

# Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP)

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires Sofia University to develop and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) prior to awarding any federal financial aid funds to students. Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress were established to encourage students to successfully complete courses for which federal financial aid is received, and to progress satisfactorily toward degree completion.

The standards apply to state, federal, and institutional financial aid programs, including Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study, all Federal Direct Loans, and all institutional scholarships.

These financial aid standards of academic progress are separate from, and in addition to, academic standards required by the University for continued enrollment. The criteria used to determine academic progress are cumulative grade point average, cumulative completion rate (or pace), and maximum time frame to complete the degree.

Students' Satisfactory Academic Progress is reviewed at the end of each period of enrollment (quarter). All periods of enrollment are reviewed, including terms during which no financial aid was received.

**Standard 1: Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measure):** Students must maintain a minimum qualitative measure of progress defined as the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Undergraduate students must maintain a 2.0 CGPA at all times. Graduate students must maintain a CGPA of 3.0 at all times. Successful completion for all undergraduate students is defined as earning either a grade of P (Pass) or a C or better. Grades of NP (Not Pass) or C- and below do not constitute successful completion. Successful completion for all graduate students is defined as earning either a grade of P (Pass) or a B or better. Grades of NP (Not Pass) or B- and below do not constitute successful completion.

**Standard 2: Semester Hour Completion Ratio or PACE (Quantitative Measure):** Students (either full-time or part-time) must achieve a passing rate of at least 67% of all units attempted to demonstrate proper pace and to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards. Units attempted include completed courses, repeated courses, withdrawals, and incompletes. Transfer credit, if applicable, is also calculated in the completion ratio.

**Standard 3: Maximum Timeframe:** Students must complete their degree program within 150 percent of the unit requirements for the degree program. The following table (next page) provides the limits for each program:

Program	Credit Hours	150% of Credit Hours
BA in Psychology	180	270
BS in Business Administration	180	270
MA in Counseling Psychology	90	135
MA in Transpersonal Psychology	48	72
MA in Business Administration (MBA)	36	54
MA in Business Administration with Data Analytics concentration	48	72
MS in Computer Science	42	63
Joint MBA/MSCS Pathway	60	90
PhD in Business Administration (DBA)	54	81
PhD in Transpersonal Psychology	75	112

<b>Program</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>150% of Credit Hours</b>
PsyD in Clinical Psychology	120	180

Transfer credit, if applicable, is also included as attempted credits in the maximum timeframe calculation.

## Transfer Credits:

Transfer credits accepted toward the student's degree program will be included when calculating the SAP Maximum Timeframe and quantitative progress.

## Repeated Courses:

Students receiving Title IV Aid may repeat a course. Repeated courses will count toward the quantitative and maximum timeframe SAP standards. Only the highest grade for a course will be included in the CGPA calculation. Federal Student Aid allows a student to retake a non-failed course and receive federal aid for that course one time.

## Incomplete Grades:

Students receiving Title IV Aid may receive Incomplete grades for a quarter with their instructor's approval. Incomplete grades will not count toward the qualitative, quantitative and maximum timeframe standards of SAP. Grades of Incomplete (I) will revert to No Pass (F or NP) at the end of the quarter immediately following the one in which the Incomplete grade was granted if the work is not completed and submitted. Students can reference the Incomplete Policy for full details and instructions for requesting an Incomplete.

## Change of Program:

All periods of enrollment will count when assessing a student's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). All attempted units will be included in the determination of a student's satisfactory academic progression when a student makes a change in his/her degree program or field of study at the same degree level (e.g., bachelor's to bachelor's).

## SAP Evaluation:

Students are evaluated at the end of every period of enrollment (quarter) for SAP. Students who have not met all the conditions for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will be placed on academic warning for the following quarter and will be expected to work with their Program Chair (or assigned Academic Advisor) to discuss their academic performance. Students on SAP Warning status will continue to be eligible to receive federal aid for this additional enrollment period. Students on SAP Warning status who fail to meet SAP standards at the end of the quarter will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid without an approved SAP appeal.

## Appeal Guidelines:

Students who fail to meet SAP standards after a period of SAP Warning will need to file an appeal to be considered for any continued financial aid. There is no limit to the number of times that a student may appeal during his/her enrollment at Sofia. However, a new reason must be provided for each new appeal and the likelihood of approval will decrease with each subsequent appeal. This appeal shall be made in writing and must include:

- An explanation of the circumstances that prevented the student from meeting SAP standards.
- Documentation of those circumstances.
- An explanation of the changes that have taken place that would allow the student to meet SAP standards in the future.
- A detailed plan for regaining SAP eligibility, or in the case of a Maximum Timeframe violation, a detailed path to program completion.

