

A-005.2 FA SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Federal and State financial aid regulations require all students to maintain satisfactory academic progress to receive financial aid. Programs covered by this policy include Federal and State work-study, loans, grants, and scholarships. The Financial Aid Office is responsible for ensuring monitoring and implementation of satisfactory academic progress standards.

Satisfactory academic progress measures a student's progress toward the completion of a particular degree or licensure program at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). Federal regulations specify that the institutions must measure progress toward the completion of a student's academic program regardless of whether the student received financial aid for the terms and credits measured. In addition to the Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid, all students must also comply with the Academic Standing (<https://catalog.smsu.edu/policies-procedures/a005/>) Policy (A-005) of the University.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement (Qualitative Measure)

An undergraduate student must have the following minimum cumulative GPA:

- Less than 30 credits - 1.60
- 30.00-59.99 credits - 1.80
- 60 or more credits - 2.00

A graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0.

Grades of A, B, C, D, and F are included in the GPA calculation.

Percentage Completion and Maximum Time Frame Requirement (Quantitative Measure)

Minimum completion of 66.67%: To remain eligible for financial aid, a student is required to progress toward the completion of an academic program by successfully completing 66.67% of all credits attempted at SMSU. SMSU uses cumulative credits successfully completed, divided by credits attempted at SMSU to measure a student's completion percentage. Attempted credits include classes completed with a satisfactory grade, classes with no grade, withdrawal, or incomplete grades, and failed classes. Any credits accepted in transfer by SMSU are also counted as completed and attempted credits in the completion calculation. When determining percentage completion for second baccalaureate degree students, only those credits attempted in the second degree will be used in this measurement.

Maximum Time Frame: All students must complete their degree requirements within a maximum time frame, not to exceed 150% of the normal length expected to attain the degree objective. First baccalaureate degree (120 credits to graduate) – maximum time frame 180 credits. An additional 60 credits will be funded for students obtaining a second baccalaureate degree. Graduate students attempting more than 54 credits towards their master's degree will be ineligible for funding (36 credits * 150% = 54)

Per guidance from the Department of Education and Minnesota State System Office, SMSU will exclude grades of Withdrawal (W), Incomplete (I), and In Progress (IP) from the quantitative analysis within the date timestamp of March 13, 2020, to July 31, 2020. In a case where the student is on FA warning from a previous term, and the quantitative percentage reads 0% due to this grade exclusion, a student may still be placed on a suspension hold and need to submit an appeal.

Evaluation Period

A student's progress is determined three times each year after Fall, Spring, and summer term grades are recorded. All prior terms of attempted enrollment are considered when determining satisfactory academic progress regardless of whether aid was awarded for the term.

Failure to Meet Standards Financial Aid Warning

For each evaluation period, the first time a student fails to meet the minimum completion rate or GPA requirement stated above, the student will be placed on a warning status for one term. Students on a warning status are eligible for financial aid for the following enrollment term.

At the conclusion of the warning period, if a student has met SMSU's cumulative GPA and completion rate, the student's eligibility for financial aid shall be reinstated, and the warning status will be end dated.

Financial Aid Suspension for Students on Warning Status

If at the end of the term a student who has been on financial aid warning has not met both the cumulative GPA and cumulative completion rate standards, SMSU will suspend the student's aid eligibility immediately upon completion of the evaluation.

Financial Aid Suspension of Students for Other Reasons

Suspension for maximum time frame failure – If at the end of an evaluation period, a student has failed to meet the measurement of maximum time frame, the student's financial aid eligibility will be suspended immediately.

Suspension for extraordinary circumstances – A student's financial aid eligibility will be suspended in the event of extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to previously suspended and reinstated students whose academic performance falls below acceptable standards during a subsequent term of enrollment, or students who register for courses, receive financial aid and do not attend any classes, or students whose attendance patterns appear to abuse the receipt of financial aid.

Suspension for the inability to meet program requirements within the maximum time frame – If at the end of any evaluation period we determine that it is impossible for a student to raise their GPA or credit completion percentage to meet minimum standards before reaching the end of their program, the student's financial aid will be suspended immediately.

