

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Policy Summary

In order to receive financial aid, you must be meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education and Ohio University. Our definition of SAP is different from the University's definition of good academic standing. All Ohio University students who have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and wish to be considered for federal, state, and institutional financial aid must meet the criteria stated in the policy regardless of whether or not they have previously received aid. Programs governed by these regulations are:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Work Study (FWS)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)
- Federal TEACH Grant
- Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG)
- Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency Grant (PHEAA)
- All Ohio University grants
- Some Ohio University Long-term Loan and Short-term Loan Programs

SAP Definitions and Requirements for Students:

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA): A first-year undergraduate must have a 1.75 GPA by the end of his or her first year. This requirement does not consider the number of terms or courses taken. For example, if a first year student begins attendance in the spring semester, he or she must earn a 1.75 at the end of that semester because it ends the academic year. Continuing undergraduate students must earn a 2.00 GPA at the end of all remaining years. A graduate student must have a 3.00 GPA at the end of each year.

Maximum Time Frame (MTF): The required length of time it will take a student to complete a degree program or certificate based on the appropriate enrollment status. Federal regulations allow a student to be eligible to receive aid up to 150% of the time that it would normally take to complete a degree. All credit hours in which a student enrolls or transfers to the University are included in the maximum time frame calculation, regardless of the number of degrees a student chooses to obtain. Grades that are considered hours attempted and completed in the calculation of maximum time frame include: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, FS, FN, CR, NR, F I, I, I*, PR, W, WP, WF, WN, P, PS, S, T, TP or TD. An undergraduate student seeking an associate's degree may remain eligible for financial aid through the first 90 semester hours attempted (associate's degree in nursing is aid eligible through 111 hours), an undergraduate seeking a Baccalaureate Degree can have up to 180 hours to complete a degree and a full-time graduate student can have up to 90 hours to complete a degree.

Minimum Completion Percentage: The percentage of coursework that a student must earn during enrollment. Ohio University requires students to earn passing grades in 67% of the hours in which they enroll during the evaluation period. Grades that are considered hours earned include: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, CR, P, PR, PS, S, T, TP and TD.

Students are reviewed annually at the end of the academic year. A student who is found to be deficient in one or more components is ineligible for any future financial aid. A student who is ineligible has the right to appeal if there are extreme extenuating circumstances that contributed to the deficiency. Students wishing to appeal are encouraged to review the SAP Appeal Procedures. Appeal forms can be obtained online.

SAP Appeal: The process by which a student who is not meeting the institution's standards petitions the institution for reconsideration of the student's eligibility. Students are evaluated at the close of spring term annually. At this time, any student not meeting all SAP components will be ineligible for any further financial aid. Students may submit an appeal to be considered for reinstatement on a probationary status of no more than one term to resolve all deficiencies. Students who appeal, but for whom it would be mathematically impossible to resolve all deficiencies in one term, will be placed on an academic plan. Per Federal Regulations, Ohio University can only consider appeals based on the death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstance. Appeals must provide documentation of circumstances on which the appeal is based. Appeals must also specify why the student failed to satisfy SAP requirements and what has changed in the student's situation.

Transfer Work from Military Experience: Transfer work accrued while on active duty in the armed forces may cause a student to exceed the maximum timeframe for the degree program. Students in this situation must appeal.

However, in the appeal process, students should indicate the number of transfer hours accrued during active duty military service. These hours will be exempted for appeal consideration. Students who meet maximum timeframe by excluding these hours and meet all other SAP criteria will be approved.

SAP Probation: A status assigned to a student who fails to satisfy SAP requirements, who has successfully appealed and had eligibility for aid reinstated. Reinstatement of aid during this probationary period may be no longer than one term. Additional periods of probation are determined by performance during previously approved probationary periods.

Academic Plan: Students may be placed on an academic plan upon submission of a successful appeal. If it is mathematically impossible for a student to resolve all deficiencies during one term of attendance and the student's reason for appeal is appropriate according to federal regulations, the student may be placed on an academic plan with the end goal being to resolve all deficiencies. An academic plan varies in length and is determined by the SAP committee. It does not have to equate to the exact number of terms it would take a student to resolve all deficiencies. Students granted aid eligibility through an academic plan may receive aid for up to one year before conducting a review of the student's performance. If the student is meeting the criteria identified in the SAP appeal approval at the annual review, the student's academic plan may be extended.

