



## Southern University and A & M College Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### 2007-2008 Satisfactory Academic Progress

#### Introduction

Financial aid recipients are expected to make reasonable progress as a condition of receiving and continuing to receive student financial aid. Student progress is assessed according to qualitative and quantitative measures. The qualitative measure (grades) is very similar to the Academic Progress standard applied to all SU students. The quantitative measure (number of credit hours successfully completed) is used to monitor progress toward degree completion. When these measures are applied, federal regulations require that the student's entire academic history is considered. This includes semesters or terms during which the student did not receive student financial aid. In response to requirements governing these programs, the University has developed this policy to monitor and determine satisfactory academic progress. This policy is effective for eligibility beginning Fall 2007 and beyond or until further amended.

#### Purpose

The intent of this policy is to 1) ensure that students using the Title IV and State financial aid programs are demonstrating responsible use of public funds in pursuit of their educational goals; and 2) set standards for monitoring all financial aid recipients' course completion rates and cumulative GPA's each year; providing notification to individual students when progress is not met and/or when they have met or exceeded the maximum attempted hour limits allowed.

#### Definitions

1. Attempted course - A course which remains on the student's record after the first fourteen days of the term.
2. Completed course/earned credit - A course in which a grade of A, B, C, D, or P was received. (Note: Withdrawal (W) and (NS), no credits, blank grades, incomplete grades (I), audits (AU), and failures (F) and (FN) are not considered "earned credit" for meeting progress requirements).
3. Financial aid – the Federal Title IV programs and state and institutional programs listed below.
  - Federal Pell Grant
  - Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)
  - National “SMART” Grant
  - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
  - Federal Work Study
  - Federal Perkins Loan
  - Federal Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized)
  - Federal PLUS Loan
  - William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized)
  - William D. Ford Federal Direct PLUS Loan
  - Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)
  - Louisiana Educational Assistance Program (LEAP)
  - Louisiana “Go Grant” Need-Based Assistance Program
  - SU Grant Programs
  - SU Foundation Programs

- SU Scholarships
  - SU Out-of State Fee-Waiver
4. Financial aid probation - A period in which a student who has been identified as not meeting one or more of the standards in this policy may continue to receive financial aid. At the end of the probationary period, a student is expected to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements in order to continue receiving financial aid.
  5. Financial aid termination - The point at which a student is no longer eligible to receive financial aid as defined in this policy.
  6. Incomplete - A grade of "I" received for an attempted course; no credit will be applied until the course is completed.
  7. Maximum timeframe - Time limit set for receipt of financial aid that is specific to a student's program of study. For undergraduate programs, federal law defines this limit as 150% of normal program requirement. This University policy sets specific timeframes for various programs of undergraduate and graduate study.
  8. Quantitative measure - Timeframe for the student to complete their program and a minimum number of credits the student must satisfactorily complete at each increment.
  9. Qualitative - Measurement of a student's academic standing consistent with the requirement for graduation from their program of study. It is required that students who have attended for a period of two academic years of undergraduate study maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).
  10. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) – Maintaining the required cumulative GPA and completion of courses at a rate that meets the standards defined in this policy.
  11. Transfer credit - Course accepted for credit at SU from another institution.

### **Authority**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended and final regulations set by the United States Department of Education (34CFR668.16) require that institutions of higher education establish reasonable standards of satisfactory academic progress as a condition of continuing eligibility for federal aid programs. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as an exemption from the requirements of any other federal or state agency, or other granting or governing authority that apply to a student or to the financial assistance the student receives, nor does this policy limit the authority of the Director of Financial Aid when taking responsible action to eliminate fraud or abuse in these programs.

### **Programs Governed by this Policy**

The Federal Pell Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant, National “SMART” Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Direct and Stafford Loans (includes Federal PLUS loans), Federal Work Study Program, and certain alternative loans for students are governed by this policy.

### **Satisfactory Progress Standards**

To encourage the completion of degree/certificate programs within a reasonable timeframe and to comply with federal and state requirements, financial aid recipients attending Southern University (SU) must maintain satisfactory academic progress as a condition for receiving financial aid. Satisfactory academic progress requires financial aid recipients to do the following:

1. Meet minimum cumulative grade point averages as listed below;
2. Earn credit for a reasonable number of credit hours towards a degree or certificate, measured incrementally;
3. Complete your degree or certificate within the maximum allowable timeframe;

4. Satisfactorily complete at least 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted; and complete courses at an overall rate which will, once again ensure graduation within the maximum allowable timeframe, measured in total cumulative hours attempted.

