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STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Satisfactory Academic Progress
Policy - Law

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Congress, mandates that institutions of higher education monitor the academic progress of students who receive federal financial aid. Baylor University has established the following minimum standards to be eligible for and continue to receive federal financial aid. This policy reflects the changes to federal regulations that are effective as of July 1, 2011.

Please note that state and institutional programs may have higher academic requirements, and eligibility for those financial aid programs is subject to the requirements of each program.

Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) will be reviewed annually, at the end of the spring enrollment period (quarter), and is based on the student meeting the requirements listed below:

Qualitative Requirement:
- Minimum 1.9 CGPA after the first year
- At the conclusion of the second year 2.0 CGPA

Quantitative Requirement:
- Student must earn a minimum of 75% of the credit hours attempted during the annual enrollment period being reviewed to be meeting SAP guidelines.

Pace Requirement:
- In addition to the above requirements, federal guidelines stipulate that a student must remain on course to graduate within an allotted timeframe, which is referred to as pace.
- Satisfactory academic progress regarding the pace is determined by dividing the total number of credit hours successfully completed by the total number of credit hours attempted (including transfer credit hours that have been accepted).
- The maximum timeframe for program completion is 150% of the published program length.

- Students must maintain a 67% completion rate overall based on attempted hours to be eligible for financial aid and to be meeting the pace requirement to graduate.

- In accordance with federal guidelines, should a student not meet the pace requirement, he/she is no longer eligible for federal aid.

Courses dropped after the twelfth-class day continue to count as attempted ours in calculating the percentage of completed hours each semester and in determining the overall progress toward degree completion when determining financial aid eligibility.

Annual Appeal:
If the student does not meet SAP, an appeal process is available annually for those students who had a personal injury or illness, death of a relative, or believe they had other mitigating circumstances that affected their ability to meet SAP. Financial aid will not be disbursed until SAP is met or an appeal approved.

Annual Probation Period:
This is the annual enrollment period(s) that the student may receive financial aid after an SAP appeal has been approved. Continuation of financial aid on probation is contingent on the student successfully meeting the provided academic plan of action provided with the approved appeal.

Annual Appeal Process:
Step One: Students who choose to follow the appeal process must:
- Submit Appeal Form to Student Financial Aid Office
  - Student must state why he or she failed to meet SAP requirements
  - Student must state what has changed so that he or she will meet SAP at the next review

Step Two: Student Financial Aid Office will:
- Review the Appeal Form
- Send results of appeal to the student
  - Approved appeals include:
    - Approval and terms of reinstatement of financial aid eligibility
    - Required to meet SAP in next enrollment period or
    - Required to follow an academic plan over an extended period
    - Consequences for not meeting terms of approval

    Approved appeals will result in financial aid being disbursed for the annual enrollment period

    o   Denied appeals include:
- Reasons for denial
- What the student must do to meet SAP

Denied appeals will result in financial aid being canceled until SAP is met

Step Three: Students must continue to meet terms, as established in the academic plan, until SAP is met in order to continue receiving financial aid on a probationary basis. Once SAP is met, students are no longer considered to be on probation.

Transfer Credits:
Accepted credit hours will be included in the SAP calculation for the next enrollment period.
- Assumes all accepted credits will be at least 2.0 GPA
- Counted in next evaluation period following receipt and review of transcript
- Admitted transfers are considered SAP eligible initially
- Transfer hours for returning students will be evaluated in the next enrollment period

Incomplete Grades:
Incomplete credit hours will be considered as attempted credit hours when meeting the pace component of SAP. Grades will be included in the CGPA component of SAP during the term in which they were assigned.

A formal SAP appeal will be required if a student has an ineligible SAP status due to incomplete grades. Evidence of incomplete grades that have since been changed to passing grades can be used to support an appeal request but are not required to submit an appeal. Retroactive financial aid may not be awarded or disbursed if the appeal or grade change is reviewed <u>after</u> the last day of the payment period/term.

Financial aid will not be disbursed until <u>all</u> prior academic year grades have been reviewed or the student has an approved SAP appeal. Students who are completing their thesis or dissertation are excluded from this process because of how grades are reported for these courses.

Dropped Classes:
Courses dropped prior to the 12th class day will not be counted as attempted hours in calculating the percentage of completed hours each enrollment period (semesters, trimesters, quarters) and in determining the overall progress toward degree completion when determining financial aid eligibility.

Withdrawing from the University:
When a student officially withdraws from the University, any credit hours showing as attempted will be included in the SAP review.

Covid-19 Provisions

ED guidance, as of June 24, 2020 states:

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Section 3509 of the CARES Act allows institutions to exclude from the quantitative component (pace measurement) of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) attempted credits 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 an institution to exercise this flexibility. However, to exclude attempted credits from SAP, an institution 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, inability to access wi-fi due to closed facilities. If an institution temporarily ceases operations during a period of enrollment, attempted credits for all affected students (specific to that enrollment period) may be excluded.

Regarding the effect of excluding attempted credits on maximum timeframe, SAP regulations require that the pace at which students progresses through the program ensures completion of that program within the maximum timeframe. A four-year program consisting of 120 credit hours with a maximum timeframe of 180 credit hours (150 percent of program length) must have a pace of 66.666 percent (rounded to 67 percent), cumulatively measured at each interval, to ensure students complete within maximum timeframe. For example, the pace of a student who has completed 78 of 120 attempted hours is 65 percent (78/120), below what is necessary to be making SAP. However, if 12 credits the student attempted but was unable to complete in spring of 2020 are excluded due to a COVID-19 related circumstance, the pace becomes 72 percent (79/108) and he or she is making SAP. The 12 credits are effectively excluded from the maximum timeframe as well as the measurement of pace.

https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/051520UPDATEDGuidanceInterruptStudyRelCOVID19May2020

At Baylor, students who met one of these circumstances were identified through conversations with the advisors and/or counselors. SAP statuses were also determined based on university-wide decisions that impacted all students. (For example, students were required to transition to online learning or were canceled with very little notice.)

In Spring and Summer 2020 and in accordance with federal regulations, students were not required to submit an appeal based upon the institution reasonably determining that the student's failure to complete credits were a result of Covid-19 related circumstances. Any student not meeting SAP for the period were placed on probation without an appeal.

In the Fall of 2020, we reinstated the official appeal requirement for students who were not meeting SAP.