

Section 12: SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

12.1 Process Overview & Responsibilities

Resources: [668.16\(e\)](#), [668.32\(f\)](#), [2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [668.34 2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Financial Aid is defined as all federally funded aid programs, state-funded programs, institutional, and outside aid. To receive financial aid, students must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Federal regulations require each educational institution define a uniform SAP policy for all financial aid applicants. This policy must have both quantitative (completion rate) and qualitative (grade point average) components and must be at least as restrictive as the institutional academic standing policy. The policy must measure a student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Registrar's Office, Office of Student Retention, and Graduate School evaluates SAP on all students each semester. If a student is not meeting SAP, future financial aid is cancelled, and the student's academic and SAP standing is updated accordingly. Students can view their academic and SAP standing in myWCU. Students can appeal their academic and SAP standing. If a student submits an appeal and it is approved by the Academic Action Committee, the student must sign an Academic Action Plan. Completed undergraduate Academic Action Plans are received by the Office of Student Retention, and appropriate departments (including Financial Aid) are sent a copy. Completed graduate and Maximum Time Frame Action Plans are received by the Financial Aid Office. The plans are saved in OnBase and the student's academic standing is updated in Banner to reflect they have been reinstated with an Academic Action Plan. If a student's financial aid offer was cancelled, they will be offered eligible financial aid. If a student has outstanding requirements, those requirements will now display in myWCU.

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.2 Same as or Stricter Than

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(1\)](#), [668.42\(c\)\(2\)](#), [2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

The SAP policy is the same as or stricter than the school's standard for students enrolled in the same educational program who are not receiving Title IV aid. This policy must have both quantitative (completion rate) and qualitative (GPA) components and must be at least as restrictive as the institutional academic standing policy. The policy must measure a student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative GPA, and maximum time frame. The SAP policy is reviewed each year. The university Academic Standing Policy for undergraduates can be on the [Online Catalog](#). The university academic standing policy for graduate can be found on the [Online Catalog](#).

The university SAP Policy for undergraduates and graduates can be found on the [Financial Aid Office](#) website.

Procedure

The Title IV SAP policy is reviewed annually by the Director, Associate Director, Senior Assistant Director, and Assistant Director of Financial Aid to ensure it meets all federal requirements. The Assistant Director will verify the policy and make any necessary changes. If the school changes its academic policy, the Director of Financial Aid will be notified.

Last Updated: November 13, 2023

12.3 Categories of Students

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(2\), 2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Office of Student Retention and Registrar's Office, evaluates SAP on all financial aid recipients, undergraduate and graduate students, after each semester. The process measures each student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame.

The university Academic Standing Policy for undergraduates can be on the [Online Catalog](#). The university Academic Standing Policy for graduates can be found on the [Online Catalog](#).

Procedure

The SAP status of all undergraduate students is monitored by the Office of Student Retention. The SAP status of graduate students is monitored by the Financial Aid Office and Graduate School. Maximum timeframe is monitored by the Financial Aid Office.

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.4 Qualitative Measures

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(6\)](#), [668.34\(a\)\(4\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#), [ED Program Integrity Q&A —Satisfactory Academic Progress, R-Q2/R-A2](#), [668.34\(a\)\(11\)](#)

Policy

Undergraduate

All undergraduate students are expected to earn and maintain a GPA of 2.0 each semester (and cumulatively) and to successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of their attempted WCU semester hours and attempted overall WCU hours. Successful completion of a course means that a student must earn credit for the course with a grade other than I, IP, F, U, NC, or W. A student's academic standing is measured by comparing the number of attempted semester credit hours with the semester credit hours earned at Western Carolina University. This includes any course for which the student remained enrolled past the drop/add period.

The following are considered when evaluating a student's academic standing:

- All transfer hours count when calculating maximum timeframe.
- Withdrawals, incompletes, and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Audited courses are not considered credits attempted or earned.
- If financial aid is awarded under the basis of a consortium agreement, those transfer hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Students enrolled in eligible teacher certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the program. These hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- If financial aid is awarded for a study abroad program, those hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

- Repeated courses are counted in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

The overall 2.0 GPA requirement that a student must have a “C” average or it’s equivalent by the end of their second academic year is achieved by maintaining a GPA of a 2.0 each semester (and cumulatively).

Graduate

All graduate students are expected to maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 each semester (and cumulatively) and to successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of their attempted hours WCU semester hours and attempted overall WCU hours, whether the hours are undergraduate or graduate level. Successful completion of a course means that a student must earn credit for the course with a grade other than I, F, U, NC, or W. A student’s academic standing is measured by comparing the number of attempted semester credit hours with the semester credit hours earned at Western Carolina University. This includes any course for which the student remained enrolled past the drop/add period.

