the length of the academic program.

This policy shall apply to the Federal Pell Grant Program, Federal Direct Loan Program, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program, TEACH Grant, Federal Work Study Program, Tennessee Student Assistance Awards, Tennessee Educational Lottery Scholarship Program, and any other State, Title IV or HEA approved programs requiring satisfactory academic progress. A student is reviewed for eligibility whether or not the student received aid during the period reviewed.

This policy will be administered by the Director of Student Financial Aid, who will develop, revise and enforce the procedures for aid retention.

The following standards are applicable to all students applying for and/or receiving assistance administered by the Student Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Veterans Education Benefits Office:

### I. General Standards

- To receive Federal student aid, eligible undergraduate students must be enrolled at least half-time (6 hours), with the exception of Pell, SEOG, and TEACH recipients. Recipients of Pell, SEOG, TEACH and who are enrolled less than full-time will receive a prorated award based on the number of hours enrolled. Only full-time enrolled students are eligible to receive a full Pell Grant.
- Special/non-degree students (as defined in the APSU University Bulletin) will not be considered for aid.
  - i. Exceptions can only be made when the student is taking preliminary courses that are required for entry into a degree program. A student's academic advisor should contact the Office of Student Financial Aid indicating what courses are required for entry. In these cases, a student may only receive federal loans up to the undergraduate annual and aggregate limit for up to a 12-month period.
- Graduate-level students are eligible for graduate unsubsidized student loans and the TEACH Grant and must be enrolled half-time to receive these funds.
- Students must meet both quantitative (Pace) and qualitative (GPA) standards to be eligible for aid.
- The entire academic record will be reviewed, to include courses that were part of a Fresh Start or Care Policy program(s).

A student is in violation of maintaining satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes if the student fails to meet any of the standards in Sections II – V.

### II. Academic Status

- Has a 0.0 GPA for the semester/term.
  - Students who receive only P (Pass) grades for all courses in a semester are reviewed manually to ensure they meet all other guidelines.

AND/OR

### III. Qualitative (GPA\*)

Students must earn at least the minimum academic requirements outlined in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins to remain eligible to receive financial aid. This includes both grades earned at APSU and transfer grades.

- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.5 for 0-29 attempted hours

- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.8 for 30-45 attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.9 for 46-59 attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 for 60 or more attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 if pursuing a Second Bachelor's Degree
- Cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 if pursuing a Graduate Degree

\* The cumulative GPA for undergraduates is based on the Inclusive Combined GPA. For graduate students, it is based on the Overall Combined GPA.

AND/OR

**IV. Quantitative/Pace of Completion (overall attempted vs. overall earned hours)**

Students must earn at least 67% of their cumulative overall combined hours attempted in order to remain eligible to receive financial aid. This includes both hours earned at APSU and transfer hours. This applies to associate, undergraduate, and graduate students. All courses for credit will be counted as hours attempted including withdrawals, incompletes, and repeated coursework. The 67% rate is determined by dividing the cumulative overall combined number of earned credit hours by the overall combined number of attempted hours. Courses dropped prior to the semester's census date are not counted as attempted hours.

***To determine completion/pace percentage:***

***Take the total number of overall combined earned hours divided by overall combined attempted hours. For example, a student attempted 45 hours and earned 25. The student would take the 25 earned hours and divide by the 45 hours attempted (25 / 45 = 55%). The completion rate is 55%, and the student is not eligible for financial aid because the rate is below the required 67% completion rate.***

***In this same scenario, a student should have earned at least 31 hours in order to remain eligible for financial aid. (31 / 45 = 68%)***

AND/OR

**V. Maximum Timeframe**

The maximum timeframe must be no longer than 150% of the published length of the educational program. Most undergraduate programs require 120 hours; therefore 180 hours attempted is the maximum timeframe allowed. Graduate length varies by program and will be measured according to the published length of the program; in cases where the program length may vary, the shortest length will be utilized for review. If at any point it is clear the student will not be able to complete the degree program within the maximum timeframe allowed or exceeds the maximum timeframe, the student becomes ineligible for aid. All transfer hours and courses outside of the program of study are included in this review.

