

Student Financial Services

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

★ **COVID-19 provision relevant to Volume 1 and student eligibility is a special allowance for satisfactory academic progress (SAP).** Section 3509 of the CARES Act allows schools to exclude from the quantitative component (pace measurement) of SAP any attempted credits that a student was unable to complete as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency. It is not necessary for a student to have filed a SAP appeal for a school to exercise this flexibility. However, to exclude attempted credits from SAP, the school must have reasonably determined that the student's failure to complete those credits was the result of a COVID-19 related circumstance. Allowable circumstances include, but are not limited to, illness of the student or family member, need to become a caregiver or first responder, economic hardship, added work hours, loss of childcare, inability to continue with classes via distance education, and inability to access wi-fi due to closed facilities. (FSA HB July 2020 1-2) UAMS documents any exception to SAP based on COVID-19 in the student's file. Documentation is provided by the UAMS Registrar's office regarding any incomplete, in progress or dropped class due to COVID-19.

A student receiving Federal Title IV financial aid or other financial aid directly administered or certified by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) must maintain satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of a certification or degree program of study. Satisfactory academic progress for financial aid recipients is measured by both quantitative (timeframe & pace of completion) and qualitative (grade-based) standards and is an assessment of a student's cumulative academic record at UAMS.

To ensure Satisfactory Academic Progress, students must meet all of the following standards and requirements. SAP is verified at the end of each payment period/semester (Fall, Spring & Summer.) At the end of the next term, if the student has not met the minimum requirements, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning/Probation.

- 1. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)** - Students must maintain a grade point average of at least a "C" or its equivalent (2.0 for undergraduate/graduate programs excluding CSPS-2.50, Graduate School-2.85 and CPH-3.00), or have an academic standing consistent with the institution's (individual college's) requirements for graduation (34 CFR 668.34).
- 2. Minimum Completion Standard for Attempted Credit Hours (Pace)** - Students must successfully complete 67% of UAMS attempted credit hours (including accepted transfer hours) to stay on pace to complete their degree.
- 3. Maximum Time Frame for Degree Completion (Timeframe)** - All colleges enforce their policy defining the maximum timeframe in which graduate students have to complete their program(s) (*See the College's Handbook/Website*). Undergraduate student's maximum time of enrollment is measured at 150% (Example: Bachelor's Degree = 120units, student has 180units to complete the degree).

A student is deemed to have met the qualitative requirements for satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes provided the student's academic status is not one of Academic Dismissal.

Transfer Credit:

For transfer students, the total years of credit hours includes time spent at the previous institution, to the extent that credit hours are transferred and applied toward the degree objective at this institution. Applicants must qualify and meet the individual college's admission requirements prior to enrollment. Transfer credit hours accepted by UAMS will be included in calculating both cumulative attempted credit hours and cumulative earned credit hours.

Official Withdrawal:

The Official withdrawal date is determined when the student begins the school's withdrawal process or the date the student provides notification of his/her intent to withdrawal. *If both circumstances occur, use the **earlier** withdrawal date.* UAMS is an institution that is not required to take attendance. A school that is not required to take attendance may always use the last date of attendance in an academically related activity as the student's withdrawal date. The school may document and use the student's last day of attendance at an academically related activity as the student's withdrawal date in the Return calculation. *(FSA HB July 2020 5-58)*

Unofficial Withdrawals:

There are two categories of unofficial withdrawals for purposes of the return of funds calculation.

1. When a school determines that a student did not begin the withdrawal process or otherwise notify the school of the intent to withdraw due to illness, accident, grievous personal loss, or other circumstances beyond the student's control.
2. All other withdrawals where official notification is not provided to the school or the official withdrawal process is not begun.

