

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Federal and state regulations, and Muskingum University policy, require that students make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in their course of study in order to be eligible to receive financial aid. Official standards of SAP for retention of financial aid at Muskingum (which include a quantitative and qualitative component as described below) are set by the Financial Aid Committee on Academic Progress. Membership in this committee consists of representation from the Office of the Provost, the Vice-President of Enrollment, the Student Financial Services Office.

1. All financial aid awards are made contingent on students making SAP. If the University makes an award and subsequently discovers that academic progress was not made, the award will be withdrawn.
2. Decisions regarding SAP for the retention of financial aid are made by the Financial Aid Committee on Academic Progress. Appeals of any decision made by this committee should be directed to Student Financial Services. Questions regarding SAP should be directed to the Office of Student Financial Services.
3. The SAP requirements stated are applicable to federal financial assistance (including Federal Pell Grant, Federal TEACH Grant, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Work-Study, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Direct Loans and Federal Direct PLUS Loans) and Muskingum University aid. Programs run by state or private agencies are governed by the specific policies of those agencies.
4. SAP is monitored at the end of each term (including summer term).
5. Transfer credits count towards the evaluation of SAP.

## **SAP Requirements**

Muskingum's SAP requirements for retention of financial aid have both a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative element refers to the student's actual progression toward a degree by measuring the number of credit hours attempted per term. The qualitative requirement relates to the quality of a student's academic performance as measured by grade-point average.

Students should note that the SAP requirements are not the same as Muskingum's definition of good academic standing, as determined by the Office of the Provost, which requires a 2.0 grade average (cumulative and for the most recent semester completed).

The financial aid progress guidelines are minimum requirements which a student must meet to be eligible for financial assistance, provided that the Office of the Provost has determined that the student is academically eligible to be enrolled at Muskingum. It is therefore possible for a student to be eligible for financial aid but be dismissed for academic reasons, or for a student to be eligible to return to Muskingum, and be in good academic standing, but be denied eligibility for financial assistance due to lack of making SAP.

## **Quantitative Requirements (Pace of Progression)**

A student's pace of progression (or class completion rate) is evaluated at the end of every term to ensure that the student completes a program of study within a maximum time frame. Students must successfully complete 67% of all coursework attempted at Muskingum to meet the quantitative SAP requirement. Muskingum University considers four years of full-time study as the standard time frame to complete a baccalaureate degree program, and thus limits financial aid eligibility to six years of full-time study, which is 150% of the program length. Appropriate considerations are made for students whose standard program length is greater than four years, and for students who enroll part-time.

The following are considered when evaluating quantitative requirements:

- Students in programs requiring 124 credit hours for graduation are eligible for financial aid during the first 186 attempted hours as an undergraduate (150% time frame). All attempted hours are counted, whether or not financial aid was received or the coursework was successfully completed.
- An attempted course is one for which the student is registered at the end of the add/drop period.
- Withdrawals, incompletes and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours. Courses where credits are not calculated as attempted hours toward a degree are exempt from the SAP calculation.
- Repeated coursework will count toward the maximum time frame. Students may repeat a previously passed

course one time and still be eligible for financial aid. Students may repeat a course they withdrew from or failed and still receive financial aid as long as SAP requirements are still being met.

- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Repeated courses are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Audited courses are not considered attempted or earned.
- Transfer credits, including those received prior to entering Muskingum University and those earned subsequent to entry, such as in off-campus study, do not count in the calculation of the GPA, but are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned credit hours. Transfer hours are not counted in the calculation of maximum time frame.
- A change of major does not typically affect the calculation of SAP and maximum time frame. In an appeal situation a change of major(s) may be considered as a special circumstance in the calculation of maximum time frame.

## **Qualitative Requirements**

Students must have achieved the stipulated minimum grade-point average in accordance with the categories of credit hours attempted:

<u>Credit Hours Attempted</u>	<u>Required Cumulative GPA</u>
1-27	N/A
28-59	N/A
60-91	1.8
92+	2.0

Muskingum uses an escalating GPA qualitative assessment rather than a fixed 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement for students who have junior class standing (60-91 credit hours earned). This allows students in their junior year, whose GPA's are between 1.8 and 1.999, the opportunity to improve their GPA while taking courses mainly in their preferred field of study. Because of this, a student of junior standing may be meeting the quantitative and qualitative component of SAP, but may not be meeting the University's 2.0 GPA requirement for graduation. Steps are taken to ensure that achievement of the necessary 2.0 cumulative GPA for graduation is attainable.

