



## **FINANCIAL AID REGULATION SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY STANDARDS**

The Code of Federal Regulations, Section 668.34, as amended October 29, 2010, require that all financial aid recipients maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress results in ineligibility for all Federal and State financial aid programs. This policy is effective January 2018.

The intent of this policy (and the underlying law and regulation) is to encourage all recipients to advance steadily toward the completion of their degrees. To receive aid, students must meet the minimum requirements as outlined below. The academic standards required to receive financial aid apply to all academic work attempted at SMSU whether or not financial aid was received at that time. Only SMSU credits, Approved Consortium credits and Common Market courses are used in monitoring the GPA component of Satisfactory Academic Progress. SMSU credits, Consortium credits, Common Market courses and Transfer credits are used in monitoring the Pace Completion Requirement and Maximum Timeframe components (see "Transfer students/courses" under Additional Information).

### **MINIMUM SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS**

#### **1. Grade Point Average (GPA)**

##### **A. Undergraduate Students:**

Undergraduate students must have a cumulative minimum grade point average of:

1.60 for anyone having attempted 1-29 semester credits

1.80 for anyone having attempted 30-59 semester credits

2.00 for anyone having attempted 60 or more semester credits

##### **B. Graduate Students:**

Graduate students must have a cumulative minimum grade point average of 3.0

##### **For all students:**

Courses which receive a letter grade of A,B,C,D, or F are included in the computation of the GPA.

#### **2. Completion of Attempted Credits/ Pace Requirement**

**A. All students** (undergraduate and graduate) must complete a minimum of 66.67% of **cumulative** credits attempted. Courses receiving grades of A,B,C,D,F,FQ,I,IP,CR,NC and W are considered to be credits attempted for the purposes of this progress standard.

**B. Maximum Timeframe** – All students must complete their degree requirements within a maximum timeframe, not to exceed 150% of the normal length expected to attain the degree objective. For example, students attempting more than 180 credits towards their first Baccalaureate Degree will be ineligible to receive funding (120 credits x 150% = 180). Note: An additional 60 credits will be funded for students obtaining a second Baccalaureate Degree. Graduate students attempting more than 54 credits towards their Master's degree will be ineligible for funding (36 credits x 150% = 54).

### **EVALUATION PERIOD**

Review of the grade point average, pace requirement, and maximum timeframe standards will be evaluated at the end of each semester. (Fall, Spring and Summer.)

### **FAILURE TO MEET THE MINIMUM STANDARDS**

Students who do not maintain the minimum cumulative grade point average or fail to complete and earn a minimum of 66.67% of attempted credits will be placed on financial aid warning for one semester. A student on financial aid warning is allowed until the end of the next enrolled semester to bring his/her academic status up to or beyond the minimum standards outlined above. If, at the end of the warning term, the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards have been met, the warning status will be ended. If, at the end of the warning term, the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards have not been met, financial aid will be suspended. Aid will remain suspended until the student once again meets the minimum standards or is approved on appeal (see below).

## FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION FOR OTHER REASONS

- 1) Suspension for maximum time frame failure – If at the end of an evaluation period, a student has failed to meet the measurement of maximum time frame, the student's financial aid eligibility will be suspended immediately.
- 2) Suspension for extraordinary circumstances – A student's financial aid eligibility will be suspended in the event of extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to previously suspended and reinstated students whose academic performance falls below acceptable standards during a subsequent term of enrollment, or students who register for courses, receive financial aid and do not attend any classes, or students whose attendance patterns appear to abuse the receipt of financial aid.
- 3) Suspension for inability to meet program requirements within the maximum time frame – If at the end of any evaluation period we determine that it is impossible for a student to raise their GPA or course completion percentage to meet minimum standards before reaching the end of their program, the student's financial aid will be suspended immediately.

