

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Athens State University has approved the following standards defining satisfactory progress, in accordance with regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Students will be notified by the financial aid office at the end of each semester if they are placed on **Warning**, **Suspension**, or become ineligible due to attempted hours. The financial aid office will update the student's financial aid standing and adjust financial aid awards accordingly. Students should note this standing is separate from the academic standing.

### **Undergraduate Standards**

To be eligible for federal student aid, an undergraduate student must show Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward a stated degree goal. At Athens State University, a student's academic progress is checked at the end of each semester. The student must meet each of the following standards of academic progress:

#### **1. Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) (Qualitative Measure)**

The minimum **GPA** for an undergraduate, degree-seeking student is a cumulative 2.00.

**Note:** Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Warning** status for one semester. If the standard is not met after the completion of that **Warning** semester the status will change to **Suspended**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There will be no consecutive **Warning** statuses given to a student who does not meet multiple SAP standards in a semester.

#### **2. Complete 67% of all hours attempted with passing grades (Quantitative Measure)**

This completion percentage is called **Completion Rate** or **Pace**. **Pace** is calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student has successfully earned by the total number attempted. All withdrawals (W), Incompletes (I), Failing Grades (F), repeated coursework, and audited coursework count as unsuccessful completions. See the [Impact of Withdrawal on Financial Aid](#) page for additional details.

**Example A:** If you have attempted 15 credit hours and successfully complete 12 of those hours, withdrew from 3 hours, then your completion rate will be 12 hours earned divided by 15 hours attempted = 80 percent completion rate. You meet the measurable progress component of this requirement.



**Example B:** If you have attempted 15 credit hours and successfully completed 6 of those hours, and either failed, repeated, have an Incomplete in, or withdrawn from the other 9 hours, then your completion rate would be 6 divided by 15= 40 percent completion rate. You do not meet the measurable progress component of this requirement

**Note:** Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Warning** status for one semester. If the standard is not met after the completion of that **Warning** semester the status will change to **Suspended**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There will be no consecutive **Warning** statuses given to a student who does not meet multiple SAP standards in a semester.

### **3. Complete a degree program with a reasonable length of time (Maximum Time Frame)**

At Athens State University, a reasonable length of time for the completion of an initial undergraduate degree program is defined as no more than 150 percent of the normal time required to complete a degree program. The cumulative amount of hours accepted by the Athens State Registrar will be used for this calculation.

**Example:** If your degree requires that you complete 124 credit hours, then your reasonable length of time will be 124 hours x 150 percent = 186 hours. You will be within your reasonable length of time during your first 186 hours of attempted course work.

**Important Note:** If you transfer into Athens State University with 186 undergraduate hours or more you may be subject to Maximum Timeframe Suspension prior to beginning your courses here. You will be notified accordingly as this will require an appeal.

Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Maximum Time Frame Suspension**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There is no **Warning** status semester given but students will be notified when they are nearing this limit.

#### *Second Degree or Provisional Teaching Certification Seeking Students*

If a student is seeking a second degree, they must complete the requirements within 130% of the time frame for the degree or financial aid eligible non-degree program. An approved plan of study is required to be on file in the Office of Student Financial Aid for all students pursuing an additional degree or initial financial aid eligible non-degree program. This plan must be followed. Additionally, both the qualitative and quantitative SAP standards must be met as written.

## **Graduate Standards**

To be eligible for federal student aid, a graduate student must show Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward a stated degree goal. At Athens State University, a student's academic progress is checked at the end of each semester. The student must meet each of the following standards of academic progress:

### **1. Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) (Qualitative Measure)**

The minimum **GPA** for an undergraduate, degree-seeking student is a cumulative 3.00.

**Note:** Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Warning** status for one semester. If the standard is not met after the completion of that **Warning** semester the status will change to **Suspended**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There will be no consecutive **Warning** statuses given to a student who does not meet multiple SAP standards in a semester.

### **2. Complete 67% of all hours attempted with passing grades (Quantitative Measure)**

This completion percentage is called **Completion Rate** or **Pace**. **Pace** is calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student has successfully earned by the total number attempted. All withdrawals (W), Incompletes (I), Failing Grades (F), repeated coursework, and audited coursework count as unsuccessful completions. See the [Impact of Withdrawal on Financial Aid](#) page for additional details.

**Example A:** If you have attempted 15 credit hours and successfully complete 12 of those hours, withdrew from 3 hours, then your completion rate will be 12 hours earned divided by 15 hours attempted = 80 percent completion rate. You meet the measurable progress component of this requirement.

**Example B:** If you have attempted 15 credit hours and successfully completed 6 of those hours, and either failed, repeated, have an Incomplete in, or withdrawn from the other 9 hours, then your completion rate would be 6 divided by 15= 40 percent completion rate. You do not meet the measurable progress component of this requirement

**Note:** Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Warning** status for one semester. If the standard is not met after the completion of that **Warning** semester the status will change to **Suspended**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There will be no consecutive **Warning** statuses given to a student who does not meet multiple SAP standards in a semester.



### 3. Complete a degree program with a reasonable length of time (Maximum Time Frame)

At Athens State University, a reasonable length of time for the completion of an initial graduate degree program is defined as no more than 150 percent of the normal time required to complete a degree program. The cumulative amount of hours accepted by the Athens State Registrar will be used for this calculation.