A degree audit is performed by the Registrar's Office for all students of junior class standing whose cumulative GPA is at least 1.80 but below 2.0. The degree audit explains the remaining courses that are required for completion of the degree based on the student's major, and indicates the necessary overall GPA required in these remaining courses to achieve both the overall graduation and major GPA requirements. These summaries are delivered to the student and the financial aid advisor, who is responsible for explaining the requirements and expectations to the student. It is important to note that students in this situation do not lose their financial aid eligibility and are not required to request the degree audit on their own.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

If a student is not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements because of an incomplete grade, the student's financial aid will be suspended (provided the student was warned in a prior semester) until the grade is changed. Student progress on incomplete grades is monitored throughout the semester. Students are reviewed for Satisfactory Academic Progress after the end of each semester (and summer session). Student whose incomplete grades change are reviewed for SAP at that time.

### ***Repeated Courses***

Students may repeat a previously passed course once if the original grade is a C- or lower. Both grades of a repeated course will remain on the student's transcript but only the most recent grade is used in computing the GPA.

Muskingum University does not offer noncredit remedial courses.

## Course Withdrawals

Students may withdrawal from full semester courses through the 50<sup>th</sup> day of the semester, and from partial semester offerings until the course is three-fourths completed. Withdrawals are not permitted after the specified time (students receive an F). Withdrawals are considered attempted but not earned hours.

## SAP Statuses

### *Warning Period*

Academic progress will be reviewed at the end of each academic semester. If it is determined during the review that the student is not meeting SAP then the student will be placed in financial aid warning status. Students in financial aid warning will be eligible to receive financial aid during the warning period. Students will receive notification of their warning status via their Muskingum e-mail account. Students in warning status who do not meet SAP requirements after their next enrollment period will be placed on SAP suspension and will not be eligible for federal, state and need-based institutional aid.

### *Financial Aid Suspension*

Students in suspension status will be mailed a letter, to the home address on file with the University, explaining the reason(s) they are not meeting SAP. Future enrollment will be at the student's own expense until both qualitative and/or quantitative academic progress guidelines are met unless the student submits an acceptable appeal.

### *Financial Aid Probation*

Students who have submitted an acceptable SAP appeal will be placed on financial aid probation. Students are eligible for financial aid during the probationary period. More information regarding financial aid probation is provided below.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Information

Students on Financial Aid suspension due to not making SAP may appeal their status by following the procedures outlined below:

- 1) **Appeal Letter-** Students must submit in writing (an attached document sent via e-mail is acceptable) a detailed letter of appeal. Students must indicate why they failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow them to make SAP at the next evaluation. Students must be able to document mitigating circumstances that occurred during the course of the semester in question that could not have been anticipated prior to that period, and that adversely affected their ability to successfully complete their required coursework. Events such as the death or hospitalization of an immediate family member, extended illness suffered by the student, or other unforeseeable events that may have caused significant hardship for the student may be considered as examples of mitigating circumstances.

The appeal letter must include:

- Name, home address, and phone number
- The circumstances that affected academic progress
- What has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to meet SAP at the next evaluation
- The student's plan of action to improve academic performance.

The appeal should be no less than one page double spaced, and should be addressed to the Muskingum University Student Financial Services Office. It may be mailed to Muskingum University, Student Financial Services, 163 Stormont Street, New Concord, OH 43762, or the appeal may be e-mailed to the students Financial Aid Counselor:

Students with last names beginning with A-E - Amy Gooden at [agooden@muskingum.edu](mailto:agooden@muskingum.edu).

Students with last names beginning with F-R- Kelley Goodrich at [goodrich@muskingum.edu](mailto:goodrich@muskingum.edu)

Students with last names beginning with S-Z – Amber Gump at [amberg@muskingum.edu](mailto:amberg@muskingum.edu)

- 2) **Academic Plan-** Some students may be required to submit an academic plan as part of the appeal process. The Financial Aid Committee on Academic Progress will determine if an academic plan is required and will notify the student. Students are encouraged to use the *Satisfactory Academic Progress Academic Plan Form* which is mailed with the suspension letter. The plan must be submitted at the time of appeal.

### **After Submitting Your Appeal and Academic Plan (if required)**

Students will be notified by mail of the results of the appeal. Please make sure that the address listed on the appeal letter is current. The Committee will also contact students by their Muskingum e-mail account if they have any questions.

During the appeal review some of the factors that may be considered are described below. This list does not include all possible factors but the factors listed below will be reviewed as well as other information that the student provides:

- Whether the student can meet the SAP requirements after successful completion of the next semester of enrollment.
- Whether the student is successfully following their academic plan (if required) and is making progress under that plan
- Validity of the reasons for failing to meet the SAP standards
- Resolution of the problems leading up to failure to meet the standards
- Prior academic history
- Meetings with the student's academic advisor and usage of the Student Success Center
- Number of previous suspensions and reinstatements.
- Student's demonstrated motivation to succeed
- Quality of appeal and supporting documentation

Students whose appeals have been approved by the Committee will be placed on Financial Aid Probation status. A student may continue to receive financial assistance during the probationary period. At the end of the probationary period the student will either be removed from probation because the student is meeting SAP standards, remain on probation because the student is meeting the requirements of their academic plan (although still not meeting SAP requirements), or the student will be placed on suspension because standards are not met. Students placed in a subsequent suspension status have the option to appeal; however, the Committee may not accept appeals with similar circumstances as appeals submitted during prior terms. Students whose appeals are not approved will be placed in suspension status.