An ineligible status is reached upon attempting the number of hours indicated below.

<b>Degree Type</b>	<b>Ineligible Status (Academic Review Required)</b>	<b>Maximum Timeframe</b>
Associate's	61—Above	90 hours
Bachelor's	140—Above	180 hours
Second Bachelor's Degree	200—Above	240 hours
Graduate	Varies based on program length	150% of Published Degree Length

**VI. Academic Amnesty/Fresh Start**

Courses excluded from Fresh Start or Academic Amnesty type programs count against a student's maximum attempted credits, and also lower a student's completion ratio because the credits count as attempted but not earned.

#### **VII. Repeat Coursework**

A previously passed course with a grade of A, B, C, or D will be eligible for federal aid only for one additional attempt. A student may find full details regarding repeat coursework at <http://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/withdrawing-from-courses/repeat-courses/repeat-coursework-regulations.php>.

#### **VIII. Change of Major**

Students who change their major, thus requiring additional hours to complete their degree, must complete their new program of study within the maximum timeframe allowed of 150% described in Section V. Changing majors, particularly more than once, may lead to not completing degree requirements within the maximum timeframe described in Section V.

#### **IX. Second/Subsequent Degree**

A second or subsequent degree student is defined as a student with a previous degree at the same classification – either undergraduate or graduate. An example is a student pursuing an undergraduate degree in a new field after earning a previous undergraduate degree.

Second Undergraduate – The maximum timeframe allowable for financial aid eligibility is 150% of the hours needed to complete the first degree, plus up to 60 additional hours. Example –  $120 \times 150\% = 180 + 60 = 240$ .

Second Graduate – The maximum timeframe allowable for financial aid eligibility is 150% of the hours needed to complete the second degree.

Undergraduate students must have their status changed to a second degree through the Office of Admissions and Office of the Registrar.

#### **X. Review and Notification**

##### **Review for Continuing Students**

- A review of academic progress will be conducted annually for all students at the end of the Spring period. For the 2023-24 academic year, this will include Summer of 2023, Fall, Fall I and Fall II of 2023, and Spring, Spring I and Spring II of 2024.
- Students approved for academic plans are reviewed at the conclusion of each enrolled period.

##### **Initial Review for Transfer Students**

- Transfer students' satisfactory academic progress standings are evaluated upon admission once all transcripts are received and reviewed. Eligibility will be calculated based on criteria outlined in Sections II – V.
- If a transcript has not been evaluated, a SAP Transfer hold will be placed on the student's record and aid is not disbursed until evaluation is complete and eligibility determined. If ineligible for financial aid, an appeal will be required.

##### **Initial Review for Readmit Students**

- Readmitted students who have not attended another institution since attending APSU are evaluated for satisfactory academic progress upon readmission if their last standing was "Warning." This is due to this status no longer being utilized.

### **Fail Status**

- Students will be notified their eligibility for financial aid has been suspended when they do not meet the eligibility requirements.

### **Notification**

- Official university notification is sent to students' APSU email accounts. If a student has declined to receive electronic communications, notification will be sent via postal mail.
- Notifications are not sent to students in good standing because no action is required.
- Financial aid eligibility status may be reviewed within AP OneStop, which is the University's official student information system.

## **XI. Appeal Process**

- In order to be considered to have Financial Aid reinstated, students who are in a violation must appeal. Students violating maximum timeframe only must only have the Academic Review form submitted.
- Appeals and Academic Reviews must be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Aid. In-person appeals are not permitted. These forms are available online at <http://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/forms/appeal-forms.php>.

### **Violations Requiring SAP Appeal Only**

- Additional documentation is not required for students who graduated with one type of degree and are beginning a degree at the next level up. Examples include:
  - Associate's to Bachelor's
  - Bachelor's to Master's
  - Master's to EdS or Doctorate
  - Once our office verifies the student is admitted to the new program, the appeal will be approved.

