

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR FINANCIAL AID

The entire academic record for a student receiving federal student aid will be reviewed at the end of each semester. A student receiving federal funds must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Failure to maintain SAP will result in the loss of eligibility to receive federal student aid funds. This does not prevent a student from attending using personal or private funding.

SAP means maintaining an overall 2.00 grade point average (GPA) and completing 67% of all the courses that a student enrolls in. A **completed** course is any course that a grade of A, B, C, or D is earned. An **attempted** course is a course that a grade of F, W, or I are earned.

Evaluation of Academic Progress: There will be a full review of academic progress at the end of each fall, spring, and summer semester and/or during the application process. At that time, a student will be in good standing, be placed on financial aid warning, or denied financial assistance. The student must meet all three satisfactory academic progress requirements (67% completion rate, 2.00 GPA, and maximum time frame) to be considered in good standing for financial aid. Students placed on financial aid warning or denial will be notified in writing.

Enrollment Status: Students may receive financial aid while enrolled full-time or for an approved part-time course of study. However, federal financial aid awards for less than full-time enrollment may be less than the full-time award. In general, all full-time students must be enrolled in at least twelve (12) semester credit hours each semester. Students enrolled in less than 12 semester credit hours will be evaluated as follows:

- 9 to 11 credit hours is three-quarter-time;
- 6 to 8 hours is half-time; and
- 3 to 5 hours is less-than-half-time.

Students receiving private or state financial assistance should refer to the specific program guidelines for enrollment definitions and requirements.

Grade Point Average Requirement: Students must maintain an overall minimum 2.00 grade point average (GPA) during all periods of enrollment. The financial aid GPA may be different from the academic GPA on grade reports and/or transcripts if developmental courses were taken. This is because financial aid includes developmental courses in the calculation of GPA and the College Registrar does not. For students repeating courses, the last grade recorded in the repeated course is the grade of record and will be used in computing the student's financial aid GPA.

Semester Completion Requirement: Students must successfully pass 67% of all hours attempted each semester and cumulatively for all periods of enrollment.

For example, a student enrolled in 15 hours must pass a minimum of 10 credit hours. (15 hours times 67% = 10 hours.)

Successful completion is defined as earning a final grade of A, B, C, or D. Grades of I, W, F and AU are not considered as successful completion. However, the courses that correspond to these grades will still be counted in the student's total number of attempted hours.

Attempted Hours: Attempted hours include any course that appears on the transcript.

Completed Hours: Completed hours include any course with a final grade of A, B, C or D.

150% Rule—Maximum Time Limit to Receive Federal Aid: The maximum time limit for completion of a degree or certificate may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program. For example, an associate degree that requires 60 credit hours must be completed within 90 attempted credit hours. (60 hours X 150% = 90 hours) Similarly, an approved technical certificate program that requires 30 hours must be completed within 45 attempted credit hours. In other words, a student may only work on a degree for a certain period of time and receive student aid funds.

A student's eligibility for aid will be terminated at the point when the maximum credit hours attempted reaches 150% of the total hours required for the program. If at any point it is clear the student will not be able to complete the program within the 150% time limit, the student becomes ineligible for federal student aid. For maximum time limit requirements, remedial and/or developmental coursework is counted.

Second Degree: In special circumstances, a student may request additional time for a second associate degree. For example, a student who has successfully earned an Associate of Applied Science degree and wishes to pursue a bachelor's degree may ask for additional to complete courses for the Associate of Arts Degree. Additionally, a student who needs retraining due to extenuating circumstances such as a disability or company closing/downsizing may petition for additional eligibility. Other situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis. All previous coursework applicable to the second degree must be counted in the maximum time limit for receiving aid, including developmental coursework.

Complete Withdrawal: Federal regulations require that a recalculation of federal student aid be completed for a student receiving federal student aid that does not complete any coursework during a period of enrollment. The last date of attendance is used to determine how much of the financial aid received was actually earned. The results of the calculation may require the institution to return a portion of the funds received for a student's institutional fees (tuition, fees, and/or books). The student will be responsible for repaying these funds to the College.

Warning Status: There will be a full review of academic progress at the end of each semester. A letter of warning will be mailed to students failing to meet SAP requirements. Warning status does not prevent the student from receiving aid but is meant to inform the student of potential academic problems and provide time for corrective action. Any student that is receiving aid on a warning basis is encouraged to meet with his or her academic advisor or a counselor to develop a plan to improve academic standing.

Students placed on warning will have until the end of the following semester of enrollment to meet all of the SAP requirements. If all SAP requirements are not met by the end of the term, federal student aid will be denied. The warning status is automatically assigned and no appeal is required. The duration of a warning is one semester only.

Repeating Classes: For students repeating courses, the last grade recorded in the repeated course is the grade of record and will be used in computing the student's grade point average. Both courses will count towards the number of hours attempted and will be counted in the 150% maximum time calculation. A student wishing to improve the grade of a previously-passed course (received letter grade of D or above) may repeat the course once. A student may repeat a failed course until it is successfully completed (normal SAP policy still applies).

Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility: After losing eligibility for financial aid, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office when he/she has completed coursework bringing the student back into good standing for SAP.

Incomplete Coursework: Incomplete coursework will be evaluated as failing until the courses are satisfactorily completed. These classes will also be included in the student's total attempted hours.

Remedial or Developmental Coursework: Remedial/Developmental coursework prepares the student for study at the college level. These courses may be considered for financial aid if the student is admitted into an eligible program. Because financial aid may be awarded for these courses, grades received for the courses will be counted in the calculation of GPA and required completion percentage for financial aid purposes (2.00 GPA and 67% completion). Federal Student Aid is not available to students enrolled solely in developmental courses unless they have been accepted into an eligible technical certificate or associate degree program.

Appeal and Reinstatement of Denied Aid: Probationary aid may be awarded when extenuating circumstances exist. Examples of extenuating circumstances include prolonged illness under a doctor's care, death of an immediate family member, or other extenuating circumstances.

To apply for probationary aid due to extenuating circumstances, the student must write a letter of appeal explaining why he or she failed to make SAP and what has changed in the student's situation to allow him or her to show satisfactory progress. The appeal letter and all supporting documentation should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. If the appeal is approved, one semester of probationary aid may be awarded. Generally, only one appeal for a semester of probationary aid is approved per student. Students should allow a minimum of seven business days for the appeal to be processed. Processing an appeal may take longer during peak periods.

Students receiving probationary aid through the granting of an appeal will be asked to fulfill certain terms and conditions, such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific classes. This is called an **academic** plan. At the end of the probationary semester, the student must meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress or satisfy the minimum requirements of the academic plan developed for the student by the Financial Aid Office. Otherwise, aid will be denied until the student is again in compliance with the satisfactory academic progress policy.

Transfer Students: For financial aid purposes, a transfer student is defined as a student who has attended any postsecondary institution previous to enrolling at SEARK College. All transfer students must submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. The maximum time limit will be reevaluated based on the student's major and will include all attempted coursework that is shared between the student's previous and current course of study.

POLICIES FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. **Developmental Courses** - Enrollment in developmental courses will be considered in the total number of hours for calculating financial aid awards. Developmental coursework is counted when determining maximum time limit. Loan applications will not be certified for students enrolled only in developmental courses unless those individuals have been accepted into an eligible technical certificate or associate degree program.
2. **"I" (Incomplete) Grades** – Incomplete grades will be calculated as failing grades until the course has been satisfactorily completed according to provisions in the College catalog. These classes will also be included in the student's total attempted hours. See the Satisfactory Progress Appeal Procedures for information on extenuating circumstances.
3. **"W" Withdrawals** – Students are responsible for completing all courses for which they are registered. Failure to complete courses is viewed as unsatisfactory progress. The hours associated with withdrawals will be included in the hours attempted but not completed. See the section on **150% Rule—Maximum Time Limit to Receive Federal Aid**.
4. **Repeating Courses** – The last grade recorded in the repeated course is the grade of record and will be used in computing the student's grade point average. Both courses will count towards the number of hours attempted. Grades of A, B, C and D will be counted in the number of hours completed. A student wishing to improve the grade of a previously-passed course (received letter grade of D or above) may repeat the course once. A student may repeat a failed course until it is successfully completed as long as Satisfactory Academic Progress criteria is being met.
5. **Transfer Students** - For the purpose of awarding financial aid, transfer students must submit a transcript from every college and university attended before the application of aid may be considered. Credit hours attempted at all institutions that apply to the current course of study will be counted in the hours attempted and toward the maximum hours allowed for financial aid eligibility at Southeast Arkansas College, including developmental coursework.
6. **Satisfactory Academic Progress** is required of all financial aid applicants at Southeast Arkansas College, **including those applicants who have not previously participated in federal aid programs.**

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS APPEAL PROCEDURES

1. Only students with extenuating circumstances may appeal for a probationary semester of aid. Examples of extenuating circumstances are death of an immediate family member or accidents/illnesses requiring extended doctor's care or hospitalization. Prolonged illness of a dependent may also be considered as grounds for an appeal. Official documentation must be presented with all appeals.

For financial aid purposes, an immediate family member is defined as father, mother, legal guardian, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent or grandchild.

2. Students should appeal no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the semester. No appeals will be accepted after the tenth (10th) class day.
3. Appeals must be in writing and **must** be accompanied by official documentation supporting the claim of extenuating circumstances. Forms are available from the Financial Aid Office and the College's website to assist students with the appeal process. The appeal must state why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.
4. Students using summer grades and hours earned to appeal for aid reinstatement must submit a written appeal indicating a request that summer grades be checked for appeal processing.
5. Students should allow a minimum of seven working days for the appeal to be processed. Appeals submitted during peak periods may take longer to process.