## NOTIFICATION

Students who fall below the minimum standards will be notified in writing if they are placed on financial aid warning, suspension, or probation following an approved appeal. Upon suspension of aid eligibility, no further processing of the student's financial aid application will take place. Any aid that has been awarded for the subsequent term(s) will be canceled. Any costs already incurred will be the responsibility of the student and arrangements must be made with Business Services.

## APPEALING FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

An appeal process is available to students that have been placed on financial aid suspension due to academic deficiencies. A student who has experienced extraordinary circumstances, which directly affected their ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress, may have their progress reviewed by Financial Aid Office personnel for possible reinstatement of aid. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include, but are not limited to the death of a relative or close friend, illness, hospitalization or injury to the student, etc. The appeal must include an SMSU Satisfactory Progress Appeal Form, the student's typed appeal statement, supporting documentation from a third party and in some cases an SMSU Academic Plan. The SMSU Academic Plan is required if the student cannot meet minimum Satisfactory Progress Requirements by the end of the term for which the appeal was approved. The appeal committee will review each complete appeal submitted and will notify the student in writing of the decision within 2 weeks. Appeals will not be considered if they are received more than one month into the term for which the student is requesting reinstatement of aid. Appeal forms are available in the Financial Aid Office and at [www.SMSU.edu/CampusLife/FinancialAid](http://www.SMSU.edu/CampusLife/FinancialAid)

## Reinstatement/Re-Establish Financial Aid Eligibility

A student is eligible for reinstatement of their financial aid when they have either, met minimum standards (2.0 CGPA and 66.67% Pace Requirement) or have a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal approved (see above). Students who have a Financial Aid Appeal denied, can also re-establish eligibility by paying for credits with their own funds, to get back above minimum standards.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- A. **TREATMENT OF GRADES:** Grades of A,B,C,D,or F are included in the computation of the GPA (qualitative measurements). Grades of A,B,C,D,F,FQ,I,IP,CR,NC and W are considered to be credits attempted for purposes of calculating the Pace Requirement and the maximum timeframe. Grades of F,FQ,I,IP,NC and W are not completed/passed credits and, therefore, will count as attempted for the Pace Requirement and Maximum Timeframe. Grades of A, B, C and D are included in the calculation of Pace Requirement as courses successfully completed.
- B. **AUDITED COURSES:** Any courses being audited will not count as credits attempted or credits passed. Audited credits will not be funded by Title IV or Minnesota State aid.
- C. **CONSORTIUM PROGRAMS AND COMMON MARKET:** These programs are University supported and are included in all (gpa and pace completion) satisfactory academic standards.

- D. REMEDIAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES (050 OR BELOW):** These courses will be included in all (gpa and pace completion) satisfactory academic standards. To include lower level courses in the determination of financial aid, the Financial Aid Office must have written documentation from the student's advisor or Learning Resources as to the reason the student is taking this course. SMSU can exclude up to 30 remedial credits from the maximum timeframe calculation.
- E. REPEATED COURSES:** When a student repeats a course, the best grade obtained and credits earned will be counted in the grade point average, but the credits are considered to be credits attempted each time the course is taken for pace requirement and maximum timeframe calculations. A student shall not be permitted to receive financial aid for more than one repetition of a previously passed course.
- F. TRANSFER STUDENTS/COURSES:** Transfer credits are not counted in calculating the cumulative GPA. However, transfer credits are used for tracking the Pace Completion component and maximum timeframe standard (180 credits towards 1<sup>st</sup> Baccalaureate, 54 credits towards Master's degree.).
- G. CHANGES IN MAJORS OR DEGREES -** When a student changes major/degree plan their Maximum Timeframe will be recalculated. All credits attempted will be calculated in GPA but only credits toward new major/degree plan would be counted in Maximum Timeframe.
- H. WITHDRAWALS:** Withdrawn credits are considered credits attempted (but not passed) for the purposes of calculating the Pace Requirement and Maximum Timeframe, but are not used in the GPA computation.

For more information call the Financial Aid Office at 1-800-642-0684 or 1-507-537-6281.