

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

### **Purpose**

To be eligible for financial aid, students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) towards their degree

### **Policy**

Federal regulations require that Westfield State University develop a plan to measure a student's academic progress. Schools are required to measure Satisfactory Academic Progress by evaluating both qualitative (Grade Point Average) and quantitative (attempted versus earned credit hours) measures.

The SAP standards are cumulative (effective spring 2023) and include all periods of a student's enrollment (including periods in which a student did not receive financial aid) at Westfield State University.

The following standards apply to students receiving financial aid at Westfield State. The Financial Aid Office will evaluate students' SAP status at the end of every semester of enrollment (effective summer 2023).

### **Qualitative Measures**

Undergraduate students must maintain the appropriate cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) based on the number of credits attempted:

Credit Hours Attempted	Cumulative GPA
0-23	1.750
24 and more	2.000

Graduate students must maintain a minimum GPA as required by their department's policy. No graduate student may have a GPA below 2.000

### **Quantitative Measures**

All students (full-time, part-time, and graduate) must make SAP toward an undergraduate degree by successfully completing at least 67% of all credits attempted toward their degree program.

- Courses with grades of W (withdrawn), Incomplete (I), and F (Failure) are counted as credits attempted, but not successfully completed
- Courses dropped during the add/drop period do not count as credits attempted

- Transfer credits accepted toward the degree program do not count towards the GPA, but are counted as credits attempted and earned
- Repeat courses are counted in both the pace and GPA calculations unless they qualify for grade replacement at which time only the most recently taken course counts in both pace and GPA. The previously taken class only counts in pace (denominator-attempted, not numerator-passed).
- Courses taken as Pass/Fail count toward credits attempted, but do not count in the GPA

### **Maximum Timeframe**

To be eligible for financial aid, students must progress through their academic program in a timely manner. For financial aid purposes, the maximum timeframe to complete an undergraduate degree cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the program. For example, if the published length of an academic program is 120 credit hours, the maximum timeframe in which to complete the program could not exceed 180 attempted credit hours (120 x 1.5).

### **Loss of Financial Aid Eligibility**

SAP evaluations take place at the end of each semester, fall, spring, and summer.

#### **For students who do not meet the SAP standard:**

- If it is the first semester the student is not meeting the SAP standard, the student will receive a warning.
- If the student has already had one semester at a SAP warning status, the student will be ineligible for financial aid.

### **Notification Process**

Students who are placed on warning or who become ineligible for financial aid will be notified by email. This email will be sent to the student's official university email address.

### **Regaining Eligibility**

A student who has lost their eligibility may regain the ability to earn financial aid once they have raised their GPA to meet the standard set based on their credits attempted, or by earning credits that will allow the student to reestablish their ability to complete their program within the maximum timeframe allowed.

A student can also regain eligibility through a successful appeal.

### **Appeal Process**

Students who are not making SAP may appeal their status to the Financial Aid Office. Students must demonstrate they had extenuating circumstances, beyond the normal demands of student life, which led them to not making SAP.

The appeal must include the following elements:

1. A narrative of the circumstances the student faced
2. Why the student failed to make SAP
3. What has changed that will allow the student to demonstrate SAP at the next evaluation

Appeals regarding SAP and financial aid eligibility may be submitted by completing the online SAP Appeal form.

When students are notified of their SAP status, there will be an initial deadline to submit a SAP appeal for processing prior to the next period of enrollment. However, the Financial Aid Office will continue to review appeals on a rolling basis.

Students who appeal by the deadline, should expect to hear back two weeks after the initial deadline date. All others should receive a response to their appeal within two weeks of submission.

Students with an approved appeal will be placed on SAP probation for one semester and will be awarded financial aid. Before the funds are awarded, students may be required to work with the Academic Advising Office to develop a plan for overcoming whatever is preventing the student from progressing academically.

At the time a student is placed on financial aid probation, it will be determined if the student can mathematically meet SAP within one term. If it is not possible, the student would be put on SAP probation with an academic plan. The financial aid academic plan will remain in place until the student is able mathematically to reach SAP.

At the conclusion of the probationary period, the Financial Aid Office will evaluate the student's academic record to determine if the student has made Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students must have made SAP or have an approved plan in place, in order to receive financial aid in subsequent terms.

If a student does not meet the SAP standard after being on probation or an academic plan, a student may submit a second appeal for financial aid. However, the basis for the second appeal must be a separate and distinct reason.

**Additional Information:**

If a student receives a grade change, has new credits transferred in from another institution or study abroad, or incomplete grades that change to a letter grade, they may request a re-evaluation of their SAP status. The Financial Aid Office will automatically re-evaluate the student's SAP status after their next period of enrollment.

Credits transferred into the university, including study abroad and consortium credits, will count towards a student's attempted and earned credits, but will not count towards their GPA for SAP purposes.