The following are considered when evaluating a student’s SAP:

- All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame.
- Withdrawals, incompletes, and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Audited courses are not considered credits attempted or earned.
- If financial aid is awarded under the basis of a consortium agreement, those transfer hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Students enrolled in eligible teach certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the program. These hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- If financial aid is awarded for a study abroad program, those hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Repeated courses are counted in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

Procedure

If an undergraduate or graduate student is not meeting the qualitative standards their electronic record is updated with the appropriate SAP status and applicable future financial aid is updated appropriately (i.e. Title IV aid is cancelled). Qualitative progress is measured at the end of each semester by the Financial Aid Office.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Office of Student Retention and Registrar's Office, assess SAP on all undergraduate students after each semester. If a student is not meeting SAP, their status is updated in ROASTAT and they are informed by the Office of Student Retention. The Office of Student Retention provides information regarding the appeal process.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Graduate School assess SAP on all graduate students after each semester. If a student is not meeting SAP, their status is updated in ROASTAT. Graduate students can view their academic standing in their myWCU account.

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.5 Quantitative Measures

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(6\)](#), [668.34\(b\)](#), [Maximum timeframe](#), [668.34\(a\)\(5\)](#), [668.34\(a\)\(5\)\(ii\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#), [668.34\(a\)\(11\)](#), [Federal Register, 9/2/20, p. 54742](#), [Electronic Announcement, 1/15/21 \(OPE Announcements-21-05\)](#), [Electronic Announcement, 5/15/20](#), [Electronic Announcement, 8/21/20](#)

The quantitative measure of SAP includes two parts. The first part is a maximum time frame, measured by attempted credit hours or clock hours, by which a student must complete an academic program. The second part includes determining whether a student in a standard or nonstandard term, non-subscription-based program is on pace to complete the academic program within that set maximum time frame. As soon as it becomes apparent a student will be unable to complete his or her academic program within the maximum time frame, either by falling below the pace standard or when it becomes mathematically impossible to complete their program within the maximum time frame, the student is ineligible for Title IV aid.

Procedures

If an undergraduate or graduate student is not meeting the quantitative standards their electronic record is updated with the appropriate SAP status and applicable future financial aid is updated appropriately (i.e. Title IV aid is cancelled). Quantitative progress is measured at the end of each semester by the Financial Aid Office.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Office of Student Retention and Registrar's Office, assess SAP on all undergraduate students after each semester. This quantitative evaluation is an automated process to calculate student's pace. If a student is not meeting pace, their status is updated in ROASTAT, and they are informed by the Office of Student Retention. If a student is not meeting maximum time frame, their status is updated in ROASTAT, and they are informed through their myWCU account. The Office of Student

Retention provides information regarding the appeal process for pace. The Financial Aid Office provides information regarding the appeal process for maximum time frame.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Graduate School assess SAP on all graduate students after each semester. This quantitative evaluation is an automated process to calculate student's pace. If a student is not meeting pace and maximum time frame, their status is updated in ROASTAT, and they are informed by the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office provides information regarding the status and appeal process for maximum time frame. If a student is not meeting SAP, their status is updated in ROASTAT. Graduate students can view their academic standing in their myWCU account.

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.5.1 Maximum Time Frame

Resources: [668.34\(b\), Maximum timeframe, 2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

A student cannot receive federal or state financial aid funding after they have attempted 150% of hours required to earn a degree. For example, students in programs requiring 120 hours earned for graduation will be eligible for financial aid during the first 180 attempted hours as an undergraduate. All attempted hours are counted (including transfer hours and part-time enrollment, whether financial aid was received or not, or the coursework was successfully completed). Occasionally, a student will complete all requirements for a degree but will continue taking courses without accepting the degree. Once a student has reached or exceeded the 150% maximum time frame, or it is mathematically impossible for them to complete their degree within the maximum timeframe limitation, they become ineligible for future Title IV and state financial aid.

Procedure

Western Carolina will determine that the student has earned their degree at the point the student has met all requirements according to their degree audit. This allows for dual degrees, change of degree and minors, if the student has not exceeded their maximum time frame overall. Once a student has met all degree requirements for their first bachelor's degree, most grant (i.e. Pell Grant) eligibility ends. The student will continue to be eligible for federal student loans and institutional aid.

