

Office/Contact: Office of Student Affairs

Source: U.S. Department of Education Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy, 34 CFR 668.34

Link: <https://ifap.ed.gov/fsa/assessments/027-2019satisfactoryacademicprogress>

Associated Forms: Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Policy and Procedure Manual

SUBJECT: Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards
NUMBER: 3:5

1. Purpose

Federal regulations require the University to define and evaluate Satisfactory Academic Progress ("SAP") for federal student financial aid applicants to ensure that the federal aid given to a student is used in a constructive manner and that the student is maintaining satisfactory advancement toward achieving a degree. Policy sets forth the SAP standards for students receiving financial aid at the University.

2. Policy

a. SAP Standards

- i. In addition to meeting the academic standards for registration at the University, students must also meet the requirements of the financial aid SAP standards to be considered eligible to receive federal financial aid and some state, private, and need-based institutional financial aid assistance.
- ii. The University reviews SAP for students who are receiving federal financial aid and those who are not receiving federal financial aid. With the exception of high school students enrolled in dual credit, the University reviews SAP for non-degree seeking students at the end of the academic year. The University does not review SAP for high school students taking dual credit. However, if those students enroll at the University after high school, any courses taken as dual credit will be included in the SAP review.
- iii. Timing of SAP review:
 1. Students in aid eligible academic programs of up to one Academic Year are evaluated at the end of each academic term.
 2. Students enrolled in degree seeking financial aid eligible programs longer than one year in length are evaluated at the end of the academic year.
 3. Students enrolled in programs that are more than two years in length reviewed for qualitative component (e., grade point average) of SAP at the end of the student's second year of enrollment. When the end of the

second year of enrollment coincides with the end of the academic year, this review is conducted as part of the end of academic year review.

- iv. For students enrolled in undergraduate degree eligible programs, the SAP review will be based on the cumulative credits the student has attempted at the undergraduate level including undergraduate transfer credits. For student enrolled in graduate level degree eligible programs, the review will be based on the cumulative

- b. If students are unable to fulfill the requirements for their degree before reaching this maximum timeframe, they will be suspended from receiving financial aid.
- ix. There are several academic circumstances that may affect a student's eligibility status and of which students must be aware:
 1. Changes in major, double majors, or minors may cause students to reach their maximum attempted hours or lose their eligibility before earning a degree.
 2. Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, and course withdrawals all reduce a student's completion ratio because they are counted as attempted, but not earned credits. They also count against a student's maximum attempted hours.
 3. Repeated courses count as attempted credit hours each time a student attempts the credits. They also count against a student's maximum attempted hours. This can reduce a student's completion ratio because repeated credits count as earned credits only once.
 4. Transfer credits or credits taken while cross-registered, enrolled in study abroad, as part of a consortium or contractual agreement, or transient study count toward a student's maximum attempted credits and their completion ratio.
 5. Remedial courses count as attempted and earned credits but are not included in the student's GPA calculation. ESL courses are considered remedial courses and will count as attempted and earned credits but are not included in the student's GPA calculation.
 6. All credit hours attempted and completed in summer terms are treated as any other semester hours in determining SAP status.
 7. Generally, all credits appearing on student transcripts will be counted in calculations for determining SAP status, including those that may have been during terms in which a student was not receiving Title IV Aid.
 8. For students who meet the SAP completion rate and GPA requirements and who are nearing max timeframe due to working on a second degree and/or transferring in credits that do not count toward the University program of study, the Financial Aid Office may on a case-by-case basis at the request of the student or academic department review a student's SAP (GPA, PACE and maximum timeframe) based on just those credits attempted that count towards the degree.
- x. Students who are suspended academically or who choose not to attend the University because of failure to maintain SAP standards will not be

- d. If a student has successfully completed six (6) college level credits since being suspended, students should document this in the appeal to support that changes have occurred that allow the student to succeed.
- e. The student must include documentation to verify mitigating circumstance that prevented the student from meeting the SAP standards during the terms the student attended but did not meet standards. Required documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Death of a family member: a photocopy of a death certificate and/or obituary and the name and relationship of the deceased to the student;
 - ii. Illness or injury to the student: an explanation of the nature of the illness or injury, the dates the student was affected by the illness or injury, and a statement from a physician or health care professional and/or a copy of medical bill or discharge forms;
 - iii. Other special circumstance: a detailed explanation of the specific traumatic event or unexpected circumstance and what the student has done to overcome the event or circumstance such that they can go on to meet the SAP standards, as well as supporting documentation from a third party (e.g. physician, social worker, counselor, police, etc.).
 - iv. Circumstances that occurred during the spring 2020 term related to COVID-19 such as illness of a student or family member, compliance with quarantine, or general disruption resulting from a COVID-19 outbreak such as difficulty with transition to online courses may be considered mitigating circumstances. If a student's SAP appeal indicates that the student's failure to meet SAP standards was due to circumstances related to COVID-19 during the spring 2020 term, the student may appeal suspension based on the COVID related circumstance. If the student is not able to meet the GPA or PACF requirements before graduation as a result of credits earned during that term due to the reasons listed above, the appeal can be approved as long as the students would meet the requirements if the credits from the impacted terms were removed from the calculations. If U.S. Department of Education regulations allow, this policy will be extended to terms beyond spring 2020.
- f. The Financial Aid Office will review and approve or deny the appeal. The Financial Aid Office may contact the student for additional documentation. Appeals are reviewed by financial aid

n. If at any time during the academic plan the student meets all of