Financial aid recipients who do not meet these conditions will lose their financial aid eligibility. Also and unless otherwise stated, a student's academic history (including transfer hours applicable towards a program of study at SUBR and in accordance with the university's Transfer Policy) is considered for purposes of this policy regardless of whether or not the student received financial aid at the time the credit hours were completed.

**Minimum Cumulative Standards**

<b>Total Cumulative Hours Attempted</b>	<b>Min. Cum. % Hours Earned</b>	<b>Maintaining Progress</b>	<b>Financial Aid Suspended</b>
<b><u>Undergraduates:</u></b>			
<b><i>Associate Degree</i></b>			
0 - 95 credit hours	67%	2.00 or greater	0.00 - 1.99
96+ Ineligible for Financial Aid			
<b><i>Bachelor's Degree</i></b>			
0 - 29 credit hours	67%	1.51 or greater	0.00 - 1.50
30 - 59 credit hours	67%	1.75 or greater	0.00 - 1.74
60 - 89 credit hours	67%	2.00 or greater	0.00 - 1.99
90 - 195 credit hours	67%	2.00 or greater	0.00 - 1.99
196+ Ineligible for Financial Aid			
<b><i>Teacher's Certification</i></b>			
0 - 45 credit hours	67%	2.50 or greater	0.00 - 2.49
46+ Ineligible for Financial Aid			
<b><u>Graduates:</u></b>			
<b><i>Master's Degree</i></b>			
0 - 58 credit hours	67%	3.00 or greater	0.00 - 2.99
59+ Ineligible for Financial Aid			
<b><i>Doctoral Degree</i></b>			
0 - 60 credit hours	67%	3.00 or greater	0.00 - 2.99
61+ Ineligible for Financial Aid			

\* Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) used for purposes of this policy is calculated by Southern University in accordance with established policy and procedure.

## Maximum Attempted Hours:

Attempted hours are all hours appearing in the transcript which include “W”, “P”, “S”, “U”, “NC”, “FN”, “NS”, and “I” grades. Remedial, repeated, transfer, suspended, and scholastic amnesty hours are also counted as pursued hours.

- **Undergraduate Students:** Students who are enrolled in an eligible undergraduate curriculum must earn the required attempted/earned hour ratio and GPA outlined previously within this policy. These students may receive financial aid for a maximum of 195 attempted hours.

Students who are enrolled in an eligible associate degree curriculum must earn the required attempted/earned hours ratio and GPA as outlined previously within this policy. These students may receive financial aid for a maximum of 95 attempted hours.

- **Additional Degrees:** Students seeking additional degrees beyond the first undergraduate level are limited as follows:

<b>Bachelors.....</b>	<b>45 credit hours beyond prior degree</b>
<b>Masters.....</b>	<b>58 credit hours beyond prior degree</b>
<b>Teacher’s Certification ...</b>	<b>45 credit hours beyond prior degree</b>

**Double Majors:** Students seeking double majors must complete their degree program for the primary major within the limits set for that major. Additional hours will not be allowed for double majors. The student, may however, petition the appeals committee for consideration.

Federal aid cannot be paid while a student is ineligible due to unsatisfactory academic progress. Until an appeal or reinstatement is approved, no federal aid will be credited to a student’s account.

## Minimum Cumulative Credit Hours Completion

Financial aid recipients must satisfactorily complete at least 67% of cumulative credit hours attempted. Grades of A, B, C, D, or P are considered satisfactory. All other grades such as F, FN, NS, W, or I are considered unsatisfactory.

A student who is unable to complete his or her degree program within the applicable timeline may appeal for an additional period of financial aid eligibility in order to complete the degree program. Special consideration will be given to a student whose attempted hours include developmental courses.

## Student Eligibility Considerations

Undergraduate students must be officially admitted to the university as degree seeking or teacher certification. Generally, students who are officially admitted and degree seeking must attempt at least part-time to be fully considered for Title IV aid. Students attending less than half time must be evaluated for financial aid in the Office of Student Financial Aid for any possible awards.

Graduate students must have a degree objective and be admitted into a Graduate program.

