

**2020-2021 Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy  
For Financial Aid Eligibility at Appalachian State University**

In order to be eligible for federal, state, and institutional financial aid, a student must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward completion of a degree or approved certificate program. The following standards and processes govern Appalachian State's SAP policy:

**COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY**

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**Standard 1: Qualitative Standard - Academic Standing (All students)**

Appalachian State's SAP policy for Standard 1 follows the university Academic Standing Policy, which states all students must maintain good academic standing based on the standards prescribed in Appalachian State University's Graduate Bulletin and Undergraduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.appstate.edu/>), as applicable. In doing so, students must meet cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements also prescribed in the appropriate bulletin. (It is important to note that transferred credits do not factor into Standard 1 because Appalachian State does not bring in GPAs for transferred credits). Students who do not meet Appalachian State's standards of progress (e.g., those who are academically suspended) generally are ineligible for financial aid. However, students may appeal ineligibility for financial aid under Standard 1 if suspended and allowed to re-enroll in the term following suspension. Students placed on academic probation are eligible for financial aid provided they meet Standards 2 and 3 below. All grades for attempted credit hours, including incompletes, unsatisfactory, and failing grades, as well as late drops or withdrawals are included in the Standard 1 evaluation; grades for transferred credits are not considered in Standard 1. Grades earned at Appalachian State that have been "forgiven" under one of the academic forgiveness policies must still use the original grade under Standard 1. Repeated coursework follows the guidelines in the appropriate bulletin.

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**Standard 2: Aggregate Standard - Total attempted hours do not exceed 150% of the published length of the degree program**

A student is maintaining SAP if his/her total hours attempted for one or more undergraduate degree(s) or graduate degree(s) will not exceed 150% of hours required for the first undergraduate or graduate degree. (It is important to note that transferred credits do factor into Standard 2; all attempted hours, including transferred and repeated credits, count toward the Standard 2). A student is no longer making SAP under Standard 2 when it is mathematically impossible to complete the degree program within 150% of the published length of the program in credit hours. For example, if an undergraduate degree program requires 120 credit hours, the 150% limit is 180 credit hours; a student in such a program would be considered not meeting SAP Standard 2 once at least 150 credit hours have been attempted. For purposes of this policy, the 150% maximum for a student seeking a second undergraduate degree is 225 credit hours attempted.

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**Standard 3: Quantitative Standard - Must earn at least 67% of total attempted hours at Appalachian State (for degree program)**

All students must successfully complete 67% of their attempted (at Appalachian State) cumulative credit hours at the end of each evaluation period (For example: At the end of spring semester, if a student has attempted 92 credit hours at Appalachian State, the student must have successfully completed 62 of those credit hours at Appalachian in order to meet Standard 3). All attempted versus earned credits at Appalachian State are factored into Standard 3 (e.g., non-credit courses and grades such as F, U, I, or W count as attempted hours but would not count in earned hours); transferred credits are not considered in Standard 3, but repeated courses are counted.

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**STUDENTS READMITTED UNDER APPALACHIAN STATE FORGIVENESS POLICIES**

Students readmitted under the one-year forgiveness policy are not eligible for financial aid, even though they may appear to meet Standard 1 of this SAP policy (per institutional policy, one-year forgiveness students are those who have earned a minimum of 30 semester hours of transferable credit since they last attended Appalachian; in addition, to be readmitted, the grades earned at other postsecondary institutions when combined with the grades earned previously at Appalachian must result in a GPA of at least 2.0). In general, students readmitted under any of Appalachian State's other forgiveness policies (e.g., two- or three-year) are not eligible for financial aid in their first semester/term after readmission. However, students readmitted under any of the forgiveness policies are eligible to appeal for financial aid using the appeal process(es) described below. Keep in mind that federal policy for SAP rules do not allow exclusion of forgiven grades from SAP calculations, even though an institution's academic policy may allow such forgiveness.

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### EVALUATION PERIOD(S)

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The Office of Student Financial Aid evaluates the three standards of SAP at the end of each spring term. The evaluation must be cumulative and include all terms of enrollment at Appalachian State, even if the student does not receive aid in any given term. At the point of evaluation, the student is either making SAP or not making SAP. If making SAP, the student is eligible to receive financial aid for the summer, fall, and spring terms; if not making SAP, the student is ineligible to receive financial aid for the summer, fall, and spring terms, but has the right to appeal this determination using the appeal process(es) outlined in this policy. When a student appeals for financial aid, appeals are reviewed for a single term of enrollment only. If, for example, an appeal is approved for the fall term, that student's record will be re-evaluated at the conclusion of the fall term to determine aid eligibility in the upcoming spring term. Note that the evaluation conducted at the end of the spring term includes a review of financial aid eligibility for summer for all students, including those students who have reestablished eligibility. In addition, an evaluation is conducted at the end of the summer only for those students who were not making SAP at the end of spring, had a successful appeal for summer, and need to have eligibility determined for fall.

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### APPEAL PROCESS

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Students who are not maintaining SAP under this policy are eligible to submit a SAP Appeal\*\*. Successful appeals are generally approved for a single term after which SAP standards will be evaluated according to the terms of the appeal approval. SAP Appeals are only considered for the following reasons:

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#### **Standard 1: Student is academically suspended, or is otherwise not in good academic standing**

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Appropriate, documented extenuating circumstances resulting in academic suspension or otherwise not meeting the qualitative standard, even if the student has been granted readmission (including under a forgiveness policy) or permission to re-enroll following a suspension.

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#### **Standard 2: Total attempted hours exceed 150% of the published length of the program**

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Appropriate, documented extenuating circumstances resulting in total attempted hours exceeding 150% of published length of program in credit hours, or reasonable documented plan to complete the degree program within 150% of published length of program in credit hours.

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#### **Standard 3: Not earning at least 67% of total attempted hours at Appalachian State (for the degree program)**

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Appropriate, documented circumstances for why student is not completing 67% or more of total attempted hours at Appalachian State in the student's degree program. Circumstances may include withdrawal for medical reasons, extended personal illness or injury, death or illness of immediate family member, required to take pre-requisite or preparatory coursework, called to active military duty, or other extenuating circumstances (all with sufficient and appropriate supporting documentation; see examples below).

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#### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals must include the following:**

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- A Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form
- A personal statement describing the circumstances that resulted in the student not meeting SAP and the student has taken to achieve academic success going forward, specifically in the term for which the student is appealing for financial aid. This should be a specific plan for being able to meet the SAP standards and graduation requirements in a timely manner.
- Third party documentation supporting the appeal. Examples of such documentation include, but are not limited to, written statements from doctors on letterhead stationery, copies of medical bills, orders for military activation, and/or death certificate(s).

\*\*COVID-19 Related Modification: We will take any COVID-19 related issue into serious consideration when reviewing all appeals as long as the student indicates how they were impacted.

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**SAP Appeals, including all required documentation, must be submitted online through StudentForms (accessed through AppalNet.appstate.edu)**

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