Reinstatement: The act of removing all SAP deficiencies reinstating aid eligibility. Reinstatement is defined as removing all deficiencies acquired during all period of enrollment or caused by transfer credits. Reinstatement is not a status granted in regard to an appeal.

SAP Processing:

The Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (OSFAS) has established the following policies and procedures stated to fulfill the requirements expressed in the Higher Education Act (HEA) as revised for the 2011-12 academic year. The Satisfactory Academic Progress policies and procedures of Ohio University are reviewed when changes at the federal or institutional level require review to ensure compliance with Federal Regulations. All Ohio University students applying for Title IV federal and selected other types of assistance must meet the criteria stated hereafter regardless of whether or not they previously received aid.

Prior to the annual SAP review, prospective first-time freshmen and graduate students are given a SAP status of MEET at the time a financial aid record is created in PeopleSoft. This allows financial aid awarding if all other

eligibility requirements are met. Continuing students are provisionally updated to MEET if they are meeting all SAP criteria based on prior enrollment. This allows financial aid awarding to proceed for students who are projected to be eligible prior to the annual review. Undergraduate students who are ineligible based on prior enrollment or whose first term of attendance is spring semester remain in an Undetermined SAP status until the annual review is completed. Graduate students only remain as Undetermined if they were not meeting all SAP criteria during prior enrollment.

The SAP annual review is conducted using delivered PeopleSoft functionality. All students with a financial aid record are reviewed the week following spring semester grade posting. This automated process runs weekly for students with new financial aid records. Our SAP requirements are based on hours successfully completed regardless of enrollment status. Programs with varied lengths have differing maximum timeframes.

Satisfactory Academic Progress standards will be reviewed annually at the close of spring semester. The determination date for eligibility will occur within seven days of the posting of spring semester grades. Students must satisfy the qualitative portion of Satisfactory Academic Progress regulations by maintaining the minimum cumulative grade point average accepted by Ohio University as described below. The award year begins with summer semester and ends with spring semester.

Proper Withdrawal from classes prior to the 14th day of enrollment will not affect minimum completion percentage. At the close of each year, the completion percentages from each semester are added together. Students with a completion percentage less than 67% for the year are ineligible to receive federal and other forms of aid.

Students who withdraw from a course after the end of the add/drop period (2nd Friday of the semester) will negatively impact their completion percentage. There is no effect on GPA. Withdrawn courses occurring after the end of the add/drop period are counted in the maximum timeframe calculation.

Students who receive an incomplete grade (I) will negatively impact their completion percentage until such a time that the incomplete changes to a graded course. There is no effect on GPA. If a student's SAP status is positively impacted by a mid-year grade change, the student must contact our office for a manual review. Incomplete courses are counted in the maximum timeframe calculation.

Repeated courses are individually counted when calculating completion percentage. For example, if a student takes Math 1000 twice and it is a five credit hour course, 10 credit hours will be counted as attempted; thus, impacting the maximum timeframe calculation. If the student fails the course the first time and receives a C the second time, five credit hours are counted as earned. Repeated courses do positively impact GPA as the highest grade received is only counted in the GPA calculation.

Remedial coursework is included when determining the minimum completion percentage and maximum timeframe, but is not included in the GPA.

Hours transferred from another school are counted as attempted and earned hours when determining minimum completion percentage. This positively impacts completion percentage, but could negatively impact maximum timeframe.

SAP Appeals:

Federal regulations do not require that a school allow students an opportunity to appeal an unsatisfactory status. Ohio University has chosen to exercise the ability to use professional judgment and entertain appeals for reinstatement of aid for no more than one term of probation. Students for whom it would be mathematically

impossible to resolve all deficiencies during one term may be placed on an academic plan, which gives much more flexibility in financial aid reinstatement. However, per federal regulations, only appeals documenting specific circumstances will be considered for approval. The Assistant Director overseeing SAP will review the content of the appeal. Only appeals that document the following reasons will be considered:

- Serious physical or mental illness of the student
- Serious physical or mental illness of the student's immediate family member
- Death of the student's immediate family member
- Other extreme circumstances

If the appeal is not submitted for one of these reasons, it will automatically be denied by the Assistant Director and will not be heard by the SAP Appeal Committee. If the appeal is submitted based on an approved circumstance, but does not provide documentation of said circumstance(s), the Assistant Director will contact the student and request the documentation. If the appeal is complete and all necessary documentation is provided, the Assistant Director will prepare to present the appeal to the SAP Appeal Committee.

