

# Policies for the Office of Student Financial Aid

## Subject

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (M)

*Office of Student Financial Aid/Scholarships*

January 2023

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Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is defined as

- passing a required number of attempted hours (67% of all hours attempted) and
- achieving a required grade point average (2.0 cumulative for undergraduate students and 3.0 cumulative for graduate students) and
- not being over attempted hours (150% of the published length of the students' degree program).

Academic progress will be reviewed at the end of each semester. An automated computer program monitors SAP. SAP begins when a student attends any higher education institution. SAP will be calculated for all students. Receipt of financial aid funds has no bearing on the calculation of SAP. SAP is continuously monitored for the duration of the students' academic career at the university, and students will be notified via email of their non passing academic standing.

At the end of each semester students will fall into one of the following categories:

- Good Standing: Student has met progress standards and is eligible for aid for the following semester.
- Warning: Student has not met progress standards. However the student is still eligible for financial aid but must have made progress by the end of the warning semester.
- Failed Standards: Student has not made progress after warning period. Student is no longer eligible for Financial Aid. Please see regaining eligibility below.
- Probation: Student has not met progress standards, but has an approved appeal and is eligible for financial aid for one semester.
- Academic Plan (APLAN): Student has not met progress standards. However, the student is still eligible for Financial Aid based on meeting semester requirements set in their individual academic plan.

Students can only receive financial aid to attempt classes up to a maximum of 150% of the required hours it takes to complete the degree plan that the student has selected including any needed developmental courses. Attempted hours include all classes in which a student enrolls and receives a grade of A, B, C, D, F, I, W, WP, WF, WZ, AU, CR, NC, P, IP, S, U, Z, X, WA, WB, WC, WD, WN, WX or NR. These grades are used in the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress. Earned hours include all classes that a student attempts and earns a grade of A, B, C, D, P, CR and S. Since IP grades are not included in total earned hours, students may submit documentation from their instructor verifying whether or not progress was made in the course.

Any student, who is over attempted hours due to the completion of a Teacher Certification program, must submit documentation of completion to be allowed additional attempted hours towards an additional degree. Students with degree programs not specifically detailed in the catalog may need to provide documentation from their academic department detailing the number of hours required for their degree, in order to verify total attempted hours have not been exceeded.

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### **Transfer Students:**

Transfer students are required to meet the minimum academic standards set by NSU in order to receive Federal Financial Aid at Northwestern State University.

Transfer students are required to submit official college transcript to Northwestern State University office of Admissions of all previous institutions they attended. In addition, the Office of Admission will review applicants enrollment history in an effort to determine any previous institutions attended and not reported by the student. All transfer hours accepted from other institutions shall be considered in determining eligibility for federal financial aid at Northwestern State University.

### **Regaining Eligibility:**

The student may regain eligibility by successfully completing one of the two options:

1. Have an approved appeal (See appeal policy below)
2. Attend at your own expense without the benefit of financial aid and be in good standing with Satisfactory Academic Progress standards – defined as having earned at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average for undergraduates or a 3.0 for graduates and complete at least 67% of cumulative course work attempted without exceeding 150% of your degree program

### **Appeals:**

A student who did not meet SAP standards may appeal to the Student Financial Aid Appeals Committee. In order for a student's appeal to be considered by the committee, the student must be able to meet the progress requirements (2.0 cumulative GPA for undergraduates, 3.0 cumulative GPA for graduates, 67% percent cumulative course complete, and not exceed 150% of degree program) by the end of that semester in which the student is appealing and students must complete a financial aid appeal form and statement along with supporting documentation that includes all of the following:

1. Why did the student fail to make satisfactory academic progress
2. What types of extenuating circumstances existed and documentation of the situation.
3. What has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate progress at the next evaluation

There is no limit to the number of appeals a student submits during their academic career. NOTE: If an appeal for a given semester is denied, the student can appeal one additional time for that semester - only if the student can submit new and updated information/documentation to go along with the appeal. Students with two denied appeals within one semester can no longer appeal for that semester. Multiple appeals within the same semester, must have approval from Director or Associate Director, for committee reconsideration.

### **Repeat Coursework**

You may include any repetition of the program in a student's enrollment status for a term as long as the student has never passed the course. If the student passes the course, you may include one repetition after passing the course. Any second or subsequent repetition of the passed course may not be included in the student's enrollment status for purposes of the title IV, HEA, programs.

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#### **Academic Plan:**

##### **Fall 2013 to Summer 2015**

For students who had FA Appeal approved during their last semester in attendance and did not make progress, or those who have had an Academic Bankruptcy (AB) approved. When a student has an AB approved by the Registrar's, these students earned hours and GPA are removed, but attempted hours will always be reviewed. These students cannot make progress within one semester. Students must go through the Appeal process in order to be approved for an Academic Plan. If approved, the student must complete the APLAN form. Students will remain on Academic Plan until progress has been made. To continue on an Academic Plan students must earn 100% attempted hours each semester, 2.5 semester GPA for Undergrad, 3.5 for Graduate, and continuous enroll.

At the end of each semester the academic performance will be evaluated. If the student does not meet the criteria stated above or does not meet all of the requirements of the NSU Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for the receipt of Federal Financial Aid, they will not be eligible to receive any future federal grants, loans, or work study until they have met the Minimum Progress Standards set by the Department of Education: 2.0 cumulative GPA for undergrad, 3.0 cumulative gpa for graduates, earned 67% of all hours attempted and not exceed 150% of published length of their degree program

#### **Academic Plan:**

##### **Beginning Fall 2015**

Due to the opening of the Academic Success Center (ASC) Academic Plans are now potentially available to any student who is not making academic progress and cannot regain eligibility within one semester. These students will complete a Financial Aid appeal form and supply all required documentation. The OSFA will determine if the appeal needs to be reviewed through the FA appeal process or submitted to ASC for an Academic Plan. If approved these Academic Plans will be tailored to each individual student's needs (GPA, hours attempted, hours earned, length of plan) so that the student can make progress within a determined time frame, while still receiving federal financial aid. Once the plan is created ASC will go over the plan and its requirements with the individual student at which point the student is then required to sign a contract as evidence of understanding and agreeing to the requirements. ACS will monitor all progress for these students. At the end of each semester students will be notified if they did not meet the requirements set forth in their plan. If a student does not meet the requirements they are no longer eligible for Title IV aid. Only extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control will be allowed for review of a second attempt (or changes to existing plan or new plan after failing) at a failed academic plan such as illness, death, military, etc.

#### **Second Degree Students:**

Students are allowed additional attempted hours to complete additional degree programs

- 2<sup>nd</sup> BS-90 additional hours
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Associates-45 additional hours
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Masters-15 additional hours
- Certification beyond BS or Masters-45 additional hours
- Associate beyond bachelors-45 additional hours
- Specialist beyond Masters-45 additional hours

If a student's attempts to earn 3 degrees of the same, the additional hours are not increased

Twice - Example:

A Student receives 1st bachelors at 185 hours. Student is given 90 more hours to pursue additional bachelor's degrees for a total of 275 hours. Once student attempts 275 hours, they are no longer eligible for federal aid, regardless of pursuing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> bachelors.

Each semester a report is ran to find all students that have completed one degree and working on a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the same type. Total hours are calculated that they are allowed and added to ROANYUD, #5, SECDEG Hours for SAP review. SAP status on ROASTAT is updated for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. The Automated computer program monitors 2<sup>nd</sup> degree SAP students. The additional hours are added to the total # of attempted hours the student has at the end of the semester they have graduated.