

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires Reformed University to develop and enforce standards of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) prior to awarding any federal financial aid funds to students. Standards of satisfactory academic progress were established to encourage students to *successfully complete* courses for which federal financial aid is received, and to progress satisfactorily toward degree completion. *Successful completion* of a course for undergraduates is defined as receiving one of the following grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D or CR. Successful completion of a course for graduate students is defined as receiving one of the following grades: A, A-, B+, B, B- or C, CR.

The standards apply to federal financial aid programs, including Federal Pell Grant and Federal Direct Loans.

These financial aid standards of academic progress are separate from, and in addition to, academic standards required by the University for continued enrollment. The criteria used to determine academic progress are cumulative grade point average, cumulative completion rate (or pace), and maximum time frame to complete the degree.

At the Spring term each year, the Office of Financial Aid reviews students' academic progress. All periods of enrollment are reviewed, including semesters during which no financial aid was received.

There are three distinct dimensions to the SAP standards:

- Completing the degree requirements within an established timeframe
- Maintaining the minimum required grade point average (GPA)
- Achieving a minimum rate of academic progression each year (Pace)

These standards also include an opportunity to appeal the denial of financial aid if the student has faced unusual circumstances that prevented the student from attaining the minimum standards described in this document.

Aid Programs Affected by Academic Progress:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal William D. Ford Direct Loans (including the subsidized and unsubsidized student loans, Federal Parent Loan (PLUS) and Federal Grad PLUS)

Qualitative Requirement - Grade Point Average (GPA)

- Undergraduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
- Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0

Quantitative Requirement - Completion Rate (Pace)

Students must successfully complete a minimum of 67% (two-thirds) of cumulative units attempted (attempted units are units for which a tuition charge was incurred). This is measured annually and on a cumulative basis. Transfer hours accepted by the University

toward the student's degree requirements are included as credits attempted/earned but not in the GPA according to University Academic Standards Policy.

Maximum Time Frame for Completion of Educational Objective

Students must complete their degree program within 150% of the published length of their degree program. The following standards of attempted units are applied to determine when a student has exceeded the maximum time frame for completion of their degree program.

Degree	Required Units for Degree	Maximum Attempted Units
Bachelor's	120	180
Master's of Divinity	90	135
Master's of Business Administration (MBA)	36	54
Master's of Arts in Theological Studies	45	67.5
Master's of Arts in Intercultural Studies	42	63
Master's of Arts in Leadership Studies	36	54

For example, if a major requires 120 credit hours to graduate, a student could not receive financial aid beyond 180 credits attempted (including transfer hours) whether or not financial aid was received for those credits.

Incomplete Grades

Within **TWO** weeks after the end of the semester, students must have made up any uncompleted work and will be assigned a letter grade by the instructor. If all required work is still incomplete after this period, the grade of "I" will automatically become "F."

Multiple Retakes - Repeated courses affect academic progress as follows:

- Cumulative Grade Point Average - Only the most recent grade counts in the student's Cumulative GPA.
- Cumulative Completion Rate and Maximum Time Frame - When a course is repeated, each course attempt will be counted as attempted hours.

Remedial Coursework

Remedial courses are treated the same as other courses for satisfactory academic progress purposes.

Transfer Hours

Transfer hours that are accepted toward the student's academic program count in the overall maximum time frame calculation and in the cumulative completion (pace) calculation. Transfer hours have no effect upon the cumulative grade point average.

Changes of Major/Degree Program

Students who change majors or change programs are still held to the 150% maximum time frame rule but only credits applying to the new major or degree program are evaluated. The 150% maximum limit will be measured based on the number of credits required for the new major/program.

Timing of Reviews

Current active students will have their academic progress reviewed at the end of the Spring term for all enrolled students. SAP is evaluated once each aid year at the University. Students who are not meeting the requirements of the University's SAP policy are notified by email within five (5) business days.

New financial aid recipients (i.e., those students who had never previously applied for aid) or students reactivated for enrollment at the University will have their academic progress reviewed when the Financial Aid Office receives the results of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

At the time of the review students who are not meeting the minimum requirements will be placed on financial aid suspension.

Financial Aid Suspension

Students who are placed on financial aid suspension are ineligible for financial aid for subsequent enrollment periods. During suspension students may be permitted to attend Reformed University at their own expense to demonstrate academic progress.

Reinstatement of Eligibility

Students who choose to attend Reformed University or another institution while on financial aid suspension at their own expense will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon seeking reinstatement. When seeking reinstatement, students must be meeting the academic progress standards in order to regain eligibility for subsequent enrollment periods. **NOTE:** A period of non-enrollment from the University itself will not restore eligibility to a student who has failed to make satisfactory progress.

Appeals

Appeal is a process by which a student who is not meeting the institution's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards petitions the institution for reconsideration of the student's eligibility for Title IV, HEA program assistance. Students on financial aid suspension may appeal the loss of aid if extenuating circumstances prevented the students

from making satisfactory progress.

Students may submit a written appeal to the Financial Aid Office. This appeal must be filed within five (10) business days of notification of the decision and must, at a minimum, explain in writing the circumstances that led to their unsatisfactory academic performance and why they feel that these circumstances will not be a factor going forward.

Circumstances which are considered extenuating are those which are unusual and/or unforeseen at the beginning of the enrollment period, such as: injury or illness of the student, death of a close relative, or other situations which were unexpected and beyond the student's control. Allowances may also be made for students who have a documented disability or other adjustment difficulties. The appeal must include what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation. Students must also provide appropriate supporting documentation, e.g., doctor's note, receipts or obituary with their appeals. Students who successfully appeal their aid ineligibility will be placed on financial aid probation.

The Appeals Process

Students appealing for reinstatement of eligibility for financial aid must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Set up an appointment with Academic Affairs to discuss the appeals process, requirements, and options;
2. Obtain a SAP Appeal Form from the OFA;
3. Obtain and attach appropriate documentation that substantiates the condition(s) related to the circumstances;
4. Visit with an academic advisor to develop an academic plan that addresses specifically academic deficiencies and how they will be addressed. For example, the advisor and the student may agree on a reduced course load; different courses; tutoring options; or other approaches the student and adviser might consider to be appropriate.
5. Submit a written statement indicating under which of the above conditions to support the appeal and provide a copy of the academic plan.

The review of the appeal can take up to two to four weeks from the date the form is submitted. Students wishing to submit an appeal should do so in ten business days upon receipt of failure to meet SAP requirements notification.

The OFA adheres to the following procedures once a student submits an SAP Appeals Form:

1. The OFA will only review complete appeal documentation.
2. The Academic Review Committee (OFA and Academic Affairs) will review the appeal with particular consideration given to the nature of the appeal together with program regulations to determine approval status.
3. If the appeal is approved, students will be notified in writing, placed on financial aid probation, and continue to receive financial aid.
4. If the appeal is denied, the student will be notified in writing within ten business days of the decision.

Students are notified in writing of the results of their appeal. The possible appeal results are listed below.

Approved Appeals - Probationary Status

Students who appeal may be granted a probationary period. At the end of a probationary period, students must be meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements or must be successfully meeting requirements of an academic plan in order to continue to receive financial assistance.

Denied Appeals - Reinstatement of Eligibility

Students who choose to attend Reformed University while on suspension, at their own expense, will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon seeking reinstatement. Students must be meeting the academic progress standards in order to regain eligibility for subsequent enrollment periods. A minimum of six units earned at Reformed University must be completed in order to be considered for reinstatement.