

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS - 34 CFR 668.16(e), 34 CFR 668.32(f), 34 CFR 668.34, 34 CFR 668.2, 34 CFR 668.16, 34 CFR 668.32

## Process Overview & Responsibilities

To be eligible for Title IV aid, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Per administrative capability requirements, UST must determine the academic standards that students must meet, and a method and schedule of measuring the achievement of these standards. The financial aid satisfactory academic progress standards must be the same as or stricter than the standards the school uses for students who are not receiving Title IV aid.

Criteria for satisfactory academic progress are as follows:

- Successful completion of 75% of all credits attempted;
- Minimum grade point average as follows:
  - Undergraduate: 2.00 Cumulative GPA
  - Graduate: 3.00 Cumulative GPA
- Requirements for degree must be completed within a specified time frame: 180 credits attempted for undergraduates and 54 credits attempted for graduates.

“W”, “I”, and “F” grades will be calculated into the GPA as credits attempted with zero quality points earned. Courses passed with “P” grades will be counted into courses attempted but not into the GPA.

All students are measured annually to determine if they are meeting SAP requirements for their degree program. A program is run in PeopleSoft to evaluate students and set a flag to “Meets SAP” or “Not Meet.” The program evaluates any students who have an ISIR record for the given school year. The program is run first after spring grades are available, then each time new ISIRs are loaded into PeopleSoft to evaluate new aid applicants.

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is the office responsible for evaluating SAP for aid applicants.

## Same As or Stricter Than

### Policies

UST’s academic policy requires that undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better in their coursework at UST. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in their coursework at UST. The SAP policy follows the same guidelines for GPA requirements.

### Procedures

Early each year (January or February), the Dean of Scholarships and Financial Aid reviews any changes to federal regulations to determine if SAP policy remains suitable for next aid year. At the same time, the SAP policy is compared to the Academic Standards section of the school catalog to make sure policy remains the same or stricter.

## Qualitative Measure

### Policies

The SAP policy’s qualitative measure is as follows:

- Undergraduate – 2.00 Cumulative GPA
- Graduate – 3.00 Cumulative GPA

This is a fixed measurement, as GPA requirements do not change with grade level. If a student does not have the required GPA they are denied financial aid. This evaluation takes place with annual SAP measurement, done in Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

The SAP policy also states that students (both undergraduate and graduate) must successfully complete at least 75% of all attempted coursework.

All undergraduate hours count when calculating completion rate for an undergraduate career and all graduate hours count when calculating completion rate for a graduate career. This is true regardless of student's enrollment status, changing of majors, cumulative statistics being reset, and whether or not a student received financial aid for the courses.

Grades recorded as "W", "I", or "F" are not considered to be successfully completed in the SAP calculation. Any courses assigned these grades are calculated into the GPA as credits attempted with zero points earned. Any courses assigned these grades are calculated into the completion rate as hours attempted but not earned.

#### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program pulls most up to date GPA available. The program also calculates a completion rate. If a student meets SAP, a flag in PeopleSoft is set to "Meets SAP." If minimum GPA is not met, the flag is set to "Not Meet." Students who are not meeting SAP are notified with a letter and an email.

#### Quantitative Measure

##### Policies

The SAP policy's quantitative measure (maximum timeframe) is as follows:

- Undergraduate students must complete their degree within 180 attempted credit hours. A regular undergraduate degree is 120 hours.  $120 \times 150\% = 180$  hours.
- Graduate students must complete their degree within 54 attempted credit hours. A regular graduate degree is 36 hours.  $36 \times 150\% = 54$  hours.

All undergraduate hours count when measuring for an undergraduate career and all graduate hours count when measuring for a graduate career. All hours count for quantitative measurement, regardless of student's enrollment status, changing of majors, cumulative statistics being reset, and whether or not a student received financial aid for the courses.

If a student fails to meet the quantitative measure for their academic career, they are denied financial aid. This evaluation takes place with annual SAP measurement, done in Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

#### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program evaluates all credit hours for a student's academic career. If a student meets SAP, a flag in PeopleSoft is set to "Meets SAP." If minimum GPA is not met, the flag is set to "Not Meet." Students who are not meeting SAP are notified with a letter and an email.

#### Increments

##### Policies

Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured annually. A program is run in PeopleSoft to evaluate students and set a flag to "Meets SAP" or "Not Meet." When the program is first run for the upcoming school year, in June, the program evaluates any students who have an ISIR record for the upcoming school year. The program is run first after spring grades are available, then each time new ISIRs are loaded into PeopleSoft to evaluate new aid applicants.

#### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program evaluates all qualitative and quantitative measures for a student's academic career. If a student meets SAP, a flag in PeopleSoft is set to "Meets SAP." If minimum GPA is not met, the flag is set to "Not Meet." Students who are not meeting SAP are notified with a letter and an email.

