

# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS PROCEDURES

When a student receives federal or state aid, federal guidelines require that the student makes progress toward his/her degree in order to continue to receive federal or state financial aid. This requirement is called Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy addresses the student's academic progress during all terms of enrollment at Aurora University, including summer, whether or not financial aid was received during the terms. At Aurora University, this policy applies to federal, state, and need-based institutional aid as well as institutional merit-based aid.

## Policy Overview

There are three parts to the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. Students need to comply with all requirements to remain eligible for aid, as explained in the following:

### a. Qualitative Regulations – Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Satisfactory Academic Progress policy requires that the student maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) in order to remain eligible for financial aid.

Undergraduate Students: Undergraduate students must achieve a minimum total cumulative GPA of 2.0 by the end of the spring semester to be eligible for financial aid for any subsequent semesters.

Graduate Students: Graduate students must achieve a minimum total cumulative GPA of 3.0 by the end of the spring semester to be eligible for financial aid for any subsequent semesters.

### 2. Quantitative Regulations - Pace of Completion

The Satisfactory Academic Progress policy contains a quantitative component, meaning that a student is required to make steady progress toward their degree or aid-eligible non-degree program. Students must complete at least two-thirds (66.67%) of all courses attempted to maintain quantitative eligibility for aid.

*Example: A student was enrolled in 12 semester hours but completes only 7 semester hours. This student completed 58.33% of the courses and is therefore NOT maintaining SAP.*

### 3. Academic Program Completion

#### Maximum Timeframe

Undergraduate Students: To earn a bachelor's degree at Aurora University, students must complete a minimum of 120 semester hours. Students may receive financial aid for up to 150% of the hours required to complete their program. For most undergraduate programs, the maximum is considered to be 180 credit hours. This includes hours earned at another institution and transferred to Aurora University, as well as any hours that may have been completed even if financial aid was not received.

If a student changes majors, courses previously completed may be included in the 150% completion rate. The student is expected to complete their program within the maximum timeframe. In limited circumstances appeals will be considered.

Timely Completion of Degree: Students enrolled in a graduate or aid-eligible non-degree program must complete the requirements for the program in the specified timeframe. Students who exceed the timeframe may not be eligible for aid and can appeal.

Degree Completion Requirement: Federal financial aid is limited to a student's degree requirements. Once a student has earned a degree, they can no longer receive federal or state aid with restrictions on institutional funds. This is accurate even if a student has not applied for graduation or the degree has not been officially conferred. Undergraduate students who are pursuing a double major or minor cannot receive aid once all degree requirements have been met for one undergraduate degree.

## What Happens If A Student Falls Below the SAP Requirements?

Schools are required to monitor SAP at least once annually. Aurora University reviews SAP after the spring semester for all programs. Students that are in Suspension status will be sent a letter and email notifying them of their status and that they have the right to appeal.

## Financial Aid Suspension

A student's financial aid is suspended if after the spring semester he/she fails to meet the minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements for one or more of the following reasons:

- The student is below the minimum cumulative GPA requirement for the student's academic level: and
- The student is below the 66.67 % minimum course completion rate (Pace of completion).

A student's financial aid is also suspended if at any time:

- The student failed to meet the requirements of their academic plan.
- The student is a readmitted student or a first-time financial aid applicant and previous coursework is below the minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress threshold, and because of this the student would be ineligible for aid unless they successfully appeal.
- The student has exceeded the maximum timeframe limits for their degree.

## How to Appeal Financial Aid Suspension

If a student has been suspended from financial aid eligibility because of failure to meet the minimum SAP requirements, and he/she feels that severe, extenuating or unusual circumstances have kept them from making progress toward their degree, he/she may appeal.

To appeal, the student must submit to the Office of Financial Aid a completed **Appeal for All Aid form** (<http://www.aurora.edu/financialaidforms/>). The appeal should include all of the items below. Additional documentation may be requested in the review process.

- Identify in Section 2 the circumstance(s) that kept the student from meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards in the past.
- He/She must provide in the letter the following:
  - The circumstance(s) affecting his/her academics
  - When the circumstance(s) occurred
  - The duration of the circumstance(s)
  - How the circumstance affected the student's ability to complete their coursework

- What has changed that will allow them to achieve future academic success.
  - Specific steps they will take to ensure the university of their future academic success.
- c. Attach documentation that supports the appeal.

Appeals must be submitted by the first day of the academic term for which you are seeking reinstatement.

The student's appeal will be considered by University Officials and he/she will receive an email notifying the student of the outcome of their appeal.

