

# Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The Office of Financial Aid (OFA) uses the SAP Policy to determine continued eligibility for its financial aid programs. The SAP Policy is comprised of two parts, a qualitative and a quantitative component.

Students must be in good academic standing and uphold the minimum requirements for both the qualitative (grade-based) and quantitative (time-based) requirements of the SAP policy to maintain eligibility to receive financial aid. In compliance with federal regulations, Soka University of America (SUA) has established guidelines that are designed to ensure that students successfully complete courses and to promote timely advancement toward degree objectives. These requirements also serve as a standard against which to evaluate student's progress, grade point average (GPA) and the overall time frame in which students complete their graduate program. SAP is evaluated at the end of each term at SUA.

In addition, the OFA will notify students if they are not making satisfactory academic progress or SAP; the Office of the Registrar will notify students separately of academic probation or suspension. The OFA SAP policy is as follows:

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) applies to ALL Institutional, Federal and State funds.

SAP policy is a complement to the Academic Probation policy but is a separate policy governing only financial aid eligibility. Students must be aware that it is possible to avoid academic probation or suspension, yet fail to meet SAP for financial aid.

The following minimum academic standards must be met:

1. Qualitative Measure:

Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in order to be eligible for financial aid.

2. Quantitative Measure:

The second component used to measure SAP is the maximum time a student may take to complete a program. Students must complete their program within 2 years.

Students must achieve both the qualitative and quantitative requirements of SAP to remain in good financial aid standing.

## Failure to meet SAP Requirements

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has mandated that universal terms (warning, suspension, and probation) be implemented to describe failure to meet SAP across all colleges.

## SAP Warning

Failure to meet SAP after one term will result in a placement on "SAP Warning" status. Student will have one term of financial aid eligibility to correct their SAP deficiencies. Students will be notified that he/she is on "SAP Warning." SAP Warning is not given to students who have reached their maximum time frame or students who have failed to meet SAP for 2 consecutive terms.

Academic counseling should be sought to ensure the student satisfies all deficiencies during this period.

If the student meets SAP within the warning period (of one term), he/she will be automatically placed back in good standing for financial aid.

It is possible for students to be placed on warning multiple times in their academic career.

## SAP Suspension

After one term of warning and continued failure to meet SAP, all of the student's financial aid will be suspended/canceled and student will be placed on "SAP Suspension."

Students will be notified in the event that he/she is on "SAP Suspension." Failure to receive notification from the OFA is not terms for an appeal approval. It is the student's responsibility to understand the Financial Aid SAP policies and adhere to them.

## Regaining Eligibility

Students on "SAP Suspension" can earn units and raise their cumulative GPA the next academic term; however they are ineligible to receive financial aid during that period of suspension. Once the SAP requirements have been met, students are eligible to apply for financial aid for the upcoming term.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the OFA when he/she regains eligibility for reinstatement of funds.

## Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances

Students may appeal for reinstatement of financial aid via a written request if they have an extenuating circumstance that has prevented the student from meeting SAP for institutional scholarships. Such situation must be exceptional and non-recurring in nature. Some examples are death in the family, illness, or car accident. The appeal must explain the cause of academic difficulty and how the situation has been resolved.

The appeal must be submitted within 20 days of notification of financial aid ineligibility. The student must meet with the Director of MA Program to create an academic plan that will ensure success in completion of their program. The academic plan must be submitted with the SAP appeal.

Students must submit the "SAP Appeal" in person to the OFA. Students may request that the form be date marked for when it has been received.

Students can expect to have a decision within two weeks of submitting an appeal form. The OFA may need to request documentation from the student which could extend this period.

In addition, if the appeal is sent to committee, the period of time needed to convene a committee could also extend the time required to make a decision. If this is the case, students will be notified that there will be a delay.

If the SAP appeal is approved, the student will be placed on "SAP Probation" and will regain eligibility for financial aid for one or more terms based on the academic plan submitted.

If the SAP appeal is denied, students are entitled to an explanation. Once an appeal has been denied, students may not make an identical appeal because he/she did not agree with the outcome. The appeal will be considered officially denied.

A student may not appeal after the enrollment period for the academic year or once graduated.

## Grades, Repeated Courses, Transfer Credits

Grades that meet SAP completion standards are grades for which credit is awarded: A, B, C, D and P. F, NP, Withdrawals (W), and Incompletes (I) are not passing grades.

If a student repeats a failed (F) or a previous passed class (D), it will replace the highest grade to recalculate into the new cumulative GPA. Credits attempted in repeated classes will be included in the cumulative credits attempted in addition to the original credits. Students who passed a class and chooses to repeat for a higher grade may receive financial aid only once for that repeated class. Students may receive financial aid for a failed class that they repeat until they pass.