- Degree Audits

- A degree audit will be used to determine whether a student has met degree requirements and is eligible to graduate based upon their declared program of study.
- Double majors
 - Students often have questions about the ability to receive federal financial aid for double/dual majors. A major consists of a group of prescribed and elective courses (27-64 hours) providing breadth and depth in an academic discipline. A double major, also referred to as a second major or dual major, is awarded when a student completes appropriate coursework specified in the major component of a degree program in addition to the work done for their primary major and degree. Some degree programs require double majors due to the number of hours in the primary major (If the major component of a degree program is between 30-40 hours, a minor or second major is required). In determining whether a student is eligible for federal financial aid for double/dual majors, the following question must be answered: **Does the degree program require a double major or minor? If a student's degree program requires a double major or minor, they cannot graduate until the double major or minor has been completed.**
 1. If the degree program **DOES** require a double major or minor, the student is allowed up to the 150% timeframe to complete both degrees. However, students can only be funded for the classes that are required for the double major or minor.
*example: if both degrees require 120 hours, the student can be funded up to 180 hours to complete both programs: 120 hours x 150%=180 hours. If one degree requires 120 hours and the other requires 128 hours, the student can be funded up to 192 hours to complete both programs: 128 hours x 150%=192 hours.
 2. If the degree program **DOES NOT** require a double major or minor, a student is allowed up to 150% timeframe to complete one degree. Student can only be funded for the classes that are required for one degree. If a student continues to take courses after one degree is completed, the student will only be eligible for federal student loans.

Transfer Student Maximum Time Frame

A student with transfer hours cannot receive any financial aid after they have attempted 150% of the hours required to earn a degree. All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame. If transfer hours, including Early College hours, exceed 90, students may request a review of their status through the Financial Aid Office. In this case, the student must submit a Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal for 150% maximum time frame. The Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee will review the appeal along with a current degree audit to determine what courses a student still needs to degree completion.

Second Undergraduate Student Maximum Time Frame

A student pursuing a **second** undergraduate degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the second degree.

Graduate

A student pursuing a graduate or doctoral degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the graduate or doctoral degree.

The Financial Aid Office monitors maximum time frame calculations and will consult with the Advising Office and Graduate School should additional information be needed.

Last Updated: February 9, 2024

12.5.2 Pace

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(6\)](#), [ED Program Integrity Q&A—Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP-Q3/SAP-A3, SAP-Q4/SAP-A4, 668.34\(a\)\(5\), 668.34\(a\)\(5\)\(ii\), 2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023, Federal Register, 9/2/20, p. 54742](#)

Policy

Undergraduate

A student's pace is measured by comparing the number of institutional attempted credit hours with the institutional credit hours earned. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the drop/add period. An undergraduate student must successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of all WCU attempted semester hours and overall hours. Pace is measured at the conclusion of each semester.

Graduate

A graduate student must successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of all WCU attempted hours, regardless of whether the hours attempted are the undergraduate or graduate level, to maintain SAP.

Procedure

Resources: [Electronic Announcement, 8/21/20](#), [Electronic Announcement, 5/15/20](#), [Electronic Announcement, 1/15/21 \(OPE Announcements-21-05\)](#)

Pace calculation is automated through Banner and evaluated at the end of each semester. The student's academic standing is updated and can be viewed on the ROASTAT Banner screen.

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.6 Evaluation Periods

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(3\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

To ensure all financial aid recipients are progressing both quantitatively and qualitatively, the Financial Aid Office runs SAP on all financial aid recipients, undergraduate and graduate students, after each semester. There are no programs with different frequencies of evaluation.

Procedure

SAP for all programs will be evaluated at the end of each semester (payment period).

Last Updated: November 10, 2023

12.6.1 Financial Aid Warning

Resources: [668.34\(b\)](#), [Financial aid warning](#), [668.34\(a\)\(8\)\(i\)](#), [668.34\(c\)\(1\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#), [668.34\(c\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)

Policy

Undergraduate

If a student failed to meet either the pace component, GPA component, or both, after a semester (payment period) they will be placed on financial aid warning for the following semester. An automated process is used to place students on Academic Warning. At the end of the term of academic warning, students must achieve all the following to regain good academic standing:

- Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester.

- Earn an overall 67% completion rate on all WCU hours attempted.
- Raise the cumulative GPA to good standing (2.0)

Or achieve all of the following:

- Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester.
- Earn an overall 67% completion rate on all WCU hours attempted.
- Earn a minimum 2.30 term GPA during the warning term.

Failure to achieve one of the above criteria will result in academic suspension.

