

Satisfactory Academic Progress



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Federal financial aid funds are awarded with the understanding that students will make progress toward their chosen degree. The University of South Alabama, as directed by the U.S. Department of Education, has established guidelines (Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress) to follow in order to meet this goal.

Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress apply for the following types of federal financial aid:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Work-Study
- Federal Stafford Loan
- Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)
- Federal Parent Loan for Graduate Students.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT STANDARDS

The Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for undergraduate students have four components.

Matriculation: Students must be formally accepted into a degree-granting program at the University of South Alabama, and be enrolled in classes required for the degree program.

Grade-Point Average: After attending four terms of post-secondary education, a minimum of a cumulative 2.0 GPA must be maintained. GPAs from transfer colleges will not factor into your cumulative GPA at USA.

Maximum Timeframe: The maximum timeframe may not exceed 16 full-time equivalent semesters attempted. Transfer hours and bankrupted hours are included in the total hours attempted as well as all acceptable and unacceptable grades. Students seeking a second undergraduate degree will be permitted to enroll in up to eight (8) full-time equivalent semesters beyond the first degree.

Pace of Progression Requirements: To ensure that students earn a degree within the maximum timeframe allowed, the student's progress will be monitored each term. The following guidelines are used:

- Students must have completed and earned 75% of the cumulative hours attempted at USA.

GRADUATE STUDENT STANDARDS

(excluding MD majors in the College of Medicine)

Graduate and Doctoral students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements. Progress will be monitored at the time of each application. The following guidelines are used.

Matriculation: Students must be formally accepted into a degree-granting program at the University of South Alabama, and enroll in classes required for the degree program.

Grade-Point Average: Determined by the college or department.

Maximum Timeframe:

- Master's Degree - 10 full-time equivalent semesters.
- Doctoral students - 20 full-time equivalent semesters including Master's work.

Pace of Progression Requirements: To ensure that students earn a degree within the maximum timeframe allowed, the student's progress will be monitored each term. The following guidelines are used:

The University's academic standards for graduate students are the qualitative standards for this policy. The quantitative component is defined as passing 50% of all hours attempted. The overall time frame is defined as 10 full-time equivalent semesters.

Doctoral Students - The University's academic standards for doctoral students are the qualitative standards for this policy. The quantitative component is defined as passing 50% of all hours attempted. The overall time frame is defined as 20 full-time equivalent semesters including graduate work.

WHAT IS A FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT SEMESTER?

A full-time equivalent semester is determined based on the number of attempted credit hours divided by twelve. For a graduate student, the number of attempted credit hours is divided by six.

Students who have reached the maximum timeframe allowed based on the number of full-time equivalent semesters are no longer eligible for federal aid.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Courses with non-assigned grades including withdrawals are considered in the determination of the percentage of hours completed toward the degree.
- Acceptable grades are: A, B, C, D, E, S, P. Unacceptable grades are: F, F*, U, I, X, WD, AU, UA, N.
- All terms of attendance are reviewed including terms no federal financial aid was received.
- Students transferring to USA are assumed to be maintaining reasonable progress. Hours transferred from prior schools will be considered in establishing the class standing for grade requirements and the Maximum Timeframe allowed to receive federal aid.
- Credit hours earned prior to declaring academic bankruptcy will be counted in all academic progress components.
- If a student repeats classes previously taken and passed, their percentage earned could be negatively affected.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is separate from the Grade Replacement Policy. Changes in your cumulative GPA and/or deficient hours due to grade forgiveness will not be taken into account in your financial suspension or appeal until you have completed the class.
- Repeating classes previously passed can negatively affect your eligibility for federal aid.
- If students fail to meet any one of the four academic standard components, they will lose their eligibility for federal financial aid funds.
- If the decision of the Office of Financial Aid is not acceptable to you, you may submit a typed letter to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services. His decision is final.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS APPEAL PROCEDURES

The academic records of all students who are receiving or applying for federal financial aid will be reviewed each semester. Students who fail to meet the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress will be sent an email notifying them that they are no longer eligible to receive federal financial aid funds.

Students have the following options available:

1. Complete 12 consecutive credit hours at USA that are required for your degree with no final grades less than a "C" without the use of federal funds. The 12 hours may be taken all at once or over more than one semester. After the 12 hours have been completed, the student would then need to submit a typed or written letter of appeal. The Office of Financial Aid would review the request to determine if aid will or will not be restored in a probationary status. Any withdrawals during this time are not acceptable. #1 is not an option if you have previously been on financial aid probation.
2. Or, submit a typed or written appeal letter to the Office of Financial Aid if the failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress was due to extenuating circumstances (ex: a significant injury or illness of the student or the death of an immediate family member). Attach documentation to support your letter and be sure to explain what change has occurred allowing you to correct your academic deficiencies. Submitting an appeal letter does not guarantee that financial aid will be reinstated. Results of your financial aid appeal letter can be viewed at <http://paws.southalabama.edu> under "Academic Progress" within 14 business days.
3. Or, make up any hour deficiency and/or attain the required cumulative GPA of 2.0 without the use of federal funds. Once completed, submit written notification to the Office of Financial Aid and your request for probation will be reviewed.