I. Process Overview and Responsibilities

In accordance with federal policy, to remain eligible for financial aid, students must continue making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree. This is monitored by reviewing both grade point average (GPA) and the number of credits completed each semester.

Federal regulations, HEA Sec. 484(c), §668.16, 668.34, require all schools participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs to have a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy that meets the requirements detailed below. These conditions apply to all students as one factor for determining eligibility for financial aid.

In accordance with federal regulations, financial aid will only be applied to courses included in a student’s program of study (degree). Any courses a student chooses to take outside of the program study (degree) will not receive financial aid. A student’s SAP status is based on the student’s entire academic record, at the University of Texas at El Paso and all other schools attended (includes all transferrable hours), regardless of whether financial aid is received or not.

II. SAP Standards

SAP is measured in three ways:

a. Qualitative Standard: Minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

The qualitative requirement sets a minimum cumulative GPA for all students to remain in good academic standing at UTEP. The cumulative GPA includes grades of A, B, C, D, F, and I. The cumulative GPA does not include grades of W, WF, WC, U, and N. Grades earned at other institutions are not averaged into the UTEP grade point average.

- For undergraduate students, the cumulative GPA is 2.0
- For graduate students, the cumulative GPA is 3.0

Certain state or institutional financial aid may require a higher GPA standard for those students pursuing an undergraduate degree. The table below illustrates the applicable GPA requirement(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Financial Aid Program</th>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Texas Grant – Renewal Award</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TEACH Grant</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>TEACH Grant</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Teacher Certificate Program</td>
<td>All Aid</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. **Quantitative Standard: Completion Rate / Pace**

Undergraduate and graduate students must demonstrate progression toward degree or certificate completion. All students must have successfully completed at least 67% of all credit hours attempted. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of completed credit hours by the number of attempted credit hours.

- Courses earned include grades of A, B, C, D or Pass.
- Courses attempted include any course in which grades of A, B, C, D, F, W, I*, N, S, and U are given.

Transfer students: All transfer units count as both attempted and completed units.

Certain state or institutional financial aid may require a specific number of completed hours. The table below illustrates the applicable completion rate requirement(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Financial Aid Program</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Texas Grant</td>
<td>24 completed credit hours (fall, spring, summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTEP Promise</td>
<td>30 completed credit hours (fall, spring, summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TEACH Grant</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Other Aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>All Aid</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Teacher Certificate Program</td>
<td>All Aid</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. **Quantitative Standard: Maximum Timeframe for Degree Completion**

Federal regulations stipulate that the maximum timeframe for degree completion cannot exceed 150% of the published length of the academic program. To determine the maximum timeframe, multiply the total hours required for the degree by 150%. For example, if the program requires 120 credit hours x 150% = 180 credit hours maximum allowed. This calculation includes transfer credits attempted at any college or university prior to attending and while enrolled at University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Once a student reaches the maximum timeframe, the student is no longer eligible for financial aid.

Transfer students: All transfer credit hours are used to calculate the student’s remaining eligibility for SAP purposes.

Students wishing to change majors after beginning a course of study may do so one time before completing 90 credit hours without adversely affecting the maximum timeframe component of SAP. Any previously completed credits that do not contribute to the new degree program will be removed from the maximum timeframe calculation. Additional changes of major may cause the student to exceed the maximum timeframe and lose eligibility for financial aid.

Students wishing to pursue a second undergraduate degree need to do so before completing or attempting 90 units at UTEP in order to qualify for financial aid. Students may view their “Degree Evaluation” online via Goldmine, under the “Student Records” link.
III. Evaluation Periods

SAP is calculated once a year after spring grades have posted.

a. Termination of Financial Aid
Termination of financial aid indicates that the student is no longer eligible for any type of financial aid (grants, work-study and loans) and occurs for the following reasons:

- Student did not meet all SAP requirements
- Student did not follow their SAP Educational Plan
- Student has reached their maximum timeframe for their degree or certificate

Students who are terminated are not eligible to receive financial aid and will be notified in writing of their termination and that they have lost eligibility for financial aid which includes grants, work-study, loans, and possibly scholarships.

If a student’s financial aid has been terminated as an undergraduate, and then the student is admitted to a graduate degree program, the student may be eligible to receive financial aid as a graduate student. The student must be in a degree-seeking status and fully accepted into the graduate program.

IV. Appeals

If the student loses federal and institutional aid eligibility due to not meeting the SAP cumulative GPA or completion rate, the student may submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Form with supporting documentation.

An appeal is usually granted when there was an extenuating circumstance, which prevented a student from meeting SAP. Examples of an extenuating circumstance may be a personal or family critical situation or natural disaster impacting the student or family’s home. An extenuating circumstance would not usually include working too many hours or having childcare issues.

Students on UTEP’s academic suspension must clear the suspension before completing and submitting a SAP Appeal.

a. Maximum Number of Appeals
Students are limited to the number of SAP appeals they may submit.

- Undergraduate Degree: 3 appeals
- Graduate/Doctoral Degree: 2 appeals
- Alternative Teacher Certification, Post Baccalaureate, and eligible Certificate Programs: 1 appeal

A student’s SAP appeal will not be approved if appealing for the same extenuating circumstance used in a previously approved appeal.