Graduate

Graduate students are not placed on Academic Warning. A graduate student must successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of all WCU attempted semester hours, regardless of whether the hours attempted are at the undergraduate or graduate level, to maintain SAP. Graduate students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0, or as defined by the Graduate School.

Procedure

The Academic Warning calculation is automated through Banner and evaluated at the end of each semester. The student's academic standing is updated and can be viewed on the ROASTAT Banner screen.

Undergraduate students are informed by the Office of Student Retention that they have been placed on Academic Warning. Graduate students can view their academic standing in their myWCU account.

Last Updated: November 13, 2023

12.6.2 Financial Aid Probation

Policies

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(8\)\(ii\)](#), [668.34\(b\)](#), [Financial aid probation](#), [668.34\(c\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#), [668.34\(c\)\(3\)](#), [668.34\(c\)\(4\)](#), [668.34\(d\)\(2\)](#)

Appeals for reinstatement without having to serve a specified period of suspension are approved or denied by the Academic and Admission Appeals Board (referred to here as "Board"). The Board's decision is final and is based upon the student's letter of appeal, which should include the following:

- The reason for the student's poor academic performance.

- Documentation of extenuating circumstances.
- A plan for rectifying the academic performance and raising the GPA to acceptable standards.

Requests for reinstatement must be submitted to the Office of Retention by the deadline stated in the academic suspension notification letter, which also includes instructions for completing the request for reinstatement. Students whose appeal for reinstatement is approved will be designated as “Suspended/Reinstated” on their academic record and allowed to continue their enrollment under an Academic Action Plan.

Readmission after Suspension. Students who have been out the required amount of time may apply for readmission in the same manner as other former students and must submit a Statement of Academic Intent.

When students return from Suspension with a successful appeal, they are placed on an Academic Action Plan (AAP). Failure to meet the terms of the AAP will result in Academic Dismissal from the university.

In addition to the above criteria, first-semester freshmen and new transfer students who are placed on Academic Warning must meet specific guidelines in order to continue enrollment in the University. First-semester freshman and new transfers who earn a cumulative GPA within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their first semester may return to the University for their second semester only if they choose to participate in the Learning Contract program and LC 101.

Procedure

Undergraduate students are informed by the Office of Student Retention that they have been placed on Academic Probation or Academic Action Plan. Graduate students can view their academic standing in their myWCU account.

If a student appeals for reinstatement and the appeal is approved, the student will be required to sign an Academic Action Plan (AAP). For campus-based undergraduate students, the Office of Student Retention sends the AAP to the student for completion. For undergraduate distance education students, the AAP is sent by the Office of Educational Outreach. Completed action plans are then forwarded to the Director and Senior Assistant Director of Financial aid for processing in Banner. The AAP is updated as complete on RRAAREQ. The student’s academic standing is updated to “AP” on ROASTAT. The tracking group is updated, and their financial aid is reevaluated and reinstated accordingly.

Undergraduate students are informed by the Office of Student Retention that they have been placed on Academic Probation or Academic Action Plan. Graduate students can view

their academic standing in their myWCU account. A graduate student approved for an AAP, will sign the form electronically through myWCU.

Last Updated: November 13, 2023

12.6.3 Academic Dismissal

Undergraduate

Students who have served a semester of *suspension* and who, upon return, fail to meet the terms of their Academic Action Plan, or who fail to meet the 2.00 cumulative GPA and 67% successful completion rate, will be dismissed from the university. Students who are *dismissed* must sit out for two years before they will be eligible to reapply for future enrollment at Western Carolina University.

Graduate

Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, or as defined by the Graduate School. The Graduate School notifies the Financial Aid Office by email if a student is dismissed.

12.6.4 Learning Contract

Undergraduate

Students who are given a Learning Contract option and who choose not to participate in the Learning Contract program are barred for one term from continuing enrollment in the University. If readmitted after a lapse in enrollment, students are reminded that they will return to Western Carolina University under the general guidelines for academic warning.

The Learning Contract Program specifies that these students work closely with an academic advisor. The student and advisor will discuss academic performance issues, set realistic goals, and make plans to reach those goals, including linking students with the campus resources that can help them succeed. Follow-up contacts will occur throughout the semester.

When appropriate, students should use the University's grade replacement policy to improve their academic standing (the grade-replacement policy does not apply to the First-Year Seminar). Additionally, these students must successfully complete all the conditions of their Learning Contract. Failure to meet these criteria will result in academic suspension.

Graduate

Graduate students do not have a Learning Contract Program. Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, or as defined by the Graduate School. The

Graduate School notifies the Financial Aid Office by email if a student is suspended or dismissed.

