

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

To receive funds administered by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid at South Texas College of Law, students must comply with the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards. These standards are based on federal regulations that require the college to ensure that financial aid applicants are progressing through their academic programs at an acceptable pace while maintaining an acceptable cumulative grade point average (GPA). The SAP standards are separate from and in addition to other academic policies at the college, including the college's policies concerning academic deficiency.

A student failing one or more of the SAP standards is placed on *Warning* status for the next semester (fall, spring or summer) in which the student is enrolled. If a student on *Warning* status fails one or more of the SAP standards when SAP is reviewed at the end of the semester during which the student is on *Warning* status, the student will be ineligible to receive financial aid from the programs managed by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid for the next semester of enrollment. A student who becomes ineligible for financial aid has the right to file an appeal.

The SAP standards affect student eligibility for the following federal and state financial aid programs:

- Federal Direct Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized)
- Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan
- Federal Work Study
- Texas Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program
- Texas College Access Loan (CAL) program
- Other programs as determined by the Director of Financial Aid

Determination of Satisfactory Academic Progress

For purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid, SAP is reviewed at the end of the fall, spring and summer semesters.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

- **Grade Point Average (Qualitative):** Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.200. (Students whose current period of enrollment at the college began prior to the fall 2011 semester must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.000.) Grades used in the computation of the GPA are A, B, C, D (including + & -), F and WF. Grades of W, I, HP, and P count as hours attempted but do not affect the GPA computation.
- **Completion Rate or Pace of Completion (Quantitative):** Students must successfully complete at least 66-2/3% of the credit hours attempted at South Texas College of Law. When computing the percentage of credit hours completed, the college does not round up. Credit hours attempted will include all accepted transfer credits (including consortium credits) and all credit hours attempted at the college. For this purpose, credit hours attempted include credit hours attempted for which the student did not receive financial aid, those from incomplete courses, courses from which the student withdraws, and courses that are repeated. In the case of a

student who has attended South Texas College of Law in the past and then re-enrolls, the college will include in credit hours attempted all credit hours from previously attempted courses. This procedure is followed regardless of how long ago the student attended and regardless of whether academic amnesty was granted.

Students may modify their initial course schedule during the add/drop period of the term without having the dropped classes included as attempted hours.

Courses in which a grade of A, B, C, D, (including + & -), HP and P are earned are counted as completed. Students who initially receive a grade of "I" and subsequently receive a grade must notify the Financial Aid Office of the grade change so their academic progress status can be re-evaluated.

- **Maximum Time Frame:** To meet this requirement a student can attempt no more than 150% of the credit hours required for the J.D. degree. Example: a Juris Doctorate = 90 hours x 150% = 135 hours. Therefore, 135 hours is the maximum that can be attempted with financial aid.

Warning and Suspension Periods

The SAP evaluation process is performed after each full term of each academic year (i.e., end of fall, spring and summer) to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid for the next term in which the student enrolls. All students are evaluated whether or not they have received financial aid in prior terms.

A student's initial failure to meet either the minimum cumulative GPA requirement or the 66-2/3% completion rate requirement will place the student on SAP *Warning* status. The warning period lasts until the SAP evaluation process is conducted at the end of the next term of enrollment. Students will continue to be eligible for financial aid while on *Warning* status for one term. If a student on *Warning* status still does not meet the SAP standards when the next SAP evaluation process is conducted, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension. A student on financial aid suspension is ineligible for the federal and state financial aid programs listed in this policy. The student will remain ineligible until the student meets the minimum financial aid SAP standards. A student who becomes ineligible for financial aid because the student is on financial aid suspension has the right to file an appeal as described in this policy.

Completion of Degree Requirements

A student who has completed all degree requirements for the J.D. degree, as certified by the Office of the Registrar, is considered to have the degree and is no longer eligible for further financial aid for the J.D. degree.

Notices

Students who fail to meet the SAP requirements will be notified of their eligibility status for financial aid at the end of each term. Notification will be mailed or provided electronically within ten business days after the SAP evaluation process is completed.

Notification will include information on the appeal process for those students who are determined not to be eligible for financial aid. Reference will be given to the process for appeal and the forms required.

Students who have failed to meet SAP standards and who do not enroll in the next term will again be notified of their SAP status should they choose to re-enroll.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals

If a student believes there are extenuating circumstances beyond their control that have contributed to the failure to maintain SAP, they may petition to have the status changed. All appeals are reviewed for mitigating circumstances by the financial aid appeals committee. All situations must be fully documented, including supporting letters from counselors, doctors, ministers and/or other third parties. As part of the appeal, the student must provide information about why they failed to make SAP and what has changed in the student's situation that would allow them to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation.

To file an appeal, students must submit the applicable form(s). The applicable forms: *Appeal for Unsatisfactory Academic Progress*, as well as, the *Time Frame Appeal* are available on the web site. Appeals may be submitted by e-mail, fax or taken directly to the Financial Aid Office.

Extenuating and mitigating circumstances beyond a student's control include but are not limited to:

- Serious illness;
- Documented learning disability;
- Documented medical condition that prevented completion;
- Death of an immediate family member;
- Involuntary call to active military duty;
- Emergency situations such as natural disasters;
- Maximum attempted hours have been reached

Appeals for the following reasons will *not* be approved:

- Withdrawing from class to maintain a higher grade point average;
- Withdrawing from or failing classes because of the student's work requirements;
- Being previously ineligible for financial aid and returning to school after an absence;
- Conflict with a professor;
- Classes not being what was expected; and,
- Not being prepared for law school

Probationary and Academic Plan Status

Students who have had an appeal approved will be placed on financial aid probation with an academic plan. The student will be eligible for financial aid during the probationary semester. Once the probationary semester has concluded, the student may re-establish eligibility to be considered for financial aid for a subsequent semester by either:

1. Taking action that brings him or her into compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components of the college's SAP standards; or,
2. Meeting the specific academic plan and standards for the semester, as established

If the student fails either to be in compliance with the qualitative and quantitative components of the college's SAP standards or to meet the specific academic plan and standards for the semester, as established, the student will be placed on financial aid suspension.

Regaining Eligibility

Students who are on financial aid suspension and who either have had their appeals denied or have never appealed will have their financial aid eligibility reinstated when they meet the qualitative and quantitative components of the college's SAP standards in accordance with this policy.