

# Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

## Summary

A student must demonstrate Satisfactory Academic/Financial Aid Progress by successfully completing courses attempted. All students are required to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress. In addition, some programs may have a programmatic progressions policy that may require specific course grades or higher GPAs that must be met. Poor performance may lead to an academic/financial aid warning and/or academic dismissal from the University. It is very important that students attend all registered courses and complete them successfully.

The following criteria are used to determine whether a student is making academic/financial aid progress. A student must be able to:

- Maintain a minimum acceptable cumulative grade point average (CGPA);
- Achieve the minimum incremental completion rate (ICR); and
- Complete the program within a maximum allowable timeframe (MTF).

Administrative actions will be taken when a student fails to meet the minimum standards of any of the above criteria. If the action results in academic dismissal from the University (programs that measure SAP annually or by violating the quarterly requirements or academic plan), a student may appeal the dismissal.

Periods of attendance when a student does not receive financial aid are included in determining academic/financial aid progress. Periods of nonattendance are not included in determining Satisfactory Academic/Financial Aid Progress. While the terms Academic Warning/Financial Aid Warning and Academic Probation/Financial Aid Probation are used, the status applies to all students whether receiving financial aid or not.

The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) contains the following sections:

- I. SAP Definitions
- II. Minimum Standards for Undergraduate Satisfactory Academic/Financial Aid Progress and
- III. Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards
- IV. Minimum Standards for Graduate Satisfactory Academic/Financial Aid Progress and Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards
- V. Procedures for Appealing Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal
- VI. Procedures for Readmission after Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal

The University has the right to modify the Satisfactory Academic/Financial Aid Progress policy at any time.

## I. SAP Definitions

### **a.) Academic Warning/Financial Aid Warning**

Applies only to quarterly SAP evaluations. Several undergraduate programs have quarterly reviews after the completion of the second academic year. Please refer to section II below.

### **b.) Calculation of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)**

A student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is calculated by:

- Multiplying credits for each course by grade points associated with the grade earned,
- Totaling the grade points earned for all the courses, and

- Dividing total grade points earned by the total number of quality credits.

#### **c.) Calculation of Incremental Completion Rate (ICR)**

A student's incremental completion rate (ICR) is calculated by:

- Totaling the number of credit hours attempted,
- Totaling the number of credit hours successfully completed, and
- Dividing the total number of credit hours successfully completed by the total number of credit hours attempted.

*Note: If a student is on academic warning/financial aid warning for failing to meet the ICR requirement, it will be very difficult for the student to meet the ICR standard of 66.67 percent. In some cases, the student may have to successfully complete all the courses attempted. A student should consult with their academic counselor on the exact requirements.*

#### **d.) Course Attempts**

A course attempt includes any time a student receives a grade for a course, if the student attends after drop/add and even if the student does not complete the course. This includes the letter grades of "A" through "F", a passing grade of "P", a withdrawal while failing the course of "WF", and a withdrawal with no grade penalty of "W". Courses for which a student enrolls but then drops during the drop/add period at the beginning of a quarter or course session are not counted as a course attempt.

#### **e.) Developmental Courses**

South University requires academic placement tests. Depending on test scores, students may be required to take developmental courses (i.e., ENG0099 and MAT0099). If so required, a student must successfully complete such courses in order to progress within the program. Developmental course credits do not count towards the total number of credits for graduation, nor do they count in the CGPA; however, they do count in determining the maximum time frame and the ICR. An Undergraduate student enrolled in developmental coursework (ENG0099 and/or MAT0099) must be able to pass the courses within three attempts or the student will be academically dismissed.

#### **f.) Maximum Allowable Timeframe (MTF)**

A student may not attempt more than 150% of the credits in their program; when the University determines it is mathematically impossible for a student to complete their program within 150% of its length the student will be academically dismissed from the University. The appeal process and related procedures are the same as those described in sections below.