Regarding the first category, if it is determined that a student did not begin the withdrawal process or otherwise notify UAMS of the intent to withdraw due to illness, accident, grievous personal loss, or other circumstances beyond the student's control, the withdrawal date is the date that most accurately reflects when the student ceased attendance due to the circumstances beyond the student's control. This special circumstance applies when:

- A student who would have provided official notification to the school was prevented from doing so due to those circumstances.
- A student withdrew due to circumstances beyond the student's control and a second party provided notification of the student's withdrawal on the student's behalf.

The second category of unofficial withdrawals encompasses all other withdrawals where official notification is not provided to UAMS. For these withdrawals, the withdrawal date is the midpoint of the payment period or period of enrollment, as applicable, or the last date of an academically related activity in which the student participated. The withdrawal date is determined no later than 30 days after the end of the earlier of (1) the payment period or the period of enrollment, (2) the academic year, or (3) the student's educational program.

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An unofficial withdrawal is determined by comparing the SSCR or National Student Clearinghouse Report to our financial student database, or by notification from the registrar, or by confirmation of an unearned F. The registrars will request faculty to provide the last date of attendance for a student that is considered unofficially withdrawn. A Title IV Return

of Funds calculation will be processed and may result in a portion of their aid being returned to the federal government.

**Incomplete grades, withdrawals, no credits and missing grades count the same as an "F" grade earned in class when evaluating hour completion.*

Administrative Withdrawals without Student Notification:

If the five Colleges, Graduate School or CSPA administratively withdraw a student who has not notified the department of his or her intent to withdraw, the date of the withdrawal is the date the College or Graduate School terminates the student's enrollment.

Withdrawals for Programs Offered in Modules (Standard, Non-standard & Non-term Programs):

A student is considered to have withdrawn, for Title IV purposes, if the student ceases attendance at any point prior to completing the payment period or period of enrollment. However, the student may provide written confirmation, at the time of the withdrawal, that he or she will attend a module that begins later in the same payment period or period of enrollment and s/he will not be considered withdrawn.

In addition, for a student in a non-term or nonstandard-term program offered in modules, a student is considered to have withdrawn from the program if the student is not scheduled to begin another course within the payment period or period of enrollment for more than 45calendar days after the end of the module the student ceased attending, unless the student is on an approved leave of absence. So, for a student in a non-term or nonstandard-term program offered in modules who ceases attendance, the student is considered to have withdrawn for Title IV purposes unless the school obtains written confirmation from the student at the time of the withdrawal that he or she will attend a module that begins later in the same payment period or period of enrollment, provided the later module the student will attend begins no later than 45calendar days after the end of the module the student ceased attending. If a written confirmation of future attendance is obtained but the student does not return as scheduled, the student is considered to have withdrawn from the payment period or period of enrollment. The student's withdrawal date and the total number of calendar days in the payment period or period of enrollment are the withdrawal date and total number of calendar days as of the student's last day of attendance (those that would have applied if the student had not provided written confirmation of future attendance).

FSA HB May 2020 5-67

Course Repetitions:

Students may repeat courses but will be placed on financial aid probation if:

- The student's GPA is below the minimum requirement to proceed in the curriculum.
- The student does not make incremental progress as determined by the college and/or the Financial Aid Office.
- The student reaches the maximum timeframe for completion of his/her program of studies.

** You may count toward enrollment status and award Title IV funds to a student who is repeating, for the first time only (i.e., one repetition per class), a previously passed course in a term-based program, including when the student is retaking a passed class due to failing other associated coursework. Students enrolled in non-term-based programs may not receive credit for retaking coursework. The regulatory definition for full-time enrollment status has been revised to allow a student to retake (one time only per previously passed course), any previously passed course. For this purpose, passed means any grade higher than an "F," regardless of any school or program policy*

requiring a higher qualitative grade or measure to have been considered to have passed the course. This retaken class may be counted toward a student's enrollment status and the student may be awarded Title IV aid for the enrollment status based on inclusion of the class. A student may be repeatedly paid for repeatedly failing the same course (normal SAP policy still applies to such cases). If a student withdraws before completing the course that they are being paid Title IV funds for retaking, then that is not counted as their one allowed retake for that course. However, if a student passed a class once and then is repaid for retaking it and fails the second time, that failure counts as their paid retake and the student may not be paid for retaking the class a third time. (FSA HB Aug 2019 3-35) Some repeated coursework may not be eligible for federal aid funds (example: courses with a grade of "Incomplete or In Progress.")

