

**University of South Carolina Regional Campuses**  
Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumer and Union

**Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (FASAP) Standards**  
Effective beginning Fall 2011

Federal regulations require the Financial Aid Office to establish and apply reasonable standards of satisfactory progress for the purpose of the receipt of financial assistance under the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The law requires institutions to develop policies regarding satisfactory academic progress (SAP). USC Regional Campus students who wish to be considered for financial aid must maintain satisfactory progress in their selected course of study as set forth in this policy. Students are evaluated on the basis of three criteria: 1) grade point average (GPA.), 2) credit hour completion rate (CHCR), and 3) maximum time frame limitation (MAXHRS).

1. **Grade Point Average (GPA)** - Students must maintain a minimum cumulative USC-GPA of 2.0 to be making satisfactory academic progress for financial aid.
2. **Credit Hour Completion Rate (CHCR)** - Students must complete with a passing grade 67% of all credit hours attempted to remain eligible for Financial Aid. Hours accepted for transfer are included in both attempted and earned hours respectively. Grades of A, B, C, D, and S count as attempted and earned credit hours. Students enrolled in audit courses (AUD) will not receive financial aid for these classes. Grades of F, I, NR, U, W, &, WF count as attempted but not earned credit hours and will negatively impact the percentage of completion. Example:

<u>Hour Attempted</u>	<u>Required % Completion</u>	<u>Must Earn</u>
30	67%	20
24	67%	16
19	67%	13
15	67%	10

3. **Maximum Time Frame Limitations (MAXHRS)** - The maximum time limit for a student to receive financial aid is 150% of the published program length.

The published program lengths for Associate Degree programs at the USC Regional Campuses are 60 credit hours and Bachelor Degree programs are 120 credit hours. For a student to be placed on unsatisfactory progress due to the maximum time frame, they would either meet or exceed 90 attempted hours for Associate Degree or 180 hours for Bachelor's Degree. All grades count as attempted hours. Please note that effective July 1, 2011, the Federal Government stipulates that any student who cannot complete their remaining courses in the 150% time frame will be ineligible at that the time the calculation is made.

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Published Length</u>		<u>MAXHRS</u>
Associate	60 Credit Hours	150%	90 Attempted Hours
AD Nursing	70 Credit Hours	150%	105 Attempted Hours
Bachelor	120 Credit Hours	150%	180 Attempted Hours

## Evaluation of Financial Aid Eligibility

- Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) are reviewed annually after grades are posted in spring semester. If a student's first term of enrollment is during a summer session, they will be reviewed at the end of the summer session(s). Students whose records are not reviewed at the end of spring or summer, will be reviewed when they submit the FAFSA for the current or upcoming year
- SAP standards are calculated using the cumulative GPA and cumulative completion rate. **Students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher and a completion rate of 67% or more.**
- Students will be placed on financial aid suspension if they have not met the standards of satisfactory academic progress. Students will be ineligible for aid during the suspension. Students will need to raise their GPA and/or completion rate to meet the minimum SAP requirements to regain financial aid eligibility or appeal their financial aid suspension, if applicable. (see Appeal Process)
- The evaluation period will be based on attendance in all prior semester(s) and will include all classes attempted whether federal aid was received or not. The initial evaluation will be based on all previous institutions attended once the transcripts are received, evaluated, and posted to the student's record. The student's cumulative GPA and completion ratio must meet the minimum standards or the student will be placed on suspension.
- Credits evaluated will include credits attempted at USC, transfer credits accepted by USC, and courses funded through consortium agreement.
- **Students who have attempted more than 150% of the credits** required for their program of study are not considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress and therefore, are ineligible for financial aid funds.
- Students seeking second degrees and students with double majors are monitored like any other students under this policy. If or when the student exceeds the maximum time frame allowed for their respective programs, students may appeal if they have mitigating circumstances. All transfer hours accepted by USC will be included when determining maximum timeframe eligibility.
- Students on probation and/or following a Financial Aid Eligibility Progress Plan will be evaluated according to the terms of the appeal and/or plan.
- Students who do not meet the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress will be notified in writing.
- Students may follow the appeal process or as outlined in the appeals section. Students will not have eligibility for any further federal aid until they have met the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards or have been granted an appeal approval.

## FASAP Additional Policies

Timing of Financial Aid SAP review- Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (FASAP) is reviewed annually after grades are posted in spring semester. Students whose records are not reviewed at the end of spring or summer, will be reviewed when they submit the FAFSA for the current or upcoming year.

SAP Academic Year – The academic year for Financial Aid Satisfactory Progress is comprised of the fall, spring and summer.

Consistent Applications- Federal regulation requires all students, *including those students not currently receiving any financial aid*, be evaluated and notified of eligibility status based on financial aid SAP standards.

Academic Forgiveness- Financial Aid regulations do not have a provision for academic forgiveness; therefore, all credits and grades removed for academic forgiveness must be used to calculate financial aid SAP standards.

Transfer Hours and GPA- Transfer course completion rate, minimum GPA, and maximum time frame requirements will be evaluated for satisfactory academic progress based on the transfer credits and grades accepted by USC at the time of acceptance.

