

Liberty University 2009-2010

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The Financial Aid Office of Liberty University administers student financial aid programs from federal, state, and institutional sources. Institutional sources include scholarships, grants, discounts and Continuing Education & Dependent Grant-In-Aid Benefits. The U.S. Department of Education requires schools to develop and implement policies by which academic progress is evaluated and monitored for all students, even those who did not receive financial aid in prior terms at Liberty University. Students must meet Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements to receive federal Title IV aid that includes Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study, Academic Competitiveness Grants, Federal SMART Grants, Federal TEACH Grants, and Federal Family Education Loans (Stafford, PLUS and Graduate PLUS). Liberty University also applies the SAP requirements to monitor eligibility for all institutional aid. The Virginia Commonwealth programs are administered under the guidelines from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

This policy describes the **FINANCIAL AID** Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements and is in addition to and operates separately from the **ACADEMIC** Satisfactory Progress requirements for each academic program and department/division.

Evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress:

The standards against which all students are measured include Qualitative, Quantitative, Maximum Time Frame, and “All Unearned Credits” standards. The academic record of all students is reviewed after the end of each term. The academic record review is cumulative and includes all courses taken at the student’s current academic level. After the evaluation, letters will be sent to all students who have insufficient academic progress and are being placed on Financial Aid Warning, Probation, or Suspension as a result.

- **Qualitative Standard:**

Cumulative GPA is composed of all coursework at the current academic level and is calculated by the Registrar’s Office. To meet the qualitative standards students must meet the minimum cumulative GPA as determined by their classification and program.

Student Classification	Required Minimum Cumulative GPA for Program
Bachelors Programs 0 - 23.99 hours earned (except B.S. in Nursing)	1.50
Bachelors Programs 24 - 47.99 hours earned (except B.S. in Nursing)	1.65
Bachelors Programs 48 - 71.99 hours earned (except B.S. in Nursing)	1.85
Bachelors Programs 72 plus hours earned, Diploma (Th.G.), M.A. (Christian Leadership, Discipleship Ministries, Evangelism and Church Planting, Intercultural Studies, Marketplace Chaplaincy Ministries, Pastoral Counseling, Student Ministries, Theological Studies, Children’s Ministry, Worship Studies) Willmington School of the Bible, M.A.R., M.R.E., M.Div., J.D. (except B.S. in Nursing)	2.00
Associates Degree	2.00
B.S. in Nursing M.A. (Human Services), M.A.T., M.Ed., M.A.M.L.	2.50
M.A. (Counseling, Global Apologetics, Marriage/Family Therapy, Communications, English, History, Religious Studies), M.B.A., M.S., M.S.N., S.T.M., Th.M.,	3.00

Additional academic progress criteria may exist for certain financial aid programs. For example, some private scholarships and Commonwealth of Virginia programs require a higher cumulative grade point average than those listed above. Also, the federal SMART and federal ACG Grants have additional requirements including a 3.0 cumulative grade point average. Once a transfer student has grades for a payment period at Liberty University for coursework taken toward the eligible program, Liberty University will use the cumulative GPA calculated from those grades only.

- **Quantitative Standard:**

In order to meet the quantitative standard students must complete 67% of attempted coursework at the current level. Withdrawals, incompletes, repeated courses, failure grades, and transfer hours will count as attempted coursework. Please note: completion rates are not rounded up to meet progress. If a student has a completion rate of 66.666%, they are not meeting the minimum 67% federal requirement for financial aid satisfactory academic progress.

- **Maximum Time Frame:**

A student may not exceed a maximum number of attempted hours in any program even if aid was not received during that term or prior terms. Once the student reaches the maximum timeframe allowed the student will be ineligible to receive financial aid; students may appeal on the basis of coursework not applicable to the current degree program.

Academic Program	Maximum Number of Attempted Hours
Diploma (Th.G.)	30
Bachelors Degree	180
Associates Degree Willmington School of the Bible Masters Degree (Except M.Div.) Education Specialist Ed.S. Doctoral Degree (Except J.D.)	90
M.Div., J.D.	135

- **All Unearned Credits:** Students attempting at least half-time level credits who earn no credits for the term will be placed on financial aid suspension and will not be permitted to receive financial aid in their next term.
- **Grades that do not count as earned toward completion of the academic program:** Because the following grades are NOT counted as earned credits toward the completion of a degree program, they are not counted as successfully completed credits toward the minimum financial aid satisfactory academic progress standards: AU, BU, CR, CU, F, FD, FN, FW, I, IP, M, N, NP, U, W, WF, WP, WU, X, Z.
- **Break in enrollment:**
When a student has a break in enrollment and is readmitted, the SAP status for prior terms will apply. For example, if a student is placed on financial aid suspension at the end of the Spring term, does not return in the Fall term, and is readmitted the next Spring term, the student will continue in a financial aid suspension status for that term.
- **Federally Defined Leaves of Absence (FLOA):**
Liberty University does not grant federally defined Leaves of Absence for Financial Aid purposes. Instead of utilizing a federally defined Leave of Absence, the University assists students by:
 - making tutoring available
 - allowing students to work with faculty to finish incomplete coursework
 - allowing an official appeal of the Financial Aid Refund calculation based on unusual circumstances
 - allowing students to “stop-out” for one or more semesters

