



## Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress

### I. Overview

One of the foundational eligibility criteria for federal (Title IV) aid requires that students are making “Satisfactory Academic Progress” (SAP). Therefore, Financial Aid will review each student’s academic progress annually, which occurs at the end of each spring semester.

Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours based on percentage of work to be completed (quantitative) and maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (qualitative), as set forth by the graduate school, which is consistent with the requirements for both enrollment and graduation. In addition, a student must complete their academic program within the maximum time frame (150% of their academic program). For example, no student may continue more than three years as a full-time student in order to complete a 2 year degree. Students’ coursework will be reviewed for classes in which the student was enrolled past the census date.

The following table summarizes the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) requirements for maintaining eligibility for federal student aid:

Academic Progress Evaluation Methods		Hours Attempted
Quantitative	$\frac{\text{Completed Hours}}{\text{Attempted Hours}} = \text{Percent (Pace)}$	67%

A student will be considered meeting the **qualitative** requirement of SAP by meeting the minimum GPA standards as set forth by the *respective school* within the graduate program.

Students who are considering withdrawing from courses during any point in the semester are **strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with a financial aid counselor before taking any action.**

### II. Process

Graduate students are evaluated for Satisfactory Academic Progress (maximum time frame and pace of completion) annually, which occurs at the end of each spring semester. Regardless of the credit hours a student attempted and for which aid was received, the student must meet the standards for maximum time frame and complete the percentage of work attempted as stipulated above.

#### Unsuccessful Grade Marks/Incomplete:

In conjunction with and in addition to the academic policy listed in the University catalog, the grading marks F, NC, NP, NR, W, WP, WF, and Z are not considered as successfully completing the course(s) attempted. Therefore, the SAP analysis will consider the attempt of these courses in the quantitative (percent completion) analysis.

For SAP analysis, the grade mark I (Incomplete) will be considered in the quantitative (percent completion) analysis when completed according to the provisions in the University catalog. When an incomplete grade changes to another grade notation, that change will be picked up in the next SAP review.

#### Repeated Courses/Auditing a Class:

All course attempts are averaged into the quantitative assessment.

Audit classes (AU) do not constitute hours attempted or completed. However, if a student enrolls in a course (for credit) and switches the class to an audit class, this will be calculated into the quantitative analysis.

Aid recipients who fail to meet these “Satisfactory Academic Progress” criteria will have their SAP status designated as “unsatisfactory”). Any student whose status is “unsatisfactory is ineligible for any further federal and state financial aid until:

- Satisfactory Academic Progress status is reestablished OR
- An Unsatisfactory SAP appeal is approved based on a documented appeal for mitigating circumstances that affected academic progress (see VI below: Method of Appeal)

### III. Transfer Students

Transfer students who have never attended Cedarville University and bring in transfer credits will have those hours count toward their current program as both hours attempted and earned. The transfer credits plus the credits received at Cedarville University will be used for the percent of completion measurement (quantitative).

### IV. How to Re-establish Eligibility

As stated above, the SAP evaluation is made for each student annually, which occurs at the end of each spring semester. If unsuccessful, the student's SAP status is considered "unsatisfactory". A student whose status is Unsatisfactory is ineligible for financial aid unless they submit an appeal and it is approved.

*An appeal must explain why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress and what has changed in his or her situation that will allow him/her to make satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation period.*

If a student's appeal is approved, he or she may be placed on **Financial Aid Probation** and can receive student financial aid for only one semester. At the end of the semester, the student must meet the criteria for satisfactory academic progress. If unsuccessful, the student is once again considered **Unsatisfactory** and is ineligible for aid. The student may appeal again, but the latter appeal must be based on a reason different from the first appeal.

Financial Aid, at its discretion, *may* place the student on an **Academic Plan**. This "Academic Plan" category stipulates that students must meet specific criteria within the plan itself. If the student meets the requisite requirement(s) but still does not meet the overall requirements of SAP, the student may continue to receive financial aid without an appeal for the next semester. After that semester, the student on an Academic Plan will again be reviewed to ensure they are either meeting the academic plan or meeting SAP standards overall.

A student may regain their eligibility by meeting federal SAP standards at a future annual review. If a student meets the SAP standards at the end of a future annual review, Financial Aid will automatically reinstate their financial aid.

### V. Definitions

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – The student's GPA meets or exceeds the minimum standard required for continuing enrollment and graduation, the student has attempted less than 150 percent of the credit hours required to complete a degree, and the student has completed 67 percent or more of his or her attempted hours.

**Minimum cumulative GPA (qualitative)** – The grade point average required for continuing enrollment or graduation.

**Maximum time frame (quantitative)** – The number of credit hours a student can attempt to complete a degree, not to exceed 150 percent of the published time measured in credit hours.

**Pace of completion (quantitative)** – The percentage calculation of credit hours completed divided by the number of credit hours attempted past the census date (end of) the drop/add period.

**Financial Aid Probation** – The status of a student who is not maintaining SAP, has successfully appealed and is eligible to receive federal aid for one term.

**Academic Plan** – The status of a student who is not maintaining SAP, has successfully appealed, and will be required to meet specific criteria in an academic plan. If the Academic Plan is met at the end of the next semester, the student may continue to receive federal aid for the next semester.

### VI. Method of Appeal

Students who have been denied federal aid due to Unsatisfactory SAP designation have the right to appeal and may do so by submitting a completed **SAP Appeal** form to the Office of Financial Aid. All appeals must provide an explanation for why the student failed to achieve satisfactory academic progress and what has changed that will allow him or her to make satisfactory academic progress during the next evaluation period.

The appeal form is available at [cedarville.edu/finaidforms](http://cedarville.edu/finaidforms) under "Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards."

The Office of Financial Aid will review each appeal and will respond by letter and/or email clearly stating whether the appeal has been approved or rejected. All appeal decisions are final.