#### **g.) Repeated Courses and Grades**

Grades achieved in repeated classes will replace withdrawn or failing grades. Withdrawn and failing grades are included in the maximum allowable time frame and ICR. A student may also retake a class in which they received a passing grade in order to improve his/her CGPA.

#### **h.) Remediation of Academic Deficiencies**

It is strongly recommended that any student with withdrawn or failing grades register for the same course(s) in the subsequent quarter or course session to improve his/her academic performance.

#### **i.) Transfer Credits**

Credits from transfer courses are calculated in the maximum allowable credits and ICR requirements. Grades for credits transferred from any postsecondary institution will be recorded as "TR" and will not affect the student's CGPA.

#### **j.) Students Transferring Between Programs and/or Campuses and Online**

A student who transfers programs and/or campuses is subject to the SAP policies and procedures of the new

program. Grades from courses taken in one of South's programs, if applicable to a transfer program, will be recorded as earned credit and will affect the student's CGPA.

A student who is in good standing per SAP in their program transferring to either a campus program or an online program, will be evaluated according to the SAP policies and procedures for the programs.

The evaluation criteria and period of time until the next applicable evaluation point may differ from the SAP policies of the student's original program. Only credits and grades from courses, including transfer, that count towards the new major degree requirements will be included in the SAP calculation. The student should work closely with his/her academic counselor to understand the SAP implications (including financial aid implications) of his/her transfer before taking any action. A student's academic file may be shared with any South University location as needed to complete the transfer.

## II. Minimum Standards for Undergraduate Academic/Financial Aid Progress and Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards

**Note: W, WF, and NCF grades count as an attempt.**

Students who have not met the minimum standards of SAP will be notified in writing by the University. Students on academic warning/financial aid warning are considered to be making progress towards meeting SAP and, if otherwise eligible, can be eligible for financial aid.

An undergraduate student may be academically dismissed for academic/financial aid reasons without a previous academic warning/financial aid warning. Students will be notified in writing if they are dismissed from the University.

### **a) All Undergraduate Programs (Except BS to MS in Accounting (see section III. below), Bachelor Science in Nursing-Professional Phase, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN), Occupational Therapy Assistant and Physical Therapist Assistant)**

For all undergraduate programs (except those listed above which are described in b), c), and d)), the following are the minimum standards used to assess each undergraduate student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first academic year (an academic year is three quarters in which courses are attempted in each quarter), a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 1.50 and an ICR of 33.33%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of (SAP) will be academically dismissed from the University.
- After attempting the second academic year, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.0 and an ICR of 66.67%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be academically dismissed from the University.
- Starting the quarter after the second academic year, and every subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 66.67%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.

### **b) Bachelor of Science in Nursing - Professional Phase**

Students in the Bachelor Science of Nursing-Professional Phase are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards are used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and an ICR of 50.00%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of (SAP) will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid.
- After attempting the second and each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and an ICR of 66.67%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.

**c) Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)**

Students in the RN to BSN program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 50.00%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of (SAP) will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid.
- After attempting the second and each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 66.67%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.

**d) Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) and Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)**

**General Education Phase:**

For undergraduate students in the General Education Phase of the OTA or PTA program, the following are the minimum standards use to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.0 and an ICR of 33.33%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of (SAP) will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid.
- After attempting the second quarter a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.25 and an ICR of 50.00%. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.
- After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and an ICR of 66.67%. percent. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning and will continue to be eligible for financial aid. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.  
*NOTE: The minimum CGPA required to be eligible to apply to the professional phase of the OTA program is 2.85 or PTA program is 2.75.*

**Professional Phase for the Occupational Therapy Assistant programs:**

Students in the professional phase Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- Students must maintain a minimum CGPA of 2.50 for OTA courses with a designation of 1011 or higher during each quarter of the professional phase and an ICR of 66.67%.

### **Professional Phase for Physical Therapist Assistant programs:**

Students in the professional phase of the Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- Students must maintain a minimum CGPA of 2.50 for all technical PTA designated courses during each quarter of the professional phase and an ICR of 66.67%.