Last updated: July 22, 2022

12.7 Appeals

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(9\)](#), [668.34\(b\)](#), [Appeal, Electronic Announcement, 3/5/20, 2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#), [668.34\(c\)\(3\)\(ii\)](#), [\(iii\)](#), [668.42\(c\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#), [668.34\(d\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#), [\(iii\)](#)

Policy

Students are allowed to appeal any and all determinations that they are not making SAP. This includes qualitative, quantitative, and maximum timeframe standards. The deadlines for the appeal are included in the notice from the Office of Student Retention.

Undergraduate

Appeals for reinstatement without having to serve a specified period of suspension are approved or denied by the Academic and Admission Appeals Board (referred to here as “Board”). The Board’s decision is final and is based upon the student’s letter of appeal, which should include the following:

- The reason for the student’s poor academic performance.
- Documentation of extenuating circumstances.
- A plan for rectifying the academic performance and raising the GPA to acceptable standards.

Requests for reinstatement must be submitted to the Office of Retention by the deadline stated in the academic suspension notification letter, which also includes instructions for completing the request for reinstatement. Students whose appeal for reinstatement is approved will be designated as “Suspended/Reinstated” on their academic record and allowed to continue their enrollment under an Academic Action Plan. Students who have been out the required amount of time may apply for readmission in the same manner as other former students and must submit a Statement of Academic Intent.

Graduate

Students who receive a notice of ineligibility for federal aid based on the SAP guidelines may submit a signed Graduate Student Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal. This appeal must include all necessary documentation to support the

circumstances described in the statement of academic intent and financial aid appeal and evidence that circumstances have been resolved.

Events/circumstances that merit an appeal of financial aid eligibility include, but are not limited to:

- Student suffered a personal illness or injury (excluding chronic conditions-students are responsible for properly balancing schoolwork with known chronic conditions) or personal family emergency.
- Student suffered a death in their immediate family. Immediate family is defined as parents, grandparents, and siblings for a dependent student and includes spouses and children for an independent student.
- Student has been absent from Western Carolina University for more than one semester and can document that the time away from the university was spent in pursuit of activities that should make the student better prepared to succeed academically.
- Student was the victim of a natural disaster that caused them to miss school for at least five consecutive days.

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee will consider the appeal, along with a current degree audit, and render a decision, which will be conveyed to the student through myWCU.

Students seeking to reestablish financial aid eligibility remain ineligible until the appeal process is complete, and a decision has been made by the Financial Aid Office Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee. Students should be prepared to pay tuition, fees, and other educational expenses.

Procedure

Undergraduate

Undergraduate students appeal through the Office of Student Retention. The Academic Appeals Committee meets to approve or deny these appeals based on an anonymous majority vote system. The Director, Senior Assistant Director, and an Assistant Director of Financial Aid serve on the appeals committee along with other appointed campus partners. Appeals instructions are emailed to the student and appeals are completed through a Dynamic Form. If the student's appeal is approved, they are notified by the Office of Student Retention to complete an Academic Action Plan. Completed Action Plans are sent to the Senior Assistant Director of Financial Aid and their financial aid is reevaluated and reinstated accordingly. If the appeal is denied, students are notified by the Office of Student Retention.

Graduate

Graduate students appeal through the Financial Aid Office SAP committee. The committee consists of the Director, Senior Assistant Director, and an Assistant Director of Financial Aid. Appeals are available to students and completed through a Dynamic Form. If the student's appeal is approved, they are notified by the Financial Aid Office to complete an Academic Action Plan. The Senior Assistant Director receives the completed action plan, and the student's financial aid is reevaluated and reinstated accordingly.

Maximum Time Frame Appeal

Appeals are available to students and completed through a Dynamic Form. Students who successfully appeal determinations based on maximum time frame will be permitted an extension of the maximum time frame up to a maximum of one or two semesters. Exceptions for a longer extension may be considered based on the circumstances of the individual student. If the student's appeal is approved, they are notified by the Financial Aid Office to complete an Academic Action Plan through myWCU. The Senior Assistant Director receives the completed action plan, and the student's financial aid is reevaluated and reinstated accordingly.