Financial Aid Warning/Appeals Process:

If the Financial Aid Office places a student on financial aid warning, s/he may continue to receive assistance under the Title IV, HEA programs for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making SAP. Financial Aid Warning Status may be assigned without an appeal or other action by the student. Students who fail to meet SAP after the warning period loses their aid eligibility unless they successfully appeal and are placed on financial aid probation. Students who lose FSA eligibility will be notified, in writing, that their financial aid has been denied. Each student denied aid will automatically be given an option to appeal to the Financial Aid Office. The student must submit an appeal in writing to the Financial Aid Office with supporting documentation as to why the student failed to meet SAP standards, what has changed that will allow standards to be met within the next term and how the student will complete academic studies (submit a copy of the student's degree plan.) Each appeal will be reviewed by the Financial Aid office to determine whether there are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevented him or her from maintaining satisfactory progress. The decision of the Financial Aid Office is final in matters of appeal. The student will be notified in writing of the appeal decision.

Financial Aid Probation:

If the student's appeal is approved, the student is placed on Financial Aid Probation and may receive Title IV, HEA program funds for one payment period. Further, while a student is on financial aid probation, the school may choose to require the student to fulfill specific terms and conditions such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific courses. At the end of one payment period on financial aid probation, the student must meet the College and Financial Aid's SAP standards or meet the requirements of the academic plan developed by the school to qualify for further Title IV, HEA program funds. If the student does not meet SAP at the end of one payment period on probation, the student loses FSA eligibility.

Reestablishing Aid Eligibility:

Students not meeting SAP and who have lost FSA eligibility may reestablish FSA eligibility by:

- Not exceeding the maximum timeframe;
- Complete at least 67% of the attempted cumulative hours as calculated; and
- Achieve the required UAMS cumulative GPA

If at the end of the following payment period, these requirements are met, the student will again be eligible for FSA Funds. The student will be notified of this result in writing.

Notification:

Students will be notified in writing of his/her status whether they are placed on financial aid warning/probation, has been removed from warning/probation and is now Title IV Eligible, if s/he loses FSA eligibility, how to reestablish FSA eligibility and result of appeal decisions.

If a student is denied aid, an SAP Hold, will be placed on his/her account, in GUS, to monitor/manage any requests for future awards.

New or Conflicting Information:

SAP calculations are to be performed at established intervals which must coincide with the end of a payment period as prescribed in 34 CFR 668.34(a) (3). The institution is not required to recheck SAP and/or recalculate as the result of grade changes that occur between formal SAP evaluations. (*FSA HB Sept 2020 1-22*) The UAMS Financial Aid office will recalculate SAP due to grade changes between formal SAP evaluations, however this is a rare occurrence. The student will be notified of any change to their SAP status and/or financial aid eligibility. The Financial Aid office will not alter aid already disbursed to a student based on an SAP evaluation that was accurate at the time it was performed. All grade changes are accounted for in the next scheduled SAP evaluation.

College Information:

For additional Admissions, SAP, Handbook, etc. information, please visit the appropriate website of the College in which you are enrolled or plan to enroll.

[College of Health Professions](#)

[College of Medicine](#)

[College of Nursing](#)

[College of Pharmacy](#)

[College of Public Health](#)

[Graduate School](#)

[Clinton School of Public Service](#)

UAMS Academic Catalog

https://registrar.uams.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2020/08/UAMS-Academic-Catalog-2020-2021-CURRENT.red_8-4-2020.pdf