

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) has adopted the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy according to federal and state mandates. Both federal statutes and the U.S. Department of Education regulations require institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards for SAP for students receiving federal aid.

The SEBTS Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy measures a student's performance in the following areas: **completion rate, maximum time frame, and cumulative grade point average (GPA)**. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students who are receiving federal financial aid are making measurable progress toward completing a degree program within a reasonable time frame. Satisfactory progress is the minimum requirement for a student to receive federal financial aid.

SAP consists of two types of measurements: quantitative (pace) and qualitative (GPA). The Office of Financial Aid monitors the SAP of all financial aid recipients by reviewing a student's academic record after grades are posted at the end of each fall, spring, and summer term. The completion rate calculation and maximum time frame calculation (quantitative measurement), and the GPA calculation (qualitative measurement) are reviewed using grades and hours from the student's total academic record. Failure to meet the standards in any of the three calculations may result in the cancellation of a student's awards.

### ***GUIDELINES***

The academic year at SEBTS for financial aid begins with fall and concludes with the spring term. The summer term is treated as a trailer. Satisfactory Academic Progress will be measured at the end of fall, spring, and summer terms. Beginning with fall 2019, students enrolling at SEBTS for the first time as a transfer student are considered initially to be meeting SAP.

The measurement of SAP will be made at the conclusion of each enrollment term. All periods of enrollment at SEBTS are included in the quantitative measurement of SAP, even if the student did not receive financial aid. Accepted transfer credits count towards both the student's attempted and earned credits, but transfer credits do not affect a student's GPA.

Students being re-admitted will have SAP reviewed based on their prior academic record at SEBTS. Students who have been academically suspended from SEBTS and are readmitted to the school are not automatically eligible for financial aid. If the student is not meeting the SAP guidelines, an approved appeal is required to receive aid.

### ***SAP NOTIFICATION***

SAP notices for students in *Warning* and *Termination* status will be sent via email after grades are posted. Students who submit SAP appeals will also be notified of the Appeal Committee's decision via email.

### ***MEASUREMENTS OF SAP***

Any student ending a term with a 0.0 GPA is automatically considered to be not meeting satisfactory academic progress unless they have less than 12 credit hours. Students with less than 12 credit hours completed are always considered to be meeting SAP for institutional purposes. Students with less than 12 credit hours have their SAP measured normally for any state or federal financial aid.

# Satisfactory Academic Performance

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## Cumulative Grade Point Average

According to Southeastern's academic policies, a student must earn or maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA or higher, otherwise they will be placed on academic probation. The only exception to this rule is for institutional aid for students who have not yet completed 12 credit hours, as described above. Students on academic probation are not necessarily on Financial Aid probation. The first semester a student fails to meet SAP, they are placed on Financial Aid Warning (see below). Remedial courses count in the GPA calculation. When calculating GPA, withdrawals (W, WF, WP), incomplete (I), Transfer (CR), Audit (AU), and passing grades from Pass/Fail courses (P) are not included in the GPA calculation.

## Completion Rate

Financial aid recipients are required to complete at least 67% of the cumulative credit hours attempted. The completion rate is derived by dividing the cumulative credit hours earned by the cumulative hours attempted, rounded to the nearest whole number. The following grades are used in computing the percentage of course work completed: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, FI, P, W, WF, WP, I, and CR. Unsatisfactory grades can be replaced by retaking a course. Southeastern follows the policies of the Registrar's Office for handling repeated courses. Currently, passing a previously failed course will still be counted toward the quantitative SAP calculations. However, when a course is failed a second time or more, those subsequent failed attempts will not be counted toward the quantitative SAP calculation. Grades of AU (audit) are not used in computing the percentage of coursework completed.

Course incompletes, withdrawals, and repeats will impact the quantitative standard of satisfactory academic progress, and incompletes should be completed as soon as possible.

The federal government requires the Office of Financial Aid to track a student's academic progress from the first date of enrollment, whether or not financial aid was received. Students returning to Southeastern after a break in enrollment should consult the Financial Aid office on how their previous academic history will affect their eligibility for financial aid. A student that completely withdraws from school during a semester and receives W, WF, or WP grades in all courses will generally return to school not meeting the SAP requirements.