*Note: PTA1001 will be included in GPA calculations for the first quarter of the professional phase even if the student takes the course prior to entry into the professional phase. See the Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant Program Progression Standards.*

## **III. Minimum Standards for Graduate Academic/Financial Aid Progress and Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards**

Academic Progress is reviewed at the completion of every quarter. A student not achieving these minimum standards of SAP will be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning. If a student who is already on academic warning/financial aid warning fails to achieve these minimum standards of SAP following a quarter of academic warning/financial aid warning, s/he will be academically dismissed from the University.

Students who have not met the minimum standards of SAP will be notified by the University. Students on academic warning/financial aid warning are considered to be making progress towards meeting SAP and, if otherwise eligible, can be eligible for financial aid.

A graduate student may be academically dismissed for academic/financial aid reasons without a previous academic warning/financial aid warning. Students will be notified if they are dismissed from the University.

### **a) All Graduate Programs (Except for the BS to MS in Accounting, Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia Science, Master of Science in Physician Assistant, RN to Master of Science in Nursing, Doctor of Business Administration, Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Pharmacy Programs)**

For all graduate students (except for those programs listed above and described in b), c), d), e), f), and g)) are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting the second quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 66.67%.

### **b) Bachelor of Science to Master of Science in Accounting (BS to MS in Accounting)**

Students in the BS to MS in Accounting degree program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting his/her first quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 1.25 and an ICR of 33.33%.
- After attempting the second quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 1.50 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting the third quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 1.75 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting the fourth quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 66.67%.
- After attempting the fifth quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 2.50 and an ICR of 66.67%.
- After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 3.0 and an ICR of 66.67%.

Regardless of academic year of enrollment, once a student is enrolled in the graduate portion of this program, the student must meet the C or better requirement for all courses and the graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

**c) Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia Science**

Students in the Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia Sciences program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards that must be met:

- Achieve a minimum quarterly GPA of 2.50 and a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and an ICR of 66.67%.

A graduate student in the Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia Sciences program can only be placed on any type of warning (academic/financial aid, clinical, or professionalism) two times during his/her academic program.

**d) Master of Science in Physician Assistant**

Students in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. Students in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program must complete all curricular requirements within 45 months of their initial matriculation into the South University PA program. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

At the completion of every quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.0 and an ICR of 66.67%.

**e) RN to Master of Science in Nursing (RN to MSN)**

Students in the RN to Master of Science in Nursing are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter of the RN to MSN program, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.5 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting the second quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.5 and an ICR of 66.67%.
- After attempting the third quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.5 and an ICR of 66.67%.
- After attempting the fourth quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.75 and an ICR of 66.67%.

After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.0 and an ICR of 66.67%.

**f) Doctor of Business Administration and Doctor of Ministry**

Students in the Doctor of Business Administration and Doctor of Ministry programs are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
  - After attempting the second quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
  - After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a CGPA of 3.00 and an ICR of 66.67%.
- Note: The grade of LP for final project and dissertation courses are exempted from the CGPA for SAP purposes.

**g) Doctor of Pharmacy**

Students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program are evaluated for SAP at the completion of every quarter. The following are the minimum standards used to assess each student's academic performance:

- After attempting the first quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting the second quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 50.00%.
- After attempting each subsequent quarter, a student must achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.00 and an ICR of 66.67%. A graduate student in the Doctor of Pharmacy program may be placed on academic warning/financial aid warning not more than three separate times (but not for two consecutive quarters) during his/her academic program.

## IV. Procedures for Appealing Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal

Undergraduate and graduate students wishing to appeal an academic dismissal/financial aid dismissal must do so in writing to their Admissions Representative or Academic Counselor. Graduate students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program wishing to appeal an academic dismissal/financial aid dismissal must do so in writing to the Registrar within the School of Pharmacy. College of Health Professions students must submit appeals as outlined in the program specific Progressions Policy published under the College of Health Professions Progression Standards in the Academic Catalog.