#### Probationary or Conditional Periods

##### Policies

UST's SAP policy does not allow for probationary or conditional periods. All students are measured annually and are determined to be meeting SAP or not meeting SAP.

##### Procedures

N/A

#### Treatment of Non-punitive Grades, Repeated Courses, Audited Courses, Pass/Fail Courses, Withdrawals, & Incompletes

##### Policies

A non-punitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that does not affect progress standards for graduation. The only courses at UST that fall into this category are prerequisite courses for the MBA program. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid does review students in these classes and manually calculates qualitative and quantitative measures to ensure they are being met.

A student may repeat a course taken at the University provided that the original grade was lower than "B." Course grades for both the original and the repeated attempts will appear on the student's transcript; however, the grade of the repeated course replaces the original grade in the computation of the GPA. The hours attempted (both original and repeated) will be calculated in the student's completion rate and will count towards the student's maximum timeframe.

Only non-degree seeking students are permitted to audit a course at UST. Enrollment in a course as an audit student is on a noncredit basis and a grade of "AUD" will be issued for the completed course. Students in these courses are not eligible for financial aid. If the student becomes degree seeking at a later date, audited courses are not counted in the SAP calculation.

The pass/fail option permits degree-seeking students with at least 60 credit hours toward a degree to explore areas of the curriculum at an advanced level without inappropriate risk to their overall academic standing. A grade of "P" earns credit hours towards the degree, but does not affect the GPA. A grade of "F" earns no credit and is computed into the GPA. The credit hours attempted are calculated in the student's completion rate and will count towards the student's maximum timeframe.

Any time between the 13<sup>th</sup> day of classes and ending with the 11<sup>th</sup> week of a regular semester a student may withdraw from a course. Students are assigned a grade of "W." These courses earn no credit and are not

computed into the GPA. The credit hours attempted are calculated in the student's completion rate and will count towards the student's maximum timeframe.

At the discretion of the faculty member, a student may receive an incomplete, and a student will receive a grade of "I." Upon the completion of the work within the next semester at the time prescribed by the faculty member (no later than the end of the following regular semester), the faculty member will award the student a letter grade, including the possibility of an "F." At the discretion of the faculty member, a grade of "IE" may be assigned, meaning Incomplete Extended. An "I" or "IE" grade that is not replaced by a letter grade by the end of the semester will automatically become a grade of "F." Grades of "I" or "IE" earn no credit and are not computed into the GPA. The credit hours attempted are calculated in the student's completion rate and will count towards the student's maximum timeframe.

There is no maximum number of allowable repeated courses, withdrawals, or incompletes. Students who have violated the SAP Policy and are on an academic plan are not permitted to receive grades of "F", "W", or "I."

#### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program evaluates all qualitative and quantitative measures for a student's academic career. It effectively handles repeated courses, audited courses, pass/fail courses, withdrawals, and incompletes. Non-punitive grades are reviewed manually, as PeopleSoft does not calculate those courses in the program.

#### Treatment of Remedial, Enrichment, & English as a Second Language Courses

##### Policies

UST does not offer remedial, enrichment, or ESL courses.

##### Procedures

N/A

#### Treatment of Transfer, Consortium, Change of Major, Second Degree, & Second Major Courses

##### Policies

##### Transfer Students

UST accepts in transfer baccalaureate-level credits from other regionally accredited colleges or universities. No course work with a grade lower than "C" is accepted for transfer. Transferred coursework is not used in determining GPA. However, hours transferred into UST are counted when calculating maximum timeframe.

##### Consortium/Contractual Agreement

UST does have certain articulation agreements with area schools that allow students to take courses there and transfer into UST. The courses are treated like all other transfer credits. Transferred coursework is not used in determining GPA. However, hours transferred into UST are counted when calculating maximum timeframe.

##### Change of major / Second degree or major

Students are assigned to an academic career, either undergraduate or graduate. Undergraduates may take 180 credit hours in that career, regardless of change of major, or second degree/major. Graduate students may take 56 hours, regardless of change of major, or second degree/major.

#### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program evaluates all qualitative and quantitative measures for a student's academic career. It effectively handles transfer work and tracks the students total attempted hours.

#### Completion of Degree Requirements

#### Policies

Students can only receive financial aid for courses that will be applicable to their degree. When the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is alerted that a student has fulfilled all degree requirements, we contact the student to find out why they are continuing to enroll. Situations are handled on a case by case basis. For example, students are not permitted to take additional courses for the purpose of raising their GPA but they may be permitted to take additional courses if they are working on a double major, or taking courses that will be prerequisites for a graduate program.

#### Procedures

The registrar provides a report of all financial aid recipients who have fulfilled all degree or certificate requirements. Students are contacted and asked for additional documentation from an advisor or faculty member if they have a valid reason to continue their enrollment.