**Example:** If your degree requires that you complete 30 credit hours, then your reasonable length of time will be 30 hours x 150 percent = 45 hours. You will be within your reasonable length of time during your first 45 hours of attempted course work.

**Important Note:** If you transfer into Athens State University with 45 graduate hours or more you may be subject to Maximum Timeframe Suspension prior to beginning your courses here. You will be notified accordingly as this will require an appeal.

Failure to meet this SAP standard will result in a **Maximum Time Frame Suspension**. An appeal is then required for financial aid reinstatement. There is no **Warning** status semester given but students will be notified when they are nearing this limit.

#### *Second Graduate Degree Seeking Students*

If a student is seeking a second graduate degree, they must complete the requirements within 130% of the time frame for the degree. An approved plan of study is required to be on file in the Office of Student Financial Aid for all students pursuing an additional degree. This plan must be followed. Additionally, both the qualitative and quantitative SAP standards must be met as written.

#### **Overview of SAP Statuses**

**WARNING** – The first semester a student does not meet one of the standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress, they will be placed on **Warning** status. **During the warning semester, the student will continue to be eligible to receive Title IV aid.** After a semester of warning, a student who does meet the minimum standards will be placed on a financial aid suspension. A student will not be eligible for Title IV financial aid until an appeal is approved (process outlined below.)

**SUSPENDED** – After attending one semester on **Warning** status, if a student does not meet the required completion rate or required GPA(s), they will be placed on a **Suspended** status. While suspended, a student is no longer eligible to receive any financial aid until the required standards are met or an appeal is successfully approved.

**MAXIMUM TIME FRAME SUSPENSION (MAX)** – This status is awarded when a student meets the allotted percentage of degree or program completion. While on **MAX**



status, a student is no longer eligible to receive any financial aid until an appeal is successfully approved. Students may wish to discuss with their advisor the option of a first undergraduate degree in an Individualized Degree Program with the hours on their transcript.

**PROBATION** – After being placed on a **Suspended** or **MAX** status and financial aid has been reinstated through a successful appeal process, the student is again eligible to receive federal financial aid. This status is generally only for one semester and quite often will carry conditions and/or stipulations for continued eligibility. **Probation** may be for longer than one semester if an approved academic plan is in place. **If placed on Probation after MAX, the student is no longer eligible to change their degree program or financial aid eligibility will be revoked.**

### **SAP Appeal and Reinstatement Process**

The process, detailed below, is for appeals related to the suspension and reinstatement of financial aid only. Students who have also been suspended from the University for unsatisfactory academic performance must file a separate appeal concerning the University suspension. Additional information on this process can be found in the Standards of Academic Performance policy or here:

<https://www.athens.edu/studentforms/>

### **A student has two options to seek to regain federal financial aid eligibility**

- Regain Satisfactory Academic Progress by completing courses that raise the Completion **Rate** and/or cumulative **GPA** to the outlined standards using payment methods other than federal financial aid.
- Complete a Financial Aid Suspension Appeal form and submit all required supporting documentation for consideration.

### **Appeal Requirements**

- A written explanation of the unusual or mitigating circumstances that the student believes prevented or hindered them in making satisfactory academic progress or completing their degree within the allowable timeframe; Include what has changed or the corrective actions being taken to prevent future problems.
- Supporting documentation by indicating below which situation(s) applies:
  1. **Medical:** If a personal medical problem contributed to the failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress, attach documentation from a medical professional from whom the student received advice or treatment.



2. **Death/Illness:** If the death or illness of an immediate family member contributed to the lack of academic progress, attach appropriate copies of medical records, death certificate, obituary etc.
3. **Military Service:** If the student withdrew due to military service, provide documentation.
4. **Other Circumstances:** Clearly state the circumstances (not listed above) in the written explanation and provide appropriate documentation. **Example: Courses on a student's academic record at Athens State University do not apply toward their current degree; include current Degree Works Report.**

- An updated plan of study may be required.

**RECOMMENDED:** At least one letter of support from someone (not a family member) who can attest to the extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical doctor, clergy, professional, etc.).

**Note:** Circumstances related to the typical adjustment to college life such as working while attending

school, financial issues related to paying bills and car maintenance/travel to campus, are not always considered as extenuating for purposes of appealing suspension of financial aid.

## **Timeline**

The appeal documentation must be provided to the Office of Student Financial Aid no later than 30 days prior to the tuition payment deadline for the upcoming semester. Failure to provide all documentation within the prescribed dates will result in a delayed determination.

Once the Office of Student Financial Aid has made a decision on an appeal, the student will be notified via their Athens State University email account. If they have an approved appeal, the status will be **Probation**. Failure to follow all conditions related to a probationary status will result in financial aid being terminated.

**Important Note:** If a student previously had their financial aid suspended and they are appealing for a second time, the appeal and all supporting documents will be sent to the Financial Aid Suspension Committee. The Committee will review the appeal and notify the student via an Athens State University email account. The Committee's



decision is final and there will be no further appeal reviewed for that financial aid suspension case. The Committee reviews appeals on an intermittent basis.

If an appeal is denied or the student decides not to appeal, they must complete the hours necessary and achieve the grades required to return to compliance with SAP.