

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid Recipients

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Congress, mandates that institutions of higher education establish minimum standards of "satisfactory academic progress" (SAP) for students receiving federal financial aid. These standards apply to all Federal Title IV aid programs including the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, TEACH Grant, Federal Direct Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans and Federal Work-Study. The Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards apply to all students seeking federal Title IV financial aid, regardless of whether a student has received Title IV financial aid in the past.

Process of Determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

Each student will be measured for satisfactory academic progress annually in May after spring grade processing. This evaluation will determine if the student has sufficient progress to be eligible for future Federal Title IV funding. Students who have not met the minimum SAP requirements will be notified that they are not eligible for financial aid via US mail and email.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Measurements: *Students must meet all three requirements.*

1. Qualitative Measure (cumulative SRU GPA):

- Undergraduate students must achieve at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Graduate students must achieve at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

2. Quantitative Measure:

Completion Rate/Pace: Pace is calculated by dividing cumulative hours the student successfully completed by cumulative hours the student has attempted. This calculation includes all attempted credits, both at SRU and those accepted in transfer; courses for which a student receives academic credit, withdraws, receives incomplete or repeat grades and/or fails are counted in the calculation of the completion rate/pace.

- Students must successfully complete 67% of the total cumulative attempted credits.

3. Maximum Timeframe (completing program of study within 150% of program length):

- Undergraduate students may receive aid for up to 180 cumulative credits attempted (includes both SRU credits attempted and those accepted in transfer).
- Graduate students may receive aid for all credits attempted up to 150% of the specified number of credits required by their specific degree program.

Students who change majors are responsible for completing the degree requirements within the timeframe specified above.

Readmitted Students:

If a student is readmitted to the University, satisfactory academic progress will be based on the student's previous attendance at SRU and credits attempted in transfer. Students requesting readmission to SRU should contact the SRU Financial Aid Office about their SAP status for financial aid.

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Special Grades and their Use in Satisfactory Academic Progress Determination:

- I – Incomplete – Student will receive no credit for an “I” grade although the “I” is counted as attempted credit(s). If, however, the incomplete grade is resolved and a passing grade is received, the credits will be counted.
- NC – No Credit – No credit received; however counted as attempted credit.
- W – Withdrawal – No credit received; however counted as attempted credit.
- AU – Audit – No credits received; not counted as attempted credit.
- P – Pass – Student receives credit(s) but GPA is not affected.
- X – No grade given – No credits received; however counted as attempted credit.

Repeat of Course:

The last grade earned is always used in calculating the GPA. If the student failed the course the first time but passes it the second time, the appropriate number of credits will be received after the second attempt. If, however, the student passed the course the first time, repeats it in an attempt to improve the GPA but receives a failing grade, the appropriate number of credits will be deducted from the cumulative credits earned total. Maximum hours earned for any course cannot exceed the number of credits listed for that course in the catalog.

Regaining Eligibility:

If a student fails to meet the satisfactory academic progress standards, but meets the standards later at some point, the student can once again be eligible to receive federal Title IV. In such cases, financial aid eligibility will begin with the academic semester after which the student re-establishes progress. *It is the student's responsibility to contact the SRU Financial Aid Office after completing coursework that allows the student to regain eligibility for financial aid.*

If a student is taking coursework at another institution to regain SAP eligibility, students should be aware that:

1. A *Transient Clearance Form* must be completed (go to Office of Academic Records and Summer School webpage) prior to taking any courses elsewhere if the credits are to be transferred back to SRU.
2. Only “credits” transfer back to Slippery Rock University, actual “grades” do not. If the student's deficiency is in GPA, taking courses at another institution will not resolve that deficiency. The Office of Academic Records and Summer School must accept the transfer credits in order for those credits to be counted towards satisfactory academic progress.

Appeal Process:

A student whose financial aid eligibility has been suspended may “appeal” that status if they have experienced extenuating circumstances that affected their ability to meet the academic progress standards. In general, extenuating circumstances can include, but are not limited to, illness, injury, death of relative or friend, difficulties with accommodations for students with disabilities, and adversity due to unforeseen events. Students interested in appealing the suspension of financial aid eligibility can access the Academic Progress Appeal Form at www.sru.edu/finaid (under “Forms”); the completed form and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Academic Progress Appeal Committee c/o SRU Financial Aid Office. The student must also address in the appeal why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP in the next evaluation. Students should submit the appeal prior to August 1st for Fall semester consideration or prior to December 1st for Spring semester consideration. The student will be notified via email of the Committee’s decision. A student can either be placed on probation for one term with the expectation that they can achieve academic progress within one term or a student can be placed on an approved academic plan the duration of which will last for the timeframe of the plan so long as the student makes the required GPA and completion rate indicated within. Should a student not make the required benchmarks of either probation or an approved academic plan, they will be notified via email immediately after final grades are received for that term.

State Grant Academic Progress: Academic progress requirements for state grant programs can vary from the federal academic progress policy. Academic progress requirements for the Pennsylvania State Grant are communicated directly to recipients with their state grant notification by PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency); questions about appeals for Pennsylvania State Grant eligibility must be directed to PHEAA at 1-800-692-7392 or www.pheaa.org.