The student's written appeal (including emails from a student's email account bearing his/her electronic signature) must state the mitigating circumstances that contributed to the dismissal. The appeal must be supported with appropriate written documentation of the mitigating circumstances with explanation on how the circumstances have been remedied or changed that will allow the student to meet academic/financial aid progress. Mitigating circumstances are events that are outside the student's control and are unavoidable. Following is an example list of events that indicate there may be a mitigating circumstance that has negatively impacted academic/financial aid progress:

- Death of an immediate family member.
- Hospitalization of immediate family member.
- Natural disaster.
- Extenuating Circumstances affecting the student or immediate family member.

NOTE: A student's life issues and the student's transition to college are not considered mitigating circumstances under this policy since a student has at least two quarters/two payment periods to adjust to college life.

The Senior Academic Progress and Remediation Specialist will review the student's appeal and related written documentation to determine whether the circumstances and academic status warrant consideration for granting the appeal. Any consideration of mitigating circumstances not specified above should be discussed with the students Admissions Representative, Academic Counselor or Senior Academic Progress and Remediation Specialist. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is the final authority to which an academic dismissal can be appealed.

Failure to provide an adequate written appeal and supporting documentation will result in the student's appeal not being considered. The student will be notified in writing that the appeal is not being considered and what additional information is needed for the appeal to be considered. This is not considered a denial of an appeal which would force the student to wait a year before appealing again.

A student who submits a written appeal and is denied the appeal cannot re-appeal for one year after the quarter or course session in which the appeal was denied however the passage of time by itself does not impact the appeal decision.

An individual graduate program may have additional specific procedures for appealing an academic dismissal/financial aid dismissal which are more stringent than the above Procedures for Appealing Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal.

Students dismissed for violating the maximum allowable timeframe (MTF), may appeal to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

The result of the appeal (whether granted or denied) will be provided in writing to the student and recorded in the student's academic file by the University.

## V. Procedures for Readmission after Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal

After one year of remaining out of the University, undergraduate and graduate students can submit an additional written appeal for reinstatement. Undergraduate or graduate students wishing to appeal an academic dismissal/financial aid dismissal must do so in writing to their Admissions Representative or Academic Counselor. Graduate students in the Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia Sciences program and the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies programs cannot submit such an appeal for reinstatement. Graduate students in the Doctor of Ministry program must do so in writing to the Progress and Promotions Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. Graduate students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program wishing to appeal an academic dismissal/financial aid dismissal must do so in writing to the Professional Performance Committee within the School of Pharmacy.

The second written appeal must be accompanied by a written discussion (and demonstration) of accomplishments or changes made in the prior year that will allow the student to meet academic/financial aid progress. In addition, they must demonstrate how former mitigating circumstances will no longer impact their academic performance.

Should the student have his/her second appeal denied, the student will be permanently dismissed from the University. The result of the second appeal (whether granted or denied) will be provided in writing to the student and recorded in the student's academic file by the University.

A student who submits a written appeal and is granted the appeal will be placed on academic probation/financial at the start of the quarter and will remain on probation for the duration of the student's academic plan. During the probationary period the student will be reviewed for academic progression quarterly. The determination for a student to return using Title IV funding is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students appeals may be granted with or without the use of Title IV funding.

Prior to and during the probationary period, the student must agree with and sign a written academic plan developed by the University on how the student will achieve specific minimum CGPA, ICR, and other applicable SAP standards associated with the appropriate evaluation points by end of either the Academic/Financial Aid Probation period or by the end of the quarter included in the Academic Plan. The Academic Plan must detail specific time frames and student success measures for the student to meet the minimum requirements of Satisfactory Academic Progress. The Academic Plan must be reviewed with the student so that designated Academic Plan is being met and the student will remain on track to achieve the success measures within the approved timeframe. Failure to meet the established goals included in the Academic Plan will result in Academic/Financial Aid Dismissal.

Please see the Re-entry/Readmission of Former Students policy in the Admissions section of the catalog once the students appeal is approved and the academic plan is reviewed and signed by the student.