

# The University of Texas at El Paso

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

The Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) knows you are working toward an important milestone: a degree from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The OSFA wants to help you achieve this goal and understands that receiving financial aid is part of your success. 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 your grade point average and the number of credits you are completing 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. SAP is calculated once a year after spring grades have posted. 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.

## SAP Standards

SAP is measured in three ways:

- 1. 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.
  - 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):

Academic Level	Financial Aid Program	Cumulative GPA Requirement
Undergraduate	Texas Grant: Renewal Award	2.5
	TEACH Grant	3.25
Graduate	TEACH Grant	3.25
Alternative Teacher Certificate Program	All Aid	2.5

**2. Quantitative Standard: Completion rate/Pace – minimum 67 percent**

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.

\*After an incomplete class is converted into a grade, the grade will then be counted in the GPA and completion rate.

If a student chooses to repeat a class to improve a grade, financial aid may only be used to do so one time (Note: a letter grade of “D” or higher is considered a passing grade).

**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):

Academic Level	Financial Aid Program	Completion Rate
Undergraduate	Texas Grant	24 completed credit hours (fall, spring, summer)
	UTEP Promise	30 completed credit hours (fall, spring, summer)
	TEACH Grant	67%
	All Other Aid	
Graduate	All Aid	67%
Alternative Teacher Certificate Program	All Aid	67%

### 3. **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  $\times 150\% = 180$  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 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.

## **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.

## **SAP Appeal Process**

If you lose federal and institutional aid eligibility because you are not meeting the SAP cumulative GPA or completion rate, you 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.

Appeal Requirements:

- Complete the SAP Appeal Form
- Attach a typed-written explanation of the extenuating circumstances associated with your failure to meet SAP requirements. In the explanation, indicate how these circumstances have changed so that you 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 you meet with your Academic Advisor to create a plan for getting back in good academic standing.
- Attach supporting documents to support the extenuating circumstances addressed in your letter.

## After an 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. 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.

***The number of appeals a student is allowed to submit is:***

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

## Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility

If your appeal is denied, you may use the option 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.

## **Academic Circumstances that May Affect Your Status**

- Changes in major, double majors or minors – may cause you to reach your maximum timeframe and lose your eligibility before earning a degree.
- Incomplete grades, missing grades, failing grades, course withdrawals – all reduce your completion rate, because these grades are counted as attempted, but not earned credits and count against your maximum attempted credit hours.
- Repeated courses – count as attempted credit hours and count against the maximum timeframe. This may reduce your completion rate/pace because repeated credits count as earned credits only one time.
  - In accordance with federal regulations, financial aid will only be applied to courses included in a student's program of study (degree).
- Option 2 – counts against your maximum attempted credits, and also lowers your completion rate as the credits count as attempted but not earned.
- Transfer credits, including study abroad – count toward your maximum attempted credits and your 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 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.

***Note: The procedures and policies listed above are subject to change without advance notice based on changes to federal laws, federal regulations, or school policies. If changes are made, students will be notified via email and must abide by the most current policy.***