Last Updated: November 13, 2023

12.7.1 Documentation

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(9\)\(iii\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

Students are required to submit documentation and information explaining why they failed to meet SAP standards and what has changed in their situation that will allow them to be making SAP by the next evaluation. Additionally, third parties may be used to document the mitigating circumstances surrounding a SAP appeal. Acceptable documentation examples include:

- Letter from physician or copies of official doctor or hospital diagnosis, treatment, dates you were ill or hospitalized and your ability to return to school.
- Copies of death certificates, obituaries, or other official documents to confirm deaths of immediate family members.
- Copies of academic transcripts and/or documentation of employment that prepared you to succeed academically.
- Letter from FEMA or other agency documenting the situation if the student was a victim of a natural disaster

Procedure

Appeals are documented and tracked through Dynamic Forms and OnBase. The Office of Student Retention manages and tracks undergraduate appeals. All other appeals are managed in the Financial Aid Office. If an appeal is received without proper documentation, the appropriate office will contact the student via email and myWCU for more information. If documentation is submitted without an appeal, the appropriate office will contact the student for more information. The Financial Aid Office documents the result of the appeal in Banner and keeps appropriate records in OnBase.

12.7.2 Academic Plans

Resources: [668.34\(c\)\(3\)\(iii\)\(B\)](#), [ED Program Integrity Q&A—Satisfactory Academic Progress, ACP-Q1/ACP-A1, ACP-Q3/ACP-A3, ACP-Q4/ACP-A4](#), [668.34\(d\)\(2\)\(iii\)\(B\)](#), [Federal Register, 10/29/10, p. 66886](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

Undergraduate

When a student who does not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards appeals and is approved, an Academic Action Plan (AAP) is developed. The AAP is created on a student-by-student basis, and designed in such a way that, if followed, the student will continue to meet academic standing requirements and financial aid eligibility guidelines. Each student must pass and earn 67% of all WCU attempted hours with a 2.3 semester GPA or an overall 2.0 GPA. Action plans are created between the student and the Office of Student Retention.

Graduate

Graduate students who have received an approved appeal will be placed on an AAP. The SAP standards are outlined in the AAP, and the student is responsible for meeting the standards by the next review cycle. Plans are reviewed at the end of each semester. Plans for graduate students are made through the Financial Aid Office.

Procedure

Undergraduate

If a student submits an appeal and is approved by the Academic Action Committee, the Financial Aid Office is notified by email regarding the AAP. Plans are reviewed at the end of each semester by the Office of Student Retention. If a student meets the terms of their AAP, but does not meet regular academic standards, the AAP continues to the next semester. If

the student does not meet the terms of the AAP and does not meet regular academic standards, the student is dismissed and notified by the Office of Student Retention by email.

Graduate

As part of each semester review, if a student meets the terms of their AAP, but does not meet regular academic standards, the Plan continues to the next semester. If the student does not meet the terms of the AAP, the student is denied financial aid for the next semester. Students are notified by the Financial Aid Office through their myWCU account.

Last updated: November 14, 2023

12.8 Regaining Eligibility

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(9\)\(i\)](#), [668.34\(a\)\(10\)](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

Undergraduate

Student grades will be reviewed at the completion of each semester to determine eligibility for the upcoming semester. If a student has a break in enrollment or is suspended, SAP will be reviewed at the end of the semester for which the break in enrollment occurred. Students who are currently under an Academic Action Plan (AAP) will continue to be reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who fail to meet the terms of their AAP will be ineligible for future aid after the term in which they break the AAP, unless they meet regular SAP guidelines. Any student who does not meet the academic standing guidelines at the time of review will be ineligible for federal financial aid for the upcoming semester and will be notified of their ineligibility. Each student is responsible for knowing their own status. Students may view their SAP status via myWCU. If a student fails to meet the terms of their AAP, they have the option to submit an appeal.

Graduate

Student grades will be reviewed at the completion of each semester to determine eligibility for the upcoming semester. Students who fail to meet the terms of their AAP will be ineligible for further aid unless they meet regular satisfactory academic progress guidelines. If a student fails to meet the terms of their AAP, they do have the option of submitting an appeal.

Procedure

A student may regain eligibility for financial aid after any academic term by earning the number of credit hours for which they are deficient or improving the WCU GPA without financial aid. These hours must be earned at Western Carolina University. Hours and GPA earned at another institution will not transfer towards meeting satisfactory academic progress.

Last updated: November 14, 2023

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

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(6\), 2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Students can view the school's definition of nonpunitive grades, repeated courses, audited courses, pass/fail courses, and incompletes in the [Online Catalog](#).

Incomplete. The instructor may grant a student an "I" grade for work not completed if the student has a reasonable prospect of passing the course by making up the work missed and if the incompleteness is unavoidable and not caused by the student's negligence. All incomplete grades must be removed and a grade of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, S, or U must be submitted to the Registrar. The work must be made up and a grade received by the Registrar by the last day of classes of the next regular semester (excluding summer), or the grade will become an F. A student may not re-register for the course until the I is removed or changed to an F. The instructor is required to list the conditions to remove the I and send the information to the department head. If the instructor is no longer employed by the university, the department head will remove the I upon completion of the stated requirements. In extenuating circumstances, students should refer to the [Online Catalog](#).