Withdrawals-

- Students who officially withdraw from the University are required to continue to meet the course completion rate, minimum GPA, and maximum time frame.
- Students who unofficially withdraw from the University, or if the only grade received is F must appeal to have financial aid reinstated.
- Please be aware the University has a policy regarding the repayment of financial aid due to withdrawing.

Incomplete Grades- Hours for which an incomplete grade is received will count toward attempted but not earned hours in the calculation of the course completion rate. The final grade for the incomplete hours will be calculated into the GPA when the course is graded. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office when the course is graded.

Repeated Coursework- All hours attempted (original and repeated) will count toward the completion rate and maximum time frame. Only grades counted by the Records Office will count in the cumulative GPA for financial aid purposes.

Developmental/Remedial Coursework- Federal regulation limits the number of developmental credits covered by financial aid funds to 30 hours. Developmental/remedial coursework will count towards the credit hour completion rate.

Double/Change Major(s) - The Satisfactory Academic Progress policy does not allow the University to increase the Maximum Time Frame of attempted hours due to double majors or a change in major. Student will have to appeal if exceed maximum time frame (MAXHRS).

Second Degrees- A student may receive financial aid to earn a second degree so long as he or she completes the second degree within 150% maximum time frame (210 total attempted credit hours combined for all undergraduate degrees).The student must also include an advisor-signed Graduation Plan for review.

Graduation Plan - An advisor-signed graduation plan must be provided indicating exactly what courses are required to complete the degree. Those hours are multiplied by 1.5 and that number is added to the student's current total attempted hours to determine the new MAXHRS.

Academic Plan- If a student submits a FA-Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal and it is NOT possible for them to maintain the required Course Completion Rate and GPA to maintain SAP after one semester of enrollment, the appeal maybe approved with a FASAP Academic Plan. The plan must be constructed to permit the student to meet FASAP standards within a reasonable period of time. If the student fails to meet the conditions of the academic plan the student is ineligible to receive aid.

## Financial Aid Programs Covered by these Standards

Federal Pell Grant  
Federal Work-Study  
Federal Supplemental Educational  
Opportunity Grants  
Federal Perkins Loans  
Federal Direct Loans  
subsidized and unsubsidized  
Federal Direct PLUS Loans  
Private Educational Loans

South Carolina Teacher Loan  
Program  
South Carolina State Need Based  
Grants  
South Carolina LIFE Scholarship  
South Carolina Lottery Tuition  
Assistance Program  
Other federal or state programs as  
required

## **FASAP Statuses**

**FASAP Good Standing** - Student meets all the SAP criteria.

**FASAP Probation** – Student’s appeal for FASAP reviewed and approved. Approvals are granted for one semester at a time. At the end of the semester the student will be reviewed to determine the following:

- student is meeting all FASAP standard or
- student successfully completing the requirements of the Academic Plan

If the student is not meeting one of the above the student status will return to **FASAP** suspension status.

**FASAP Suspension** - Students who fail to meet any of the SAP criteria, singularly or in any combination, will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FASUSP) from the time of the status calculation until the next calculation period (end of spring term). Any student, who is on FASUSP, will have their financial aid suspended until a time when they have successfully met all SAP criteria and have been placed back into Good Standing at the next calculation period (end of spring term).

If you have mitigating circumstances that have caused you to be placed into this category, such as major illness, death in family or other tragic event AND you can provide corresponding evidence you may submit an appeal.

### **Notification of Status and Right to Appeal-**

Students will be notified in writing of changes to SAP status and any appeal decisions.

Paying out of pocket for classes or sitting out a semester is not grounds for reinstatement of aid. Students must bring their academic progress back into compliance or have an appeal approved to have aid reinstated.

A student who has an appeal approved will be placed into a Financial Aid Probation or Eligibility Progress Plan (Academic or Graduation Plan) status for the following semester of enrollment .The appeal approval notification may list restrictions or requirements to be followed by the student. Failure to follow restrictions or requirements may result in immediate forfeiture of financial aid.

## SAP Appeal Process

A student who has lost financial aid eligibility due to extenuating circumstances may appeal. Extenuating circumstances that may include: personal illness or accident, serious illness or death within immediate family, or other circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.

Students appealing their Satisfactory Academic Progress status are required to submit an appeal packet for review. **The appeal packet MUST contain the following items and information:**

1. An appeal statement, which must:
  - a. Be typed, no handwritten appeals accepted.
  - b. State what caused the student to fail the SAP policy, and
  - c. State what corrective action/steps the student has taken to maintain SAP by the next evaluation period?
2. Provide supporting documentation (Examples of documentation could include an obituary notice, divorce decree, or a letter from a physician, attorney, social services agency, parole officer, employer, etc)
3. Academic Plan – you must sit down with your academic advisor and develop an academic plan that includes all courses required for your major, those courses that have been successfully completed and all remaining coursework. The Academic plan must be signed by the student and advisor.
  - a) Future SAP determinations will be based upon the Academic Plan so any change in this plan must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office prior to the determination date (end of Spring Semester).
  - b) Transfer hours will be considered in determining successful completion of SAP.