## MAXIMUM TIME FRAME

Students are expected to graduate within 150% of the published length of their educational program, as measured in credit hours. For example, majors requiring 127 hours will be allowed to receive financial aid for up to 190 attempted hours ( $127 \times 1.5 = 190.5$ ). The total number of credits required for degree completion varies by program. The SEBTS Catalog will be used for initial calculations. Southeastern expects all its bachelor's degrees to be completed within 4 years, giving a maximum time frame of 6 years. Southeastern expects all its associate degrees to be completed within 2 years, giving a maximum time frame of 3 years.

All attempted hours used for the Quantitative Measure are used for Maximum Time Frame. A recalculation MAY be made for credit that does not apply if a student changes majors or degree programs. This recalculation may be made for Maximum Time Frame only. The 67% annual completion standard still applies. Students desiring a double major must still meet the 150% standard for completing their degree. The 150% is calculated from the degree which requires the most hours.

Once a determination is made that it is not possible to complete a degree within the Maximum Time Frame, the student's aid will be terminated. An appeal request may be submitted in these circumstances. See below under Appeals.

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### ***REPEATING COURSEWORK***

Students may repeatedly receive financial aid for failing the same course. However, these credit hours continue to count in Qualitative, Quantitative, and Maximum Time Frame calculations. A student may receive financial aid only ONCE again for a previously passed course. These credit hours also count Quantitative and Maximum Time Frame calculations.

### ***SAP STATUS***

#### FINANCIAL AID WARNING

A student who fails to meet SAP (excluding Maximum Time Frame) at the end of a term or semester will be placed on Financial Aid Warning, not to exceed one term or semester. During this one term or semester, the student may receive financial aid despite not meeting SAP standards. However, at the end of the Financial Aid Warning period, the student must meet SAP standards or will be suspended from further financial aid until SAP standards are met, or the student must appeal and have the appeal approved.

#### FINANCIAL AID TERMINATION

A student becomes ineligible for all federal student aid funds if a SAP review indicates he or she does not meet one or more of the requirements. Students who lose their eligibility have an opportunity to appeal.

#### FINANCIAL AID PROBATION

The status assigned to a student who fails to meet SAP standards, has appealed and had the appeal approved. This student may receive financial aid for one enrollment period or meet the terms of the approved appeal at the end of the following enrollment period in order to continue to receive financial aid.

Academic performance of students on Financial Aid Probation is monitored at the end of each term until the student is no longer violating SAP standards. Students who violate their probation status will be placed back in Financial Aid Termination. See above.

### ***APPEAL PROCESS***

A student's academic performance may be influenced by unusual or mitigating circumstances (i.e., illness, accident, death in the family, or hospitalization; or other family emergencies). In these cases, the student may wish to appeal his/her Financial Aid Termination. A Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid office will review for completeness and then forward appropriately completed appeals to the Appeals Committee. The appeal must include why the student failed to meet SAP and what has changed in the student's situation to make it possible for him/her to meet the guidelines in the future. Along with the appeal form, documentation must be provided. The following may be considered acceptable documentation to support the appeal:

- Statement from physician, counselor, etc. concerning the condition, dates of occurrence, and resolution
- Copy of death certificate, obituary, or statement from physician
- Copy of police reports or court records
- Documentation that supports circumstance and resolution

Appeals that are incomplete or lack supporting documentation will not be sent to the Appeals Committee, and the student will be notified by the Financial Aid Office.

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The appeals committee always has the discretion to prepare an SAP Academic Plan (which we refer to as an SAP Completion Plan), which the student must agree to and adhere to in order to regain eligibility. In instances where a student would be unable to regain SAP in the course of a single semester, such as Maximum Time Frame Appeals, an SAP Completion Plan will be required. SAP Completion Plans will be created by the SAP Appeals Committee, discussed with the student, and then signed by the student and the Associate Dean. This plan must specify the coursework necessary to regain SAP.

In the case of Maximum Time Frame Appeals, The SAP Completion Plan will identify what the student must do to complete the degree requirements and the projected graduation date. It serves as a guideline to assist the student in planning out a schedule of coursework that will allow them to successfully complete their degree. If the appeal is approved, a review will be done at the end of each enrollment period to ensure the student is meeting the terms of the Academic Plan. If not, further eligibility for aid is terminated immediately.

### ***REGAINING ELIGIBILITY***

Students not meeting Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Guidelines may re-establish eligibility on their own by taking action that brings them into compliance with standards.

### ***AVAILABILITY OF SAP POLICY***

This policy is available to students on the SEBTS website and in the Financial Aid Office. Awareness of this policy is also made as needed and a link to the policy will be included in all award notification e-mails. It will be updated as necessary or whenever changes in regulations occur.