In Progress. An IP (In-Progress) is assigned only in courses that have been approved for IP grading. An IP grade indicates that a grade is pending until the sequence of courses is completed. A grade of IP is appropriate as long as work remains in progress. Once work is complete, the IP grade will be replaced with an evaluative grade appropriate for the course. If a student changes programs, changes options within a program and that credit is no longer needed to complete program requirements, or if the student ceases enrollment and the work is not completed within a year, an evaluative grade will not be issued. The IP grade will be administratively replaced with NG (No-Grade) to indicate that work is no longer in progress.

Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory. S/U grading is limited to courses in which standard or traditional grading is rendered difficult by the nature and purpose of the material. There is no limit on the credit hours a student may earn in S/U grades, but not all courses are approved for S/U grading. S/U grades may not be awarded in courses unless specified in the course descriptions in the catalog and in the master class schedule. S and U are the only grades that can be assigned in these courses. Neither S nor U is used in calculating the GPA, but an S allows hours of credit while a U does not.

Audit. When space is available, a registered student may audit a course with the approval of the advisor, the instructor, and the head of the department offering the course. To enroll, the student must submit a completed course audit form. Changing from audit to credit, or the reverse, is permitted only during the regular schedule adjustment period. No credit is earned for auditing, but the audited course must not add hours in excess of the student's maximum load. An audited class will be noted on the student's transcript. Audit courses do not count toward the twelve hours required for full-time enrollment. Participation in class activities is optional; students should negotiate such conditions with the instructor before seeking permission to audit. Tuition and fees for audited courses are determined by the courses' hour value.

Course Withdrawals: Sometimes, students may find it necessary or advisable to withdraw from one or more courses during a term. After consultation with their academic advisor and the instructor of the course, students may withdraw from any course before one half of the term has expired. Course withdrawals must be completed in the student portal (myWCU). Students are not permitted to withdraw from courses after the withdrawal deadline published by the Registrar's Office. Course withdrawals affect satisfactory academic progress, which also affects academic standing. Courses from which students withdraw do not count toward the 12 hours required for full-time enrollment, and no refund is given for courses from which students withdraw. Students may withdraw from a maximum of 16 hours of courses during their career at Western Carolina University and receive a grade of W. Any withdrawal beyond the limit will result in a Withdrew-Failing (WF) which will affect the semester and cumulative GPA as if it were an F.

Grade Replacements and Repeat Courses: Students may repeat a maximum of 16 credit hours. When a student repeats a course, only the most recent grade will be used in the calculation of the student's grade point average and counted in the hours toward graduation. However, all grades shall remain on the student's transcript.

Exceptions:

1. The First-Year Seminar may not be repeated.
2. Courses available for re-enrollment for additional credit are not counted as repeats unless the student declares a repeat or exceeds the number of times for which credit can be earned in the course.
3. Some academic programs may have policies that further regulate the number of repeats. Students should check with their advisors about additional regulations.

The 16-credit-hour limit of the repeat/grade replacement policy may be appealed by the student in writing to the student’s advisor, department head or program director, and Dean.

Note:

- Any courses elected for repeat must be taken and repeated at WCU. Grades earned elsewhere cannot be used to replace grades earned at WCU.
- Students may not repeat courses for which they have already earned credit, without permission from their advisor. A permit is required to enable registration. If a faculty advisor approves the repeat permit, the faculty advisor can call or email the department head to have the permit processed so the student can enroll.
- All repeats, except for re-enrollment for additional credit courses, result in a mandatory grade replacement (Regardless of the grade earned, the grade earned in the last course taken will replace the grade of the previous course).
- After degree conferral, grades may not be replaced or forgiven.

Financial Aid and Repeated Coursework:

Per the [Department of Education \(ED\)](#), schools “may include any repetition of the program in a student’s enrollment status for a term as long as the student has never passed the course. If the student passes the course, the school may include one repetition after passing the course. Any second or subsequent repetition of the passed course may not be included in the student’s enrollment status for purposes of the Title IV, HEA, programs.”

Undergraduate

Western Carolina University uses a +/- grading system. The following chart provides the quality points earned with each grade.