If the appeal is Approved—The student will receive an academic plan. The academic plan will list specific term requirements and what must be accomplished during the probationary term to continue to receive financial aid in the following term. The student's financial aid will be reinstated on a probationary status for the appropriate term in accordance with federal, state and university regulations and processing requirements/deadlines, and the availability of funds.

If the appeal is Denied—The student may continue without federal, state and institutional financial aid, and appeal for reinstatement after the student has demonstrated progress towards earning their degree by improving their cumulative GPA and/or credit hour completion rate so that they are meeting the minimum requirements. Sometimes Private loans may be an option for a student to finance their tuition charges while their federal and state aid is suspended.

Submission of an appeal does not guarantee reinstatement of your eligibility.

Please note that academic or admission reinstatement does not constitute reinstatement of financial aid eligibility.

## Definitions and Policies Related to Satisfactory Academic Progress

### Attempted Credit Hours

All credit-bearing courses are calculated into the student's "hours attempted" for financial aid purposes. This means they are included in determining the pace of completion percentage as well as counting toward the 150% maximum timeframe eligibility. This includes:

- Accepted transfer credit (regardless of whether you received aid for the courses, and regardless of their treatment in the student's current AU degree requirements); note that credit earned through study abroad consortium or other consortium agreement is treated as transfer credit. Please note transfer credits are not included in the calculation of the student's GPA.
- Test credit
- Other types of academic credit
- Repeated courses

### Successfully Completed Credit Hours

Courses with a passing grade (A, B, C, D, P, or CR) are considered to be successfully completed.

Courses with a non-passing grade (F, W, I, X, NP, or NCR) are considered to be not successfully completed

### Policy on Incompletes, Audits, Non-Credit Remedials, and Withdrawals

Aurora University will not allow incomplete, non-credit remedial, and withdrawal courses to be considered as credits successfully completed, but will consider them as courses attempted and therefore count them in the maximum timeframe.

Students who receive an Incomplete or Deferred Grade for a course while on SAP probation will be reviewed on an individual basis. Students in this situation are monitored in conjunction with the Registrar's Office for final grades, and then the files are evaluated as to progress. If needed, any required adjustment to their financial aid is made upon notification of the final grade.

Non-credit remedial courses are counted toward the minimum amount of courses required for financial aid eligibility.

Aurora University does not offer withdrawal pass and withdrawal fail courses.

**Audited courses** do not earn academic credit and are not eligible for financial aid payment. As such, they are not evaluated in the review of the student's satisfactory academic progress.

**Withdrawal grades** are considered to be not successfully completed, and negatively impact satisfactory academic progress. This includes official withdrawal grades W, which are not calculated in the grade point average, as well as unofficial withdrawals that result in the grade of an F which is calculated in the grade point average.

### Impact of Dropping/Failing Courses

Though a student may receive Federal Title IV aid for retaking a course that had previously been dropped or failed, both the first and second attempts are counted toward the quantitative requirement (see item 2). This means that repeatedly withdrawing from and/or failing courses may negatively impact a student's quantitative progress (pace of completion) over the long term and result in the student failing to meet SAP requirements.

### Retaking Coursework

Students are eligible to repeat courses, but only the higher grade will be calculated in the GPA and credit towards graduation.

Federal regulations specify that you may not receive aid more than once for repeating a course previously passed, even if you are required to retake the course to fulfill degree requirements. For example, if you receive a "D" grade in a course and you are required to repeat the course to achieve a grade greater than a "D", you may receive financial aid for only one repeat of the course.

### Changing Programs of Study

As outlined in the academic catalog, students wishing to change programs of study (majors) need to complete a Declaration of Major form. The student is encouraged to meet with an academic advisor and a financial aid counselor. The student is expected to complete his/her program within the maximum timeframe. In limited circumstances, appeals will be considered.

### Double Majors

As outlined in the academic catalog, students may pursue multiple majors. The student would need to complete the Declaration of Major form for both programs, and if approved, the student is encouraged

to meet with an academic advisor and a financial aid counselor. The student is expected to complete the multiple majors within the maximum timeframe.

A student's financial aid eligibility ends once all requirements for a first bachelor's degree are met even if the requirements for the second or additional program have not been met.

### **Second Undergraduate Degree**

Students pursuing a second undergraduate degree are eligible only for federal student loans at the undergraduate level. Students seeking a second undergraduate degree are subject to the maximum timeframe limit for undergraduate study.

***This information is accurate at all Aurora University locations and subject to change without prior notice.***