For example, if a student’s SAP appeal is approved due to the death of a parent, the student may not submit another appeal the following semester due to the same circumstance. However, the student may submit a SAP appeal in the event of the death of the second parent.
b. Appeal Requirements

The student will be required to:

- Complete the SAP Appeal Form
- Attach a typed-written explanation of the extenuating circumstances associated with the student’s failure to meet SAP requirements. In the explanation, the student must indicate how these circumstances have changed so that the student can now do well in school and meet all future SAP criteria.
- Include a “student plan of action” for academic improvement. This may require that the student meet with their Academic Advisor to create a plan for getting back in good academic standing.
- Attach supporting documents to support the extenuating circumstances addressed in the letter of explanation.

c. Appeal Review

The Assistant Vice President and Assistant Director of Student Financial Services review SAP Appeals on a weekly basis.

d. After Appeal is Approved

Students will be awarded financial aid for the term after eligibility has been reinstated subject to their financial aid eligibility and the availability of funds. The student will be placed on a “probation” status and will be given an Educational Plan. Students on SAP financial aid probation will continue to receive financial aid but will be monitored for improvement and adherence to their Educational Plan; which outlines their required courses for continued financial aid funding and the student must meet all other SAP requirements.

A student will be removed from SAP financial aid probation only upon completion of the Educational Plan and once all SAP requirements are met by the student.

V. Regaining Eligibility

If your appeal is denied, you may use the options below to regain eligibility. Be advised that if you do not qualify for financial aid, you must pay tuition and fees by the payment deadline or your classes will be cancelled.

Students not meeting SAP standards, may enroll in school without the benefit of financial aid and complete coursework that improves the student’s academic progress in order to bring the student back into full compliance with the SAP standards. Once the student is back in compliance with SAP standards, the student will need to notify the OSFA for a SAP re-evaluation to determine the student’s eligibility for financial aid.

a. Option 2 (Academic Fresh Start)

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) does not recognize Option 2 and requires an institution to count courses applicable to a student’s major (whenever taken even if financial aid was not received for these courses) in evaluating a student’s SAP.

When an Option 2 is processed, the following changes occur to the student’s academic record:
• All credits earned will be lost. However, they will remain on the student’s record and transcripts;
• Credits earned prior to Option 2 will count against the student’s maximum attempted credits;
• Student’s completion rate will lower as the credits previously earned will count as attempted (not earned).

Once those changes occur, the student will not be eligible for financial aid for the following reasons:

• The student will not be meeting GPA requirements. Student’s GPA will be zero.
• The student will not be meeting the 67% Completion Rate/Pace requirement. The student’s Completion Rate will be 0%.

A student, who opts for Option 2, will not be eligible for financial aid and will need to pay for courses out-of-pocket until the student meets the GPA and Completion Rate/Pace requirements without exceeding the Maximum Timeframe.

Students requesting Option 2 are required to consult with a Financial Aid Advisor to discuss the financial ramifications of moving forward with the Option 2. Once discussed, if the student would like to move forward with this option, the Financial Aid Advisor would need to add their name, title, signature and date on the Option 2 form. There is not a section for OSFA to sign, however, it can be done anywhere on the form.

VI. Academic Circumstances that May Affect SAP Status

Students who do not begin attendance in their scheduled classes, are not eligible for federal financial aid and must repay all aid originally received. If the student does not pay the funds due to UTEP, a financial hold is placed on the student's account. This means he/she will not be permitted to register for classes or receive transcripts until the balance is paid.

• Changes in major, double majors or minors – May cause the student to reach maximum timeframe and lose eligibility before earning a degree.
• Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, course withdrawals – All reduce the completion rate, because these grades are counted as attempted, but not earned credits and count against the student’s maximum attempted credit hours.
• Repeated courses – count as attempted credit hours and count against the maximum timeframe. This may reduce the student’s completion rate/pace because repeated credits count as earned credits only one time.
  o In accordance with federal regulations, financial aid will only be applied to courses included in a student’s program of study (degree).
• Transfer credits, including study abroad – Count toward the student’s maximum attempted credits and completion rate/pace.
• Remedial courses – Count as attempted and earned credits and are included in the GPA calculation.
• Late posted grades or grade changes – Once notification is received from the student of grade changes, the student’s GPA will be recalculated to determine financial aid eligibility.
• Dismissal – Students, who are suspended academically by the University or choose not to attend because of SAP termination, will not be automatically eligible for financial aid upon their return to UTEP. Students must meet SAP qualitative and quantitative standards. If the student is below standards, a student may appeal or use means other than financial aid for educational expenses. Absence does not restore eligibility for financial aid. It remains the responsibility of the student to be knowledgeable of their SAP status when returning to school after dismissal or choosing not to return because of SAP termination.

• Summer Term Courses – All credits attempted and completed in the summer are treated as any other semester hours in determining SAP status.

• Audit Courses – Students are not eligible to receive financial aid for audit courses.

Early College – These courses will count for SAP purposes. However, if these courses were taken while the student was still in high school, OSFA will not count these courses against the student until the student is an official undergraduate student. The student’s SAP status will be updated to “eligible” at the beginning of the first undergraduate semester until the first SAP review at the end of his first undergraduate year.