Grade	Interpretation	Quality Points per Semester Hour
A+	Excellent	4.0
A	Excellent	4.0
A-		3.67
B+		3.33
B	Good	3.0
B-		2.67
C+		2.33
C	Satisfactory	2.0
C-		1.67
D+		1.33
D	Poor	1.0
D-		.67
F	Failure	0

WF	Withdrew/Failing	0
I	Incomplete	0
IP	In Progress	0
S	Satisfactory	0
U	Unsatisfactory	0
W	Withdrawal	0
AU	Audit	0
NC	No Credit	0

Graduate

Western Carolina University uses a +/- grading system. The following chart provides the quality points earned with each grade.

Grade	Interpretation	Quality Points per Semester Hour
A	Superior	4
B	Good	3
C	Passing	2
F	Failure	0
I	Incomplete	0
IP	In Progress	0
S	Satisfactory	0
U	Unsatisfactory	0
W	Withdrawal	0
AU	Audit	0

Procedure

Through the processes included in [Failed to Earn a Passing Grade](#), Financial Aid monitors and tracks students who will need aid adjustments due to nonpunitive grades.

Last updated: November 14, 2023

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

Resources: [668.34\(a\)\(5\)\(ii\)](#), [2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#), [668.20](#), [ED Program Integrity Q&A—Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP-Q3/SAP-A3, SAP-Q4/SAP-A4](#)

Western Carolina University does not offer financial aid to students in remedial, enrichment and/or English as a Second Language courses. To qualify for financial aid, a student must be degree-seeking and meet all eligibility requirements noted in [Section 3.2](#).

Last updated: November 10, 2023

12.11 Treatment of Consortium, Change of Major, Second Degree, & Second Major Courses

Resources: [ED Program Integrity Q&A—Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP-Q5/SAP-A5, 2022-23 FSA Handbook, Vol. 2, Ch. 3, August 2022](#)

Policy

Consortium Agreement

A consortium agreement is a written agreement between two schools that allows a student to continue to receive financial aid while studying at a school other than their home school (A home school is the one that will grant the student a degree). Therefore, under a consortium or contractual agreement (including study abroad), the home school must give credit for course(s) taken at the host school on the same basis as if it was providing the education itself. The assumption of this agreement is that the host school's academic standards are equivalent to its own and a completely acceptable substitute for its own instruction.

- Consortium agreements are used during the regular school year as well as summer for distance students only. An exception may be used for a student who needs a course to graduate, and the course is not offered at Western Carolina University in their graduating semester.
- Students must receive a passing grade in consortium hours. Even though the grades are not counted towards the GPA, the hours must be used in calculating the quantitative component of the student's Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- A consortium agreement can apply to all financial aid funds, if the courses are applicable to the student's degree or certificate program.
- A consortium agreement can be an agreement for each student, a separate agreement with each host school, or a blanket agreement with a group of schools. The home school is responsible for disbursing funds and maintaining information on the student's eligibility, how the award is calculated, what money is disbursed, and documentation from other schools. Any school paying financial aid funds is responsible for returning any funds when necessary.

Change of Major

If a student changes majors, the overall attempted hours cannot exceed the 150% maximum time frame. Change of majors are updated in Banner.

Second Degree

A student pursuing a **second** undergraduate degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the second degree.

Double Majors

[Refer to Section 12.5.1.](#)

Procedure

At the end of the semester that a student is in a consortium agreement, they must submit proof of grades at the host school to the Financial Aid Office and Registrar's Office. Failure to submit proof of grades will prevent the student from receiving financial aid for future semesters. Change of major, second degree, and double majors are monitored through the [Maximum Time Frame process](#).

Last updated: November 10, 2023

12.12 Completion of Degree Requirements

Resources: [2023-24 FSA Handbook, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, February 2023](#)

Policy

Students can only receive financial aid for the courses needed to complete their degree. If a student has met all degree requirements and continues taking classes, the student is pursuing a second degree and is only eligible for federal student loans.

Procedure

To determine eligibility, the Financial Aid Office works with the Registrar's Office to identify students who are enrolled in courses that are not required for their degree.

Last Updated: November 14, 2023

12.13 Notices

Resources: [668.16\(e\)](#), [668.42\(c\)\(2\)](#)

Policy

The university Academic Standing Policy for undergraduate students can be found under the [Online Catalog](#). The university Academic Regulation for graduate students can be found under the [Online Catalog](#). Each academic year, the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is reviewed and updated by the Financial Aid Office, Office of Student Retention, Advising Center, Registrar's Office, and Graduate School.

Procedure

The University Satisfactory Progress Policy for undergraduates and graduates can be found on the [Financial Aid Office website](#).

Last updated: November 14, 2023