- allowing students to drop courses with a “W” rather than an “F” during specific time-frames
- allowing students to submit a Special Considerations Form (even during the period of enrollment) to reconsider the calculation of need-based financial aid eligibility
- allowing students to appeal a determination of insufficient satisfactory academic progress under the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy requirements.

The “*Federally Defined Leave of Absence*” policy listed above is for student financial aid purposes only and does not address College policy for employees (i.e. FMLA regulations).

- **Terms/Parts-of-Term/Summer Sessions:**

A traditional semester is referred to as a standard term (e.g. Fall, Spring, and Summer). Standard terms, as defined by Liberty University, are comprised of a combination of smaller “sub-terms” (e.g. sub-term B, sub-term C, etc.). Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements are calculated based on the combined sub-terms as defined by Liberty University. Intercession credits from classes occurring during approximately the final two weeks of December and/or the first two weeks of January will be added to the Spring Term. Any other intensive courses will fall within a standard term (and be attributed to only that specific standard term). Summer sub-terms, for the purpose of credit hour load and measurement of progress, are combined together into the Summer term. The Summer term is considered a “trailer” at Liberty University. This means that aid processed for the Summer term will be based on the FAFSA from the prior year.

- **Withdrawals and Incompletes:**

Courses from which a student withdraws or receives a grade of incomplete will not be considered as satisfactorily completed. The courses, which will be considered courses attempted but not completed, may negatively affect eligibility for the next term. Additionally, they will factor into the measurement for the maximum time frame.

- **Repeated Courses:**

Repeated courses are considered in the maximum time frame requirement. The course(s) will be considered as attempted each time the course is taken. Repeating the same course during the same term is not allowed as this would inflate the student’s enrollment level requiring the elimination of related financial aid. Additionally, a course that is repeated during the same term would cause an incorrect calculation of the completion rate (Quantitative Standard) listed above.

- **Transfer Courses:**

Transfer courses are not considered in determining eligibility under the qualitative measure but are considered in the quantitative and maximum time frame measurements. Transfer students are awarded as first-year students without regard to grade or warning status at the prior post-secondary institution. The FASAP requirements would then be used to measure the transfer student’s continued status. Transfer credits must be evaluated and a grade-level established before any educational loans are processed.

- **Consortium Agreements:**

The number of credits earned under an approved consortium agreement are integrated into the student’s record upon completion of the course. Note: Courses must first be approved for transfer by the Liberty University Registrar’s Office. The Consortium Agreement is also subject to approval by both the home and host institution’s authorized financial aid staff. Failure to complete the course/s could negatively reflect in the SAP evaluation. Financial Aid staff from the home school will request information from the host school during the enrolled term to confirm continued enrollment and satisfactory academic progress.

- **Remedial/Developmental Course work:**

Financial aid is not available for non-credit remedial courses. Remedial/Developmental courses carrying regular college credit are considered in determining the qualitative, quantitative and maximum time frame requirements for SAP. These courses are counted in enrollment for financial aid eligibility since they meet the following federally defined requirements:

1. They are not a prerequisite that would hinder admission into an eligible degree program at Liberty University.
2. They are less than one year in length.
3. They offer instruction above the 5th Grade Elementary level.
4. They are not used to satisfy high school graduation requirements.

- **ESL Courses:**

Financial aid, including Dependent Grant in Aid (DGIA) and Continuing Education (CE) benefits, is not available for students enrolled in the ESL/ELIL program. ESL courses taken as part of an undergraduate program are non credit courses. ESL/ELIL courses are not included in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress.

- **Special Student Status:**

Special Students are not eligible for federal and state aid. Some Special Students qualify for certain institutional aid programs. For this reason, the Quantitative Standard Rule, Maximum Timeframe Rule and All Unearned Credits Rule of the Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress Policy apply to Special Students. The minimum cumulative grade point average requirement for Special Students is as follows: 2.0 is required for Institute, Graduate, Doctoral and Law; 1.5 is required for Undergraduate Special Students.

- **Change in Major / Additional Degrees:**

When a student changes their major or seeks an additional degree, the student may appeal to the Financial Aid Office to have courses attempted and earned that do not count toward the student's new major or degree excluded from the Maximum Time Frame calculation of a student's SAP standing.