### **Appeals for Maximum Timeframe**

- Students only in violation of maximum timeframe should not submit a satisfactory academic progress appeal form.
- Students who violate maximum timeframe may have their advisor complete an academic review and submit it to the Office of Student Financial Aid. The academic review includes a section for excludable credit which may include military credit, change in program, etc. Excludable credit will be considered when determining if a student can complete their degree within the maximum timeframe allowed.
- Financial aid counselors review remaining hours for degree completion based upon information from the academic review. If the student is unable to complete the program within the maximum timeframe allowed, the student is ineligible for applicable financial aid and will receive an email notification. If the academic review indicates the student should complete their program within the allowed maximum timeframe, the student is placed on an academic plan.

### **Appeals Requiring Documentation**

- Documentation of extenuating circumstances is required for all students not in the groups indicated above. Students who are appealing should make their appeal as thorough as possible, indicate the reason(s) they failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress, and include a plan of action indicating how they will maintain compliance with the standards.
- Extenuating circumstances may include:
  - Serious Illness of the Student or Immediate Family
  - Death in the Immediate Family
  - Divorce or Separation
  - Military Service
  - Personal Difficulties

- Examples of documentation may include a medical statement on official letterhead, copy of death certificate, or signed statements on the student's behalf. Statements from relatives are not typically accepted.
- Submission of documentation does not guarantee approval of an appeal.
- Appeals containing fraudulent documentation will be denied.

#### **Exception for Military Withdrawals and Incompletes**

- Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, according to state and institutional regulations, if a service member is called to active duty and must withdraw from a course or receive a grade of incomplete, then the withdrawal or grade of incomplete that is related to the service absence shall not affect eligibility or continuing eligibility for state or institutional financial aid, including scholarships or grants, upon reenrollment at the institution. The semester hours attempted for courses from which the military service member withdrew or received a grade of incomplete shall not count against any limitation or receipt of state or institutional financial aid, including scholarships or grants. Future consideration for state or institutional financial aid, scholarships, or grants shall not be affected by the withdrawal from a course or the receipt of a grade of incomplete due to mandatory service obligations.

#### **Deadline Information**

- Deadline information for appeals is available on our office's website. Appeals submitted after the priority deadline date may not be processed until late registration.
- Appeals submitted after the end of the term may not be considered until the following semester/term.
- Students will be notified in writing, via APSU email, of appeal decisions. If denied, a reason for denial will be included. An updated financial aid eligibility status will be available in AP OneStop.

## **XII. Review of Appeals**

The initial appeal review is conducted by a financial aid counselor. If an approval cannot be granted, the appeal is forwarded to the financial aid appeals committee. The committee is typically comprised of staff from the financial aid office, enrollment management, and other members of the campus community. The decision of the committee is final.

#### **Approved Status**

- Approved status is assigned to students who fail to meet satisfactory academic progress guidelines, have submitted an appeal, and the appeal has been approved. Students may receive aid for one semester/term while on this status.
- An approved appeal does not allow retroactive financial aid payments.
- When a student is approved for one semester, their GPA and pace must meet the minimum after that semester in order to continue receiving financial aid.

#### **Academic Plans**

- When a student's appeal is approved, but it is mathematically impossible to reach satisfactory academic progress standards within one semester, the student is placed on an academic plan and must only take courses required to complete degree program.
- Academic Plan for maximum timeframe only must maintain each semester:
  - Semester completion rate of 75%
  - 2.0 semester GPA for undergraduate students
  - 3.0 semester GPA for graduate students
- Academic Plan for not meeting both GPA and Pace standards must maintain each semester:
  - Semester completion rate of 75%
  - 2.25 semester GPA for undergraduate students
  - 3.25 semester GPA for graduate students
- Academic Plan for not meeting Pace standards must maintain each semester:
  - Semester completion rate of 75%
  - 2.0 semester GPA for undergraduate students

- 3.0 semester GPA for graduate students
- Academic Plan for not meeting GPA standards must maintain each semester:
  - Semester completion rate of 75%
  - 2.25 semester GPA for undergraduate students
  - 3.25 semester GPA for graduate students
- If a student does not meet the conditions of the academic plan, the student is ineligible for financial aid. A student who fails an academic plan must submit a new appeal and supporting documentation. A new academic review is not required unless the student has changed his or her program of study.