Appeals and Probation

An appeal process is available to students placed on financial aid suspension due to academic deficiencies. A student who has experienced extraordinary circumstances, which directly affected their ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress, may have an appeal reviewed by the Financial Aid Office personnel for reinstatement of aid. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to the death of a

relative, illness, hospitalization, or injury to the student, etc. The appeal must include the SMSU Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form, the student's typed appeal statement, and supporting documentation from a third party. In addition, an academic plan consisting of the steps that a student must follow to bring themselves back into good standing must be developed with the student's advisor. The appeal form can be found on the SMSU Financial Aid Office website.

The approval of an appeal places the student on probation for one term with the Financial Aid Office. The approved appeal will state the terms of the appeal and specific conditions that apply. During the probation period, a student is eligible to receive financial aid. A student on an approved appeal must meet the conditions of the approved appeal and academic plan to continue receiving financial aid for more than one term.

When reviewing an appeal, a comprehensive review of the student's academic history along with the documentation submitted will be considered. An appeal will be reviewed by the Director of Financial Aid or designee and notified of the outcome via their SMSU email. The appeal will be reviewed within 2 weeks of submission. Any student whose appeal is denied may appeal to the Financial Aid review committee. An appeal received after the appeal deadline date, which is listed on the appeal form, will not be considered for the term for which the student is requesting reinstatement of aid.

Students who submit an appeal of suspended status are not guaranteed reinstatement of financial aid eligibility and are responsible for any institutional charges incurred for the term(s) suspended, regardless of the status of the financial aid appeal, except as provided by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Exception for Financial and Registration Obligation Procedure ([https://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/706p2g1.html#:~:text=Students%20are%20granted%20this%20exception,the%20subsequent%20summer%20session%2C%20or\), effective May 15, 2006](https://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/706p2g1.html#:~:text=Students%20are%20granted%20this%20exception,the%20subsequent%20summer%20session%2C%20or),effective May 15, 2006)).

Notification

Students who fall below the minimum standards will be notified in writing if they are placed on financial aid warning, suspension, or probation following an approved appeal. These notifications are made once term grades are recorded and/or a satisfactory academic progress review is completed. A student appealing their aid eligibility will receive an email with their probationary requirements once the appeal is reviewed/approved. If the appeal is denied, reason(s) for the denial will be listed.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid

Neither paying for their own classes nor sitting out a period of time is sufficient in and of itself to re-establish a student's financial aid eligibility. Students paying for their own classes may have their financial aid eligibility reinstated by successfully completing credits such that they are again meeting the cumulative GPA and cumulative completion rate requirements, or by successfully completing the terms of their academic plan.

Additional Elements

Treatment of Grades: In the completion rate calculation, grades of A, B, C, D are considered attempted and successfully completed grades. Grades of Failed (F), Never Attended (NA), Failed Quit (FQ), Incomplete (I), In Progress (IP), No Credit (NC), and Withdrawal (W) are considered attempted but not successfully completed grades.

Academic Amnesty/Renewal: Academic amnesty/renewal is not recognized in the satisfactory academic progress review for financial aid.

Audited Courses: A student may not receive aid for audited classes (AU grades) and these credits are not included in any financial aid satisfactory academic progress measurements

Consortium Credits: Consortium credits will be included in cumulative GPA, completion percentage and maximum time frame calculations.

Remedial/Developmental Credits: All remedial/developmental courses at SMSU are included in the GPA and excluded from the completion percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress. Up to 30 remedial/developmental credits will be omitted when determining maximum time frame.

Repeated Courses: A repeat course will replace the previous grade when determining the grade point average. All credit, original and repeated, are included in determining the 66.67% completion rate requirement and maximum time frame. A student shall not be permitted to receive financial aid for more than one repetition of a previously passed course.

Transfer Credits: Transfer credits are not counted in the cumulative GPA calculation. However, transfer credits are counted when determining the cumulative completion rate and maximum time frame.

Withdraws: Withdrawal courses (grade of "W") are considered attempted but not successfully completed credits. A grade of "W" does not impact GPA but does negatively impact the cumulative completion rate percentage and counts towards the maximum time frame.

Related Documents

SMSU Policy A-005, "Academic Standing (<https://catalog.smsu.edu/policies-procedures/a005/>)"

SMSU Procedure A-005.1 "Satisfactory Academic Progress (<https://catalog.smsu.edu/policies-procedures/a0051/>)"

Procedure History

Date of Adoption: July 12, 2007

Date of Last Review: March 8, 2024

Date and Subject of Amendments

3/8/2023 - Procedure was split out from the policy.