One of the following decisions will be made regarding the student's appeal:

- The appeal is denied; the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid.
- The appeal is granted, and the student placed on Academic Probation for one quarter; the student should be able to meet satisfactory academic progress by the end of the probationary period. If the student does not meet SAP at the end of the probationary quarter, the student will lose eligibility for financial aid.
- The appeal is granted and the student will be placed on an Academic Plan because Satisfactory Academic Progress cannot be met within one quarter. The Academic Plan, monitored on an individual basis, will ensure that the student is able to meet SAP by a specific point in time, will have set conditions, and can be evaluated at whatever periods as determined by the plan or at a minimum at the end of every quarter. The student will lose financial aid eligibility if the student fails to meet the conditions of the Academic Plan.

**NOTE:** No Appeal Process is offered for Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

## Scholarship Recipients:

Scholarship recipients are also expected to meet and maintain SAP requirements. In addition to SAP, a scholarship may have more rigorous requirements and/or a separate appeal process. Students should refer to the original scholarship award notification for specific requirements.

In the event a student fails to meet SAP requirements of a scholarship, the Dean of Student Services will notify either the private scholarship donor or the relevant University department. The latter parties determine whether the student is still eligible for the scholarship. If the scholarship is canceled, the student may appeal directly to the donor or scholarship provider.

## Dissertation Enrollment and Extensions:

Doctoral students are given a maximum of 18 quarter units to complete their dissertation work before they become ineligible to receive financial aid (including federal student loans). After 18 units of Dissertation work (DOC9001-1 through DOC9006), students must file an appeal for an extension. Dissertation Continuation Enrollment courses (DCE9101 through DCE9104) are three units each; therefore, students may continue to qualify for financial aid. Students who are unable to complete their dissertation in four additional quarters will be dismissed from their program with "All but Dissertation" (ABD) status.

For additional information about dissertation enrollment and extensions, students should contact the Director of the Dissertation Office ([dissertation@sofia.edu](mailto:dissertation@sofia.edu)).

## Probationary Status – Academic Part-Time:

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress may be placed on Academic Part-Time status. Students in Academic Part-Time status are provided a list of courses for the quarter. They must enroll in these courses and only these courses. At the end of the quarter, students must successfully complete and pass these courses in order to move to the next level.

## Suspension:

Suspension means that a student has been placed on leave involuntarily for a violation of school policy. Suspended students may not attend classes or make use of the University's facilities. Suspended students may appeal the suspension using the procedures described in the Academic Appeals Process.

## Withdrawing from School:

Withdrawing means that all services offered by the University are terminated. No fee is charged for the processing of a request to withdraw. Grades of "Incomplete" change to a grade of "No Pass." When a student withdraws from Sofia University, access to the portal and Learning Management System is immediately terminated. Withdrawn students must apply through the Office of Admissions to return and pay the required admission fee. Students may withdraw from the University at any time by giving notice to the Office of the Registrar. Students may not withdraw by contacting any other office or by ceasing class attendance. Written notice is required.

## Withdrawal in Good Standing – Ph.D. Candidates:

Once Ph.D. students have entered Candidacy (see page 11), they are required to make continuous progress in completing their dissertation. Under no circumstances will a Dissertation Committee be allowed to remain idle for more than two consecutive quarters. Students who anticipate a gap in completion of the dissertation will be required to withdraw. Assuming all obligations to the University are current and the student has no outstanding coursework or other requirements, this will be classified as a "Withdrawn in Good Standing." The student's Dissertation Committee will be dissolved upon the student's withdrawal from the program. Withdrawn in Good Standing (WIGS) students may apply to re-enter when it becomes possible for them to complete the dissertation.

Withdrawn students must apply through the Office of Admissions to return and pay the required admission fee.

## Involuntary Withdrawal (IW):

The University may initiate an Involuntary Withdrawal (IW) as a result of a student's violation of University policies, inappropriate behavior, or other academic reasons.

## Withdrawal for Non-Payment:

Payment is due at the start of each enrollment period. Students whose tuition and fees are past due will be barred from class registration and participation in currently enrolled classes. Students who fail to make timely payment will be withdrawn from the University. Academic records for such students will be held until any outstanding balance is settled.

## Academic Withdrawal:

Students who are not academically progressing will be placed on Academic Probation. Students on Academic Probation who are unable to meet the terms of their action plan will be withdrawn from the University.

## Dismissal:

Under exceptional circumstances, such as academic dishonesty, criminal action, or unethical behavior, a student may be immediately dismissed from the University. This will be recorded on the student record as an Involuntary Withdrawal from study. Students may also be dismissed for not completing a dissertation within ten calendar years from initial enrollment in the doctoral program, including periods of leave. Dismissed students have a right to appeal as described in the Academic Appeals Process.

## Program Transfer:

Some students decide after matriculation that they are better suited for another program at the University. In such cases students may request to transfer to a new program by contacting the Office of the Registrar at [registrar@sofia.edu](mailto:registrar@sofia.edu). All general and program specific admissions requirements must be met when applying.

The request may take ten business days as it must be approved by the Sofia Academic and Administrative Officers. International students must submit the request form to the Director of International Partnerships and Recruitment before the orientation date of new program start quarter. Please be aware that this change may affect financial aid awards, catalog year, graduation date, and graduation requirements.