#### **Denied Appeal**

- Students who have a denied appeal remain on financial aid suspension and are not eligible to receive financial aid. A reason for denial will be provided and the student may refer to this policy for regaining eligibility.
- If the committee determines there is insufficient documentation during the review of an appeal, the committee will ask for additional documentation.
- The committee typically meets twice per month; however, more frequent meetings are scheduled during high volume periods. The dates are published on the Office of Student Financial Aid website.
- Generally, a maximum of two appeals may be granted.

#### **Waived Appeal Due to Natural Disaster**

- FEMA declared Montgomery County a disaster area on December 13, 2023, due to the devastating effects of the tornado. Our office has received guidance from the School Participation Division regarding policy and procedures around satisfactory academic progress.
- **Guidance Received from School Participation Division**
  - Our office has the ability to waive the appeal process and **ALL** related SAP requirements if the student can document their inability to meet SAP was related to the tornado.
  - Explanation and/or Documentation **MUST** be uploaded to the student's file for record.
- **Staff/EdAmerica Procedure with the Student**
  - Our SAP Policy on our financial aid website has been updated.
  - After the fall SAP process has ran, all violators will receive an email. The email will inform students of the recently revised SAP waiver process due to the tornado.
  - The SAP Appeal Form has been revised to include "Natural Disaster (December 9, 2023 Tornado)" as a reason for completing the form.
  - If student selects this box, they must provide a brief explanation on how their failure was related to the tornado.
  - The student's Financial Aid Counselor will waive SAP requirements, update ROASTAT appropriately, and RHACOMM will be notated with category code " WAIVSP "
  - The student will be notified via AP student email of the waived status.

### **XIII. Regaining Eligibility**

In the event a student's appeal is denied, he or she may regain eligibility for financial aid by taking the following actions:

- Earn the number of deficient credit hours (quantitative/pace standards)
- Earn the required GPA (qualitative standard)
- Notify the Office of Student Financial Aid when the deficient hours and GPA meet the compliance standards.

Students may be required to complete a number of credits, or enroll for a number of academic periods without receiving Federal student aid. However, neither paying for classes, nor a period of non-enrollment re-establishes eligibility.

If an academic review reveals a student will violate maximum timeframe prior to degree completion, the student is ineligible for applicable financial aid. The student may not regain eligibility unless a change in program or degree results in the student's ability to graduate within the maximum timeframe.

Should students decide to pay fees out-of-pocket, there is no guarantee an appeal will be approved. If an appeal is approved, financial aid will be awarded based on eligibility, but retroactive financial aid payments will not be granted.

#### **XIV. Academic Circumstances that Affect a Student's Eligibility Status**

- **Academic Fresh Start**—counts against a student's maximum attempted credits, and may also affect completion ratio (pace).
- **Academic Suspension**—automatically suspends financial aid eligibility. Approval to re-enroll at Austin Peay by the Academic Standing Committee does not automatically restore financial aid eligibility.
- **Changes in major, double majors, or minors**—may cause students to reach their maximum attempted hours and lose eligibility before earning a degree.
- **Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, and course withdrawals**—all reduce a student's completion ratio (pace), because they are counted as attempted but not earned credits. They also count against a student's maximum attempted hours.
- **Late reported grades or grade changes**—will be recalculated for financial aid eligibility once our office receives formal notification from the student or the Office of the Registrar.
- **Repeated courses**—count as attempted credit hours each time a student attempts them. They also count against the allowed maximum timeframe. This can also reduce a student's completion ratio (pace) because failed credits count as attempted hours and only passed repeats count towards earned hours.
- **Summer term enrollment**—reviewed the same as fall and spring periods of enrollment.
- **Taking courses not required for a degree**—may cause a student to reach his or her maximum attempted hours and lose eligibility before earning a degree.
- **Transfer credits**—count in a student's total attempted hours.



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