#### Notices

#### Policies

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is responsible for publishing the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. The requirements for meeting SAP are in the school catalog, and the full policy is available online at [https://www.stthom.edu/About/Consumer-Information/Consumer-Information.aqf?Aquifer\\_Source\\_URL=%2FConsumerInformation&PNF\\_Check=1](https://www.stthom.edu/About/Consumer-Information/Consumer-Information.aqf?Aquifer_Source_URL=%2FConsumerInformation&PNF_Check=1)  
The SAP policy is reviewed and updated annually by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

#### Procedures

SAP policy is updated annually in catalog and online. Students are notified about the policy via award letter (new students) and/or in the student portal (continuing students).

#### Appeals

#### Policies

Students who do not meet SAP guidelines will be sent a letter and an email explaining that they are on financial aid dismissal. Students who feel there are extenuating circumstances which may affect the denial of financial aid have the right to appeal. In order to appeal, the student will need to complete and submit an appeal form prior to the census date of the term (12<sup>th</sup> day of class) in which the student is seeking financial assistance. The Financial Aid Appeal Committee will review the appeal forms and will decide whether a reinstatement should be made. The Committee reserves the right to restrict the number and types of courses a student may take. Appeals may be approved due to unusual circumstances that affected academic performances, including but

not limited to: family member's death, illness, etc.

After a reinstatement is made, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will create an Academic Plan that the student must follow. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will notify the student of the committee's decision by email within 2 days of the committee meetings. Students who need Academic Plans will be asked to schedule an appointment with our office to review the requirements of the Academic Plan. Undergraduate students will be required to successfully complete each semester with a 2.00 term GPA or better, until they are meeting regular SAP requirements. Graduate students will be required to successfully complete each semester with a 3.00 term GPA or better, until they are meeting regular SAP requirements.

If the student fails to meet the requirements of their Academic Plan, they will be denied financial aid for the following semester and cannot appeal again at that point. Second appeals may be considered if a student sits out for two semesters, or if a student successfully completes 6 credit hours (of an academic nature) using their own financial resources. Repeated appeals are not encouraged as they violate the intent of the satisfactory academic progress guidelines.

#### Procedures

When SAP appeals are received by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, they are routed to financial aid counselor, Oscar Morales. The appeals are checked for completeness, and students are contacted if any information is missing. Appeals are sent to the Committee to allow time to review prior to meeting. Financial aid counselor schedules and conducts meetings.

#### Financial Aid Committee Members:

- Dean of Scholarships and Financial Aid (Chair) - ex officio; non-voting member
- Financial Aid Counselor - ex officio; voting member
- Director of Advising - ex officio; voting member
- Business Office Representative; voting member (2 year term: even years)
- Counseling and Disability Services Representative; voting member (2 year term: odd years)
- Registrar's Office Representative; voting member (2 year term: odd years)
- Graduate Program Faculty Representative; voting member (2 year term: even years)
- Undergraduate Faculty Representative; voting member (2 year term: odd years)

Financial aid counselor informs student of appeal outcome and is responsible for meeting with student about academic plan, and updating PeopleSoft system so student is awarded correctly.

#### Documentation

#### Policies

As part of the financial aid appeal process, students are required to submit at least one supporting document. More documentation may be requested by the Committee. Examples are:

- Letter of recommendation from assigned Academic Advisor
- Academic Advisor Certification Form (attached to SAP Appeal)
- Letter of recommendation from a UST Faculty Member
- Letter of recommendation from UST Tutorial Services office
- Letter of recommendation from UST Counseling & Disability Office
- Letter of recommendation from spiritual advisor
- Letter of recommendation from Physician
- Letter of recommendation from Employer

#### Procedures

When SAP appeals are received by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, they are routed to financial aid counselor, Oscar Morales. The appeals are checked for completeness, and students are contacted if any information is missing. If a student's appeal does not contain supporting documentation from a third party, the student is contacted and the appeal will not be sent to committee without necessary documents.

## Regaining Eligibility

### Policies

A student may regain eligibility by meeting SAP qualitative and quantitative standards:

- Successful completion of 75% of all credits attempted;
- Minimum grade point average as follows:
  - Undergraduate: 2.00 Cumulative GPA
  - Graduate: 3.00 Cumulative GPA
- Requirements for degree must be completed within a specified time frame: 180 credits attempted for undergraduates and 54 credits attempted for graduates.

Students are measured annually and once their calculations fall within acceptable ranges they are once again eligible to receive aid. Also, students who are on an academic plan or who have had appeals denied are reviewed at the end of each semester to see if they are meeting SAP guidelines. If they fall within acceptable ranges the academic plan is cancelled and they are again meeting SAP.

### Procedures

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid runs a program that measures SAP in PeopleSoft. The PeopleSoft system is integrated, so the program evaluates all qualitative and quantitative measures for a student's academic career. Students who are meeting all standards are set to "Meets SAP." Students who are on academic plans or who have appeals denied are measured manually at the end of each semester to see if they are meeting SAP per the qualitative and quantitative measurements.

Students who have regained eligibility are notified by letter and email.

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