

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

To be in compliance with the Department of Education, the following satisfactory academic progress standards become effective July 1, 2011. The new rules will be applied to all students who are enrolled at the institution, starting summer 2011.

Maintaining Eligibility

Federal guidelines for the continued receipt of student financial assistance funds require that standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) be applied to all students who are enrolled at the university. These standards must be equal or stricter than the standards required of students who are not receiving financial assistance. MUSC is required by federal law to institute standards of satisfactory progress for students receiving Title IV assistance. MUSC students receiving financial aid are required to be in good standing and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Frequency of Monitoring

Academic progress is reviewed at the end of each semester the student is enrolled.

Definitions

- **Warning Status:** A Notice is sent to all Students failing to meet SAP standards *for the first time*.

Official warning under the new regulations: Students placed on a “warning” status are eligible to receive financial aid for the following term of enrollment. No appeal is necessary. SAP standards must be met at the end of the following term.

- **Probation Status:** Students, who have been placed on warning and fail to attain the SAP minimal standards by the end of the following term, are placed on Probation.

Those students will be issued a Financial Aid Notice advising them of the *Loss of their Title IV Aid Eligibility* (financial aid).

A student on Probation may not receive financial aid for the subsequent payment period unless:

- The student is now making satisfactory academic progress; or
- The student successfully appeals.
 - If the appeal is approved, the student must meet the requirements specified by the institution in the academic plan.
 - A student reinstated to eligibility under an academic plan and making progress under the plan is considered to be eligible.
 - Students who fail to meet the terms of the academic plan will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid until satisfactory academic progress is met.

A probationary semester will be granted only if *the student submits a successful appeal*

AND

(A) a student is deemed able to attain SAP in the next semester

(B) *AND* the petition is signed for approval by the Dean, Associate Dean, or Head of the Department

OR

(C) If the deficiencies (i.e. GPA and/or hours earned are too low) are too grave and it is deemed not possible for the student to attain SAP in the next semester, the student should consult with their academic advisors to establish a customized academic plan.

A Customized Academic Plan should ensure the student will progress towards meeting graduation requirements if adhered to and the college may require specific terms and conditions such as a reduced course load or enrollment in specific courses. Failure to meet any portion of an academic plan will result in a permanent loss of eligibility.

Qualitative Measure of Progress

- Students must have a 2.0 GPA in the term being reviewed. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a letter of warning to the student. A student on financial aid warning must maintain a 2.0 GPA the next academic term or the warning status will be upgraded to a probation status and financial aid will be withheld for the next enrollment period.
- For professional schools that use a nontraditional grading system (one not based upon grade point average) to assess satisfactory completion of course work, a similar nontraditional approach will be used to measure qualitative progress for continuing financial eligibility. If a student enrolls only in P/NP (pass/no pass) courses during a particular term, any no-pass grade will constitute non-satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes. Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress the following term will be placed on a “probation status”.
- Any course with an “I” grade must be completed no later than the following term. Failure to receiving a passing grade will result in a “Probation” status and student will not be eligible for aid.
- Students whose academic year does not include a summer term, are not eligible to receive financial aid during the summer term if they are required to complete the failed or incomplete coursework in order to proceed in a program of studies.
- Students who come back to MUSC following a dismissal, withdrawal or leave of absence are placed on probation status, and must successfully appeal in order to receive financial aid the following term.
- Students who do not fail courses but must repeat coursework or re-take exams are allowed a single repetition of previously passed coursework. The registered coursework will count toward a student’s full-time enrollment status.
- Students who failed a course are not allowed to repeat the courses previously passed to meet full-time enrollment status.
- Students who fail to pass Part I of National Boards in the College of Medicine have the option to enroll in a remedial course of study as a full-time student and continue to receive financial aid or be placed on leave of absence. If placed on a leave of absence, a student is ineligible for financial aid until satisfactory passage of boards and he/she is allowed to begin clinical rotations.

The Loss of Eligibility Notice will advise students regarding Probation and the Appeal Process to request a probationary semester.

1. Students who lose their eligibility may appeal when Health or Family Emergency or Special Circumstances affected their meeting SAP. **If the Appeal is Approved**, the student will be granted one probationary semester to get back on track. Students must request a Custom Academic Plan if they feel they will not be able to meet MUSC’s established SAP standards. All students on probation must attain SAP standards by the end of that probationary semester to receive Title IV Aid beyond that. Failure to do so will result in loss of Title IV Aid.
2. If the Appeal is Denied the student is notified and is ineligible for Title IV Aid until they attain SAP again. A customized plan is NOT available to students unless their Appeal is approved.

Final Ineligible Notice

Failure to meet any portion of the academic plan will result in a Final Ineligibility Notice.

Time Frame for Completing Degree Objectives

- Students may receive financial aid for no more than 150 percent of the published time required to earn a specific degree or credential. Unless a specific program publishes tighter restrictions, students are eligible for federal aid for 3 years while completing a 2 year curriculum, 4.5 years for a 3 year curriculum, 6 years for a 4 year curriculum, and 7.5 years for a 5 year curriculum. Students who are enrolled in less than full-time coursework have the years of financial aid eligibility prorated accordingly.

Appeal Procedures/Customized SAP Plans

Students who fail to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards may appeal the suspension of their financial aid assistance funds. Letters of appeal should be based on mitigating circumstances that impacted negatively on the student's ability to meet the required standards. Examples of such circumstances are: 1) death/prolonged illness of an immediate family member; 2) medical illness (student) that created undue hardship; 3) losses due to a natural disaster (i.e. hurricanes, storms, etc...)

Reinstatement of Eligibility Notice after loss of Federal Title IV Aid

Students who fail to meet the terms of an academic plan may not petition for reinstatement of their financial aid until they have successfully completed a term at MUSC. Students in this situation are not eligible to receive financial aid. Students, who meet SAP standards, will have to complete a new SAP petition.

Steps to Appeal the Process

- Students may appeal a decision due to extenuating circumstances. The student must submit a written letter of appeal to:

**Office of Financial Aid
Harper Student Center
45 Courtenay Drive
Charleston, SC 29425**

- Students must submit their appeal to the Office of Financial Aid no later than thirty (30) days after the official notification of his/her financial aid status.
- Students must attach all necessary documents to the written appeal request.
- Students must have the petition signed off by a Dean, Associate Dean, or Head of the Department from their College.
- The College administrator must specify on the petition form the academic plan (if appropriate), along with the terms and conditions for an approval.
- The appeal will be reviewed by the university Financial Aid Committee within 2 weeks of receiving the request and all necessary documents.
- The student may appear before the Committee to appeal if so desired.
- The student will be notified in writing of the decision to reinstate or deny the financial aid eligibility.
- If the student is determined eligible for reinstatement of financial aid, he/she will be considered for aid available at the time of reinstatement.