Students may only submit one appeal per academic career. For example, students may appeal once as an undergraduate and once as a graduate. Exceptions may be made for students who have not attended Ohio University for, at least, three full academic years.

There is no secondary or director appeal process. If an appeal is denied, students can only be reinstated for aid eligibility if they satisfy all deficiencies. If an appeal is approved and the student does not fulfill the conditions of his or her probation or academic plan, the student will not be eligible for aid for any future semesters during their academic career unless the student satisfies all deficiencies. Successfully attending 12 credit hours at your own expense no longer qualifies a student to regain aid eligibility. Certain extreme situations will be vetted through a student's regional campus SAP advisor or the Associate Director of Operations on the Athens campus. If feasible, a petition may be made to the director only when a student has failed to perform well during the period of probation due to specific, extreme circumstances. No petition to the director will be considered on the basis of a denied appeal decided by the SAP Appeal Committee.

The SAP Appeal Committee is an assigned group of three financial aid administrators who serve as an impartial "jury" hearing SAP appeals. This committee determines probationary aid eligibility of students. The committee also reviews NCAA Appeals and makes recommendations to the Director regarding what action to take (see section entitled "NCAA Appeals"). The Assistant Director serves as the committee chair. He or she is responsible for designating a time and place that is convenient with the other SAP Appeal Committee members to hear appeals.

The other two seats on the SAP committee are filled on a rotating basis semester by semester.

At the SAP Appeal Committee meeting, the chairperson provides the demographic and applicable academic information as well as the student's SAP standing. The committee also reviews the student's grades during the most recent enrollment period. The chairperson also reads the appeal information and provides the student's documentation. He or she then reads the advisor/advocate section of the appeal.

The committee determines the action that will be taken and the Assistant Director updates the PeopleSoft system. Either the appeal will be denied and the student will remain ineligible or the appeal will be approved reinstating aid eligibility for no more than one term or placing the student on an academic plan. In cases of denial, there is no further action or secondary appeal process. The committee's decision of a denial stands.

A student who does not submit a SAP appeal or whose appeal is denied may be reinstated for federal and selected other types of financial assistance by successfully satisfying all deficiencies. Students who regain eligibility by

resolving all deficiencies will be identified during the annual SAP review. After eligibility has been established, any award will depend upon the availability of funds and other aid eligibility criteria. Students who believe they have resolved all deficiencies mid-year must contact our office for a mid-year manual review. Students may regain financial aid eligibility the term following the resolution of all deficiencies.

SAP Notifications:

Following the SAP annual review all students who are not meeting one or more SAP criteria are sent an email to their assigned Ohio University Catmail account. This email outlines their SAP status, provides their GPA, completion percentage and total attempted hours, and provides the requirements of these criteria. The email also includes appeal information. Students who are close to their maximum timeframe receive an email with the same information warning them that they are close to the maximum timeframe for their degree program. This email is sent to students who are within 30 credit hours of reaching their maximum timeframe limit.

Ohio University requires that all students work with their academic designee to complete an academic plan as part of each SAP appeal regardless of the number of terms necessary to resolve all SAP deficiencies. The academic plan is used to calculate the number of terms necessary to raise the GPA to a 2.0 GPA and/or raise the completion percentage to 67%. Students are manually awarded financial aid based on the terms of their academic plan.

Students will be required to demonstrate specified academic progress every term of their academic plan. Student performance is reviewed at the end of each term of the plan. Students must meet specified term requirements as outlined in their approved appeal in order to receive aid for the next term of their plan. After the last term of the academic plan future eligibility for financial aid will be determined. If the student has resolved all deficiencies, the SAP status is updated to reinstated. If the student has not resolved all deficiencies, the SAP status remains PROB to signify an appeal approval. However, no further aid is awarded.