Students who are in suspension status may use one or more of the following payment options while attempting to regain SAP:

1. Students own resources
2. Muskingum University Payment Plan
3. Private Alternative Loan (with approved credit)

Reinstatement of financial aid eligibility will occur immediately upon the student's attainment of both the quantitative and/or qualitative benchmarks of SAP. Coursework taken at a school other than Muskingum, including summer coursework, will count toward meeting the quantitative requirement, but not the qualitative requirement.

### **Academic Plan Status**

A student who is on an approved academic plan will have his/her status reviewed after each academic term to ensure that the student is successfully following the plan. Students who are meeting their academic plan will still be eligible for financial aid. If the student does not meet the plan requirements (and is not meeting SAP) at any time, financial aid eligibility will be revoked for the subsequent term and the student will be placed in suspension status. The student has the

option to appeal the suspension status. Students following an academic plan can exceed the maximum time frame requirements.

### **Merit-Based Financial Assistance**

Students must meet additional requirements in order to retain academic scholarships awarded by Muskingum University. In addition to SAP, recipients of John Glenn, Muskingum Academic Scholarships, Science Division and Returning Student Scholarships must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average. Recipients of Muskie Awards must maintain SAP to ensure renewal of these awards.

Students who received Special Acknowledgment Awards prior to August 29, 2011 are no longer required to maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA to maintain eligibility. Students are now required to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to maintain eligibility.

Students who fail at any time to remain in good academic standing as determined by the Office of the VPAA are subject to the immediate loss of their scholarship.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements for Students Pursuing a Second Degree**

To obtain a second Bachelor's degree in a major different from that of the first degree conferred, a student must develop a plan of study comprised of at least 30 semester hours of courses that do not duplicate those constituting the majors of the first degree. The student must successfully complete at least 30 semester hours in residence at Muskingum beyond the first degree, including a capstone experience and half of the hours for the major.

Satisfactory Academic Progress review will only cover coursework completed towards the additional degree. A minimum grade point average of 2.00 or above must be earned for all coursework presented in the new program.

To meet the quantitative Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement, students must successfully complete 67% of all coursework, and financial aid is limited to 150% of the time required to complete the degree program.

### **International Students**

In addition to making SAP, International students with International Scholarships must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average. Recipients of International Awards and International Grants must maintain SAP in order to retain eligibility.

### **Graduate Students**

#### ***Quantitative Requirements***

A student's pace of progression (or class completion rate) is evaluated at the end of every term to ensure that the student completes a program of study within a maximum time frame. Graduate students must successfully complete 67% of all coursework attempted at Muskingum to meet the quantitative SAP requirement. Muskingum University considers three years of full-time study as the standard time frame to complete a graduate degree (MAE, MAT, MISST) program, and thus limits financial aid eligibility to 4.5 years of full-time study, which is 150% of the program length. Appropriate considerations are made for students whose standard program length is greater than two years, and for students who enroll part-time.

The following are considered when evaluating quantitative requirements:

- The 150% time frame, assuming the standard time frame of 3 years of full time enrollment (9 credit hours a semester), is equal to 9 semesters or 4.5 years of study. The maximum time frame for a graduate program is 81

hours. All attempted hours are counted, whether or not financial aid was received or the coursework was successfully completed.

- An attempted course is one for which the student is registered at the end of the add/drop period.
- Withdrawals, incompletes and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours. Courses where credits are not calculated as attempted hours toward a degree are exempt from the SAP calculation.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Repeated courses are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Audited courses are not considered attempted or earned.
- Transfer credits, including those received prior to entering Muskingum University and those earned subsequent to entry, such as in off-campus study, do not count in the calculation of the GPA, but are included in the calculation of both attempted and earned credit hours. Transfer hours are not counted in the calculation of maximum time frame.

**Course Repeat Policy** Students may repeat graduate courses with permission of their academic advisor. While the transcript will record both grades, only the second grade will be included in the calculation of the grade point average unless the second grade is I, WIP or W. Students may not register for any one course more than two times.

### ***Qualitative Requirements***

All graduate students at Muskingum University must have a 3.0 or better GPA to remain in good academic standing or to graduate. Higher grade or GPA standards mandated by individual graduate programs or by licensure requirements, however, take precedence over University minimum standards. The GPA requirement for SAP is 2.75. Students below a 3.0 GPA after their first year of full time enrollment will need to meet with their academic advisor to ensure they can achieve a 3.0 required for graduation.