AC 31 UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH POLICY (formerly 09-04-02)

CATEGORY: STUDENT AFFAIRS
SECTION: Registration and Records
SUBJECT: Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2017 Revised
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I.   **SCOPE**

This policy establishes Satisfactory Academic Progress for students used in determining financial aid eligibility. It applies to most aid programs at the University of Pittsburgh. If a financial aid program has eligibility criteria that differ from this policy, then refer to the specific requirements of that program. The Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements for individual academic programs are separate from this policy.

II.   **POLICY**

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Financial aid regulations require that a student maintain SAP towards degree completion in order to receive student financial aid. The guidelines used to assess academic progress for financial aid purposes include a quantitative (time-based) and qualitative (grade-based) evaluation based on guidance from federal regulations HEA Sec. 484(c), 34 CFR 668.16(e), 34 CFR 668.32(f), 34 CFR 668.34. The academic standards assessed include: 1) Grade Point Average (GPA) Evaluation; 2) Pace of Progression; and 3) Maximum Timeframe.

Failure to meet one or more of these academic standards will result in the loss of financial aid eligibility.

The academic standards are assessed as follows:

A.   **Grade Point Average Evaluation**

GPA is evaluated after spring semester grades have been posted.

Undergraduate students (including Associate's and Bachelor's degrees)
- o   If the sum of a student's Pitt-earned and accepted transfer/advance standing credits is 30 or fewer credits, the student must have a minimum 1.5 cumulative Grade Point Average.
- o   If the sum of a student's Pitt-earned and accepted transfer/advance standing credits is greater than 30 credits, the student must have a minimum 2.0 cumulative Grade Point Average.

Graduate and professional students must have the minimum cumulative Grade Point Average consistent with their program requirements for graduation.

B.   **Pace of Progression**

The **Pace of Progression** is the ratio of successfully completed credits divided by attempted credits. The grades F, G, I, M, N, NC, R, U, W, and Z are not considered successfully completed. See Policy 09-01-01 Grading System for definitions of grade types.

For financial aid purposes, a student at the University of Pittsburgh must maintain a Pace of Progression of at least 67%. This Pace of Progression should ensure that students will complete their academic programs within the maximum timeframe described below.

C.   Maximum Timeframe

The **Maximum Timeframe** is up to 150% of the credits needed for degree completion. For example, an undergraduate pursuing a bachelor's degree that requires 120 credits has a maximum timeframe of 180 credits. For doctoral students only, the maximum timeframe will be equal to the established statute of limitations, which may vary by program.

Definitions of Financial Aid Academic Progress Status

Satisfactory Academic Progress is evaluated annually after spring semester grades have been posted. Each student will be assigned a Financial Aid Status in one of the following categories after the evaluation process has been completed:

Financial Aid Status	Eligible for Aid	Definition of the Term
Meets SAP	Yes	Meeting all standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress
Not Meets	No	Student is not eligible for financial aid, but can submit an appeal, based on extenuating circumstances, to be considered for reinstatement of eligibility. Refer to Appealing for Financial Aid Reinstatement below for more information.

Repeats/Incompletes

Repeated Courses

Repeated courses may negatively impact a student's Pace of Progression and/or Maximum Timeframe. All courses attempted count toward the Maximum Timeframe even if the student retakes a class multiple times. If the student fails a course on multiple attempts, this will negatively impact the Pace of Progression since the student will have attempted courses without successfully completing them.

Incomplete Grades

An "incomplete" grade may negatively impact the GPA and Pace calculations. Grades of G and I are considered incomplete. If a subsequent grade change impacts the eligibility status, an appeal would still need to be submitted for aid eligibility reinstatement.

Prior Degree, Post-Baccalaureate, or Non-Degree Students

There are some financial aid options for students with prior degrees who are returning to complete another degree or to take preparatory coursework for acceptance into a graduate program. To be considered for aid eligibility, the student will need to complete the Prior Degree/Verify Enrollment Form.

Appealing for Financial Aid Reinstatement

The Financial Aid Office will notify aid applicants who do not meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress criteria. Appeals for financial aid reinstatement should be made by submitting a completed appeal form signed by a designee of the Dean or the Vice President for Academic Affairs along with supporting documentation (ex. medical statements, academic plan, etc.). Refer to the appeal form for additional instructions. Appeals will be evaluated by the Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeals Committee. The student will be notified of the result of their appeal **via email**. Review of appeals may take two weeks or more. The table below describes possible appeal outcomes:

Appeal Result	Financial Aid Status	Eligible for Aid	Definition of the Financial Aid Status
Approved	Probation	Yes	Student is eligible for financial aid for one semester, but must meet SAP requirements at end of the semester to return to "Meets SAP" status.

Appeal Result	Financial Aid Status	Eligible for Aid	Definition of the Financial Aid Status
Approved	Academic Plan	Yes	An academic plan must be established in meeting with a designee of the Dean or the Vice President for Academic Affairs (for example, an academic advisor). Student must follow the plan to maintain financial aid eligibility. A review of progress will occur at the end of each semester while in this status. Failure to follow the plan will result in a status of "Not Meets" and loss of financial aid eligibility.
Denied	Not Meets	No	Student is NOT eligible for Financial Aid, but can re-appeal by submitting additional documentation for reconsideration. If student chooses not to re-appeal, or if the re-appeal is denied, financial aid will not be an option to help pay for education related expenses until student complies with SAP standards.

III.   HOW THE SAP POLICY IS APPLIED

- Any student at the University of Pittsburgh receiving financial aid is subject to the SAP policy, including students taking prerequisite courses for admission into a graduate degree program.
- This policy does not override the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements in place for individual academic programs.
- Financial aid is defined as loans, grants, scholarships, and work study.
- Evaluation is conducted annually and occurs after spring semester grades have been posted.
- The GPA Evaluation is based on the student's cumulative GPA for courses taken at the University of Pittsburgh.
- Transfer/advanced standing credits accepted by the University of Pittsburgh will be included as part of the Pace of Progression and Maximum Timeframe evaluations.
- The evaluation will determine a positive ("Meets SAP") or negative ("Not Meets") financial aid academic progress status. Refer to chart on page 2 for explanation of each status.
- If the University of Pittsburgh has suspended a student for any reason (academics, code of conduct, etc.), the student is ineligible for financial aid while the student is on suspension. Aid progress eligibility will be evaluated at the time of reinstatement from suspension.
- The School of Medicine and the School of Dental Medicine evaluate students in the Medical Doctor (MD) and the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) programs, respectfully. Otherwise, the Financial Aid Office conducts all evaluations.

Further Information

If needed, please contact the Financial Aid Office for more information about this appeal process and see the FAQs listed on the Financial Aid Office website.

IV.   FORMS (available from the Financial Aid Office) Appeal Form

Prior Degree/Verify Enrollment Form

V.   REFERENCES

Policy AC 36 (formerly 09-01-01), Grading System

Policy AC 67 (formerly 09-05-08), Termination of Registration

Procedure AC 67 (formerly 09-05-08), Termination of Registration