- **Changed Grades:**

If a grade is changed, the student is required to notify the Financial Aid Office immediately. The Financial Aid Office will then initiate a review of the effect of the grade change on academic progress within 30 days of notification. A grade change late in or after the term in question, or failure to notify the Financial Aid Office may result in the loss of financial aid eligibility because regulations may limit the time within which aid may be re-awarded or disbursed.

The Liberty School of Law adheres to a schedule which allows for grades to be submitted after the end of the Term. Because of this, Liberty School of Law students evaluated after grade submissions may have their aid eligibility recalculated – and may need to adjust their payment arrangements through Financial Check-In later than non-law students.

- **Academic Amnesty Program:**

Federal regulations require that the student's complete academic history be included in the evaluation of Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. Therefore, the Academic Amnesty Program at Liberty University cannot alter the academic history reviewed for Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress.

- **Failure to make Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

Students who fail to meet the qualitative and/or quantitative standards at the end of a term (based upon the student's enrollment) will be placed on financial aid "warning" status and will remain eligible for financial aid while on a warning status. Students on financial aid warning status must meet the qualitative and quantitative requirements by the next term's measurement of progress.

Students not meeting the requirements at the next term's measurement of progress will be placed on financial aid "probation" and will remain eligible for financial aid while on financial aid probation.

Students not meeting the requirements at the next term's measurement of progress will be placed on financial aid suspension and considered ineligible for future financial aid until the deficiencies are resolved.

- **Re-establishing Eligibility:**

Students may re-establish eligibility for financial aid by taking appropriate action that brings the student into compliance with the standards. Readmission to Liberty University after ACADEMIC suspension or approval of an ACADEMIC suspension appeal does not automatically reinstate FINANCIAL AID eligibility after a FINANCIAL AID suspension. Reinstatement of aid eligibility is not retroactive. Reinstatement of aid eligibility will only affect current or future enrollment periods.

- **Exemption of Certain Institutional Funds:**

Some specific institutionally funded sources of financial aid are excluded from the minimum requirements under the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy. These funds are:

- The Distance Learning Program Alumni Scholarship
- The Distance Learning Program Military Tech Fee Waiver
- The Founder's Memorial Scholarship Programs (including associated funds formerly known as "Jerry Falwell Ministries - JFM" or "Jerry Falwell Scholarship - JFS").
- Discounts processed through Student Accounts (that are not listed as an aid fund) but as a resource.
- Liberty University employees who are not enrolled in a degree program –and- not receiving any other type of financial aid covered under this policy, are exempt from the 150% rule requirement. Please Note: The Dependent Grant in Aid (DGIA) program does require the student to be enrolled in a degree program and therefore DGIA recipients are subject to the 150% rule and other requirements within this policy.
- The LU VTAG Institutional Fund
- The WWMC Radio Scholarship Fund

- **Appeals:**

A student who is placed on financial aid suspension may appeal this decision. To appeal the financial aid suspension, a student must submit to the Director of Financial Aid a signed and dated letter of appeal explaining why s/he should not be suspended along with the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form and any supporting documentation. After committee review of the submitted appeal, the student will be notified of the decision in writing. All financial aid awards remain cancelled until the student follows these appeal procedures and receives a written notification of reinstatement. If a reinstatement is approved, the reinstatement will last from the date of the appeal approval until the next term measurement event.

Students on financial aid warning or probation status are not required to submit a letter of appeal since their financial aid eligibility will continue during the warning and probation status. In the cases of those students receiving financial aid in the form of subsidized employment, the student's worksite supervisor/s will be notified of the reinstatement.

Students who submit an appeal to the Financial Aid Office very late in a term or after the term has ended may lose financial aid eligibility because regulations may limit the time within which aid may be re-awarded and/or disbursed.

During the period of an approved appeal, adequate progress measured within the term allows the student to be classified as an approved appeal forwarded.

- **Student Should Monitor Progress**

Students are responsible to review their grades (when midterm and end-of-term grades are available) and compare their progress to the standards set forth in the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Policy to ensure that they are aware of their standing. As they review their academic information, students are encouraged to proactively seek assistance. For example, students could pursue additional academic advising, arrange tutoring, or regularly discuss their academic work with their instructor/s. The student's responsibility to monitor their own academic progress is important especially as the evaluation may immediately affect their financial aid eligibility for the next term. For example, failure to meet standards while on financial aid probation in the Spring term will immediately affect aid eligibility for the Summer term.

PLEASE NOTE: Since a financial aid suspension that is caused from one term's grades could immediately affect the next term's aid, even after the student begins attendance of that term, all students are encouraged to monitor their own progress very closely.

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