



## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The policy contained herein complies with the federal regulations governing Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, as established in the Program Integrity final rules published October 29, 2010 (effective July 1, 2011), and subsequent amendments (including those in 2016 and 2020). The core applicable regulations are 34 CFR §§ 668.16(e), 668.32(f), and 668.34, as interpreted in the current Federal Student Aid Handbook.

The programs governed by this policy include Title IV programs: Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Direct Loan programs (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS, and Graduate PLUS), and Federal Work-Study Program, as well as other State and Institutional Programs for which SAP compliance is required, as applicable.

Louisiana Tech University evaluates all applicants for Federal Financial Aid eligibility using the policy contained herein. This policy meets federal requirements but may not coincide with other academic institutions' policies as each institution is required to develop its own policy. This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate academic programs offered at Louisiana Tech University.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for each student shall be evaluated and determined at the end of each academic year (the end of each Spring quarter) or at the time of admission/re-admission. Eligibility is evaluated using three criteria: 1) GPA, 2) Completion rate (PACE), and 3) the 150% rule for maximum aggregate hours. Upon posting grades/transcripts and attendance data (at the end of each Spring quarter), a student's cumulative GPA will be evaluated along with the completion rate (PACE). PACE is determined by dividing the cumulative hours earned (EHRS) at, or transferred to, Louisiana Tech University by the cumulative hours attempted (AHRS) at, or transferred to, Louisiana Tech University. All withdrawals (W), Incompletes (I), No Credit (NC), Completed/Passed (A, B, C, D, S), and Failed (F) courses are included in attempted hours for calculating PACE.

The U.S. Department of Education allows a student a maximum of 150% of their program hours to earn a degree. If a student has met, exceeded, or cannot achieve their degree before reaching the 150% rule, the only action available is to appeal their limit or complete the program without further federal financial aid. Appeals for excessive aggregate hours must be prepared and submitted according to the guidance furnished later in this policy.

### Undergraduate Eligibility

Eligible students must have a minimum of a 2.00 undergraduate cumulative GPA with at least 67% completion rate (PACE) and must meet the criteria for the 150% rule based on their program hour requirements. All attempted undergraduate level hours are calculated as part of 150% rule. A completion rate greater than or equal to 66.5% shall be considered as meeting PACE. A completion rate of less than 66.5% will not meet the PACE requirement.

### Graduate Eligibility

Eligible students must have a minimum of a 3.00 graduate cumulative GPA with at least 67% completion rate (PACE) and must meet the criteria for the 150% rule based on the program hour requirements. All attempted graduate level hours (posted on Student Record) are calculated as part of the 150% rule. A completion rate greater than or equal to

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66.5% shall be considered as meeting PACE. A completion rate of less than 66.5% will not meet the PACE requirement.

Louisiana Tech University students found to be below SAP standards for GPA and/or PACE at the time of evaluation will be deemed ineligible for federal financial aid and have funds terminated for the upcoming quarter. *(See additional descriptions Dual Enrollment and Transfer students)* A student who has Title IV eligibility terminated has the option to either submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal or attend at their own expense until their cumulative GPA and/or PACE are within SAP standards. An approved appeal or regaining SAP standards through an informal review or annual evaluation, will result in resumed eligibility if the student is within the 150% rule and meeting all SAP requirements.

A student's SAP status cannot be retroactively reinstated for a prior quarter.

Specific appeal requirements can be found below or on the [SAP Appeal form](#). The following will provide definitions and appeal guidance.

#### Additional Descriptions to Policy

**Academic renewal:** Students granted academic renewal will have to appeal for federal financial aid eligibility. If the appeal is approved, students will still have all attempted hours considered when evaluating aggregate hours. Questions about Academic Renewal should be addressed to the Admissions Office at (318) 257-3036.

**Appeal:** Process for requesting Office of Financial Aid to engage in a review for exceptions to the policy for an individual student. Students must initiate the appeal.

**Disabilities:** Students who arrive at Louisiana Tech and are aware of learning or other disabilities should immediately contact the Office of Disability Services so that appropriate accommodation can be provided. A student with a documented disability and functional limitations is still held to the same academic expectations as other students. If the student is registered with the Office of Disability Services and receives appropriate accommodation, the student should maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid eligibility purposes.

**Dual Enrollment (Early Start) and Summer Enrichment:** High school students taking college courses will have these courses evaluated when matriculating at Louisiana Tech University. If the true freshman's college level courses attempted prior to freshman enrollment fail to meet the 2.00 cumulative GPA and/or 67% completion requirements (PACE), the student will remain eligible until the annual SAP evaluation (end of spring quarter). The student is expected to raise their grades and completion rate to the required level by the end of the first academic year.

**Reestablishing Title IV aid eligibility:** When a student who has had their federal financial aid funds terminated is found to be meeting SAP standards (GPA, PACE, 150% rule).

**Transfer Students:** Students entering Louisiana Tech University from previous or intervening post-secondary institutions must submit all prior transcripts to the Admissions Office for subsequent posting by the Registrar to the student's Louisiana Tech University academic record. Once all transcripts have been received the transfer student will be evaluated for GPA, PACE, and the 150% rule requirement to determine eligibility for Title IV Aid. SAP status for transfer students is either eligible or ineligible. If it is determined a student is ineligible, the student may appeal and/or fund the academic costs with alternative funds until they reestablish aid eligibility. The eligibility determination cannot be complete until all academic transcripts have been received by the Registrar's office. A student will not receive a financial aid offer with an incomplete transcript evaluation.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Descriptions and Instructions

Students may appeal SAP decisions if extenuating circumstances impacted their academic performance.

Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Prolonged illness, medical condition, or injury to student or immediate family member
- Death of an immediate family member
- Other extenuation circumstances beyond the student's control

Examples of Supporting Documentation include, but are not limited to:

- Physician's letters and hospital records (must include dates of illness and recovery time)
- Death certificate or obituary
- Court or police documents
- Official letter on letterhead from third party licensed health professional

SAP Appeals must include the following:

1. Completed SAP Appeal Form
2. Letter of Explanation which has the following elements:
  - a. The mitigating circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergency).
  - b. How and/or why the circumstance caused poor academic performance
  - c. What actions are being taken to improve academic performance
3. Supporting Documentation:
  - a. Examples: Medical records, obituaries, or letters from academic advisors.
4. If applicable, a student must submit an Academic Degree Completion Plan (required student has exceeded the 150% rule). The Academic Degree Completion Plan must:
  - a. Be signed by the academic advisor and student
  - b. List the terms, courses, and credit hours the student will take for program completion

Appeals must be submitted by the deadline for the relevant quarter. Approved appeals will result in temporary eligibility of financial aid under