NOTE: Students who have been counseled regarding acceptance into a graduate program and are enrolled in required prerequisites but are not yet classified as a graduate student may receive a Stafford loan for **one consecutive year** based on undergraduate loan limits. To be eligible for this exception, the student must be taking classes that are a prerequisite for admission. If the student is only taking courses to

raise their GPA in order to be admitted, he/she would not qualify for loans under this exception.

### **Academic Clemency**

Academic Clemency, which is granted in accordance with University policy, shall be considered when determining a student's satisfactory progress. However, it is the student's responsibility to provide written notification to Appeals Committee regarding the granting of academic clemency.

### **Monitoring Intervals**

Effective Fall 2007, Satisfactory academic progress shall be monitored annually, at the conclusion of each spring semester for the preceding summer/fall/spring semesters or at the time the student is applying for financial aid if a current satisfactory progress assessment is not available. If a student is academically suspended between monitoring periods, the student's eligibility for financial aid will also be suspended and must be reassessed at the time the student is readmitted to the University.

### **Probationary Period**

Effective Fall 2007, students will be placed on a year probationary period (Summer, Fall & Spring), with the exception of students that are academically suspended between monitoring periods, which allows them to continue to receive financial aid while on probation. At the end of the probationary period, the student must meet the SAP requirements on their own in order to continue to receive financial aid. If a student does not meet the SAP requirements, they will have to submit a Financial Aid Appeal for reinstatement consideration for their next enrolled semester/term.

### **Notification of Financial Aid Termination**

The Office of Student Financial Aid will send a termination letter to any student who is no longer eligible for financial aid, due to their failure to meet one or more of the provisions outlined herein. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain current addresses with the Office of the Registrar. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the student to stay informed of the University's SAP standards and to monitor their progress.

### **Appeals**

Students who have been denied financial aid based upon the provisions outlined in this policy have the right to appeal. To initiate a satisfactory academic progress appeal, the student must complete a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form and submit it along with all required supporting documentation to the University's Appeals Committee.

### **Reasons for Appeal**

Under general circumstances a student may appeal his/her financial aid termination for several reasons. All appeals will be considered for the following reasons.

- Change of grades
- Death or serious illness of an immediate family member
- Medical illness or injury to the student or a dependent child (attending physicians' affidavit is required).
- Other causes (i.e. natural disaster, acts of God, or other traumatic life-altering event, etc).
- Exceeding Total Attempted Hours (i.e. change of major or length of academic program).

Appeals must be in writing and submitted within the timelines established by the University's Appeals Committee. All documents and appeal application must be mailed together via certified mail with return receipt requested. Faxes, late, or separated documents will not be accepted.

Decisions concerning SAP appeals are voted on by a committee. **The decision of the committee is final and will not be overturned by ANY University administrative official.** Generally, the committee will notify student of their decision by email within 20 business days of the date your appeal is documented and received by the committee.

### **Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility**

Students who do not maintain satisfactory academic progress shall lose their eligibility for financial aid and may only regain eligibility by eliminating all satisfactory progress deficiencies at their own expense or by appealing their satisfactory academic progress status.

### **Returning and Transfer Students**

Returning and transfer students must be in good academic standing and must have earned 67% of all hours attempted to be eligible to receive financial aid. Academic progress will be monitored using the **Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average** chart previously outlined in this policy.

### **IMPORTANT: (Please Note)**

Students applying for financial assistance must be in compliance with the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) as a condition of initial or continuing eligibility.

- Financial aid will be denied to students who fail to maintain progress under the policy.
- At the end of each spring term, a formal review will be made to ensure compliance with the grade point average, maximum time limit, and minimum hour requirements of this policy. First-time aid applicants who have previously attended SU must also be in compliance with the policy even though aid has not been received during periods of prior attendance.
- Students who fail to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards will be notified by letter of their deficiency.
- It is the responsibility of students who have been notified of a satisfactory progress deficiency to document any corrections to information used to determine their status.
- Any aid released to a student who is subsequently determined to be ineligible to have received funds under the rules for SAP may be rescinded and the student may be billed for all funds disbursed.

### **Promulgation**

This policy will be included in University catalog and other appropriate University publications. The policy, or a summary of its primary features, will be provided to each financial aid recipient.

### **Amendment to the Policy**

This policy will be amended whenever applicable federal or state laws and regulations are changed.

### **Implementation Date**

Implementation of new Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy to be effective for eligibility determinations for Fall 2007 and beyond, unless otherwise amended.