(Or)

4. Graduation Plan- Students exceeding the Maximum Time Frame (150%) **MUST** submit a Graduation Plan with their appeal packet. This Graduation Plan should consist of the classes and number of hours left to graduate as well as the signature of the student's advisor. Failure to submit this Graduation Plan with appeal packet may result in an immediate denial. However, submitting a signed Graduation Plan does not guarantee an approved appeal. If the student's appeal is approved, the Graduation Plan will be reviewed at the end of each term. If a student's appeal for Maximum Time Frame, or exceeding 150%, is approved, they will **ONLY** be approved for the number of hours indicated on their Graduation Plan.

The Committee will not review cases arising from poor academic and social choices made by the student or "the need" to have financial aid to continue as a student. The appeal will be deemed incomplete if it does not address all of the items listed above. Incomplete appeals will not be forwarded to committee for review but returned to the student.

### **SAP Appeal Review Process**

The outcome of an appeal may include a

- denial (or)
- approval for a probationary period (or)
- approval with an Academic Plan or Graduation Plan to assure students meets the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Process.

FASAP appeals are reviewed by the Financial Aid SAP Committee. The FASAP Committee's decision is final. The student may not submit any subsequent requests for funding consideration. In order to regain eligibility for financial aid, the student would need to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards. Students who do not meet the terms of financial aid probation may permanently lose eligibility for federal student aid at the Regional Campus.

Notification: Students will be notified in writing of the results of the appeal, and of any restrictions or conditions pertaining to their appeal.

**Why My SAP Appeal and any subsequent information MUST be in writing?**

Federal SAP policy is governed by federal regulations and federal regulations are audited each year by the Dept of Ed through our state auditor. Those regulations state that we are required to base an appeal equally and consistently to all students who fail to meet SAP standards. Our posted policy states you must submit your appeal in writing and in order to comply with the legislation we cannot deter from that position. So any issue related to a student's SAP appeal must be in a written format. Unfortunately, since we are required to have your appeal in writing, any information you may wish to provide NOT in written format (verbally) cannot be admissible for a defense of our approval/denial.

**Appeal Deadline**

The deadline for receipt of FASAP appeals in the Student Financial Aid Office for the term financial aid reinstatement is requested are as follows:

<u>Term desire financial aid</u>	<u>Priority Deadline</u>
Fall	August 1
Spring	December 1
Summer I	April 1
Summer II	May 1

Note: Each regional campus is also allowed to establish a Final Deadline for appeals to be submitted for any term. Students must submit appeals by this final deadline or they will not be able to receive financial aid for that term, and the appeal will only be considered for the next term of enrollment. Contact the individual Financial Aid Office for these deadlines.

**Understanding Fee Payment**

- Students are responsible for paying their bill for tuition and fees by the bill due date, whether or not they are eligible for financial aid.
- If you had financial aid awarded for the coming term and had already pre-paid your tuition and fees before your financial aid suspension was posted, your tuition and fees will continue to be deferred until a decision is made on your appeal provided you submitted the appeal by the Final Deadline.
  - If the decision is to approve the appeal, your aid will remain in place based on your eligibility at the time of the appeal decision
  - If the decision is to deny the appeal, your aid will be removed from your account and you will be responsible for reconciling your bill with the business office.
- If you **did not** use financial aid to pre-pay your tuition and fees for the coming term before your financial aid suspension was posted, any aid already awarded will be cancelled and you will either need to pay your tuition and fees or enroll in a Tuition Payment Plan with the regional business office; otherwise your classes will be dropped

for non-payment. Your appeal will still be considered if it is turned in by the Final Deadline, but your financial aid will not be reinstated unless your appeal is approved.

- If you **did not** have financial aid at the time your suspension was posted, you will either need to pay your tuition and fee bill or enroll in Tuition Payment Plan or your classes will be dropped for non-payment.
- If you register for classes, you **must** attend them in order to be considered eligible for financial aid.
- If your appeal is denied you are responsible for any unpaid tuition and fees, you must contact the Business Office.
- Due to the large volume of appeals submitted, it may take several weeks for all appeals to be reviewed. Once a decision on your appeal has been made, you will be notified in writing.

### Financial Aid Contact Information

#### University of South Carolina Lancaster

P O Box 889 Lancaster SC 29721  
476 Hubbard Dr. Lancaster SC 29720  
Phone: 803-313-7068 Fax: 803-313-7168  
[usclfa@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:usclfa@mailbox.sc.edu)  
School Code: 003453

#### University of South Carolina Sumter

200 Miller Road Sumter SC 29150  
Phone: 803-775-6341 Fax: 803-938-3847  
[sufinaid@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sufinaid@mailbox.sc.edu)  
School Code: 003426

#### University of South Carolina Salkehatchie

P O Box 617 Allendale SC 29810  
628 Spruce Street, Allendale SC 29810  
Phone: 803-584-3446 Fax: 803-584-3884  
School Code: 003454

#### University of South Carolina Union

P O Drawer 729 Union SC 29379  
309 East Academy St. Union SC 29739  
Phone: 864-429-8728 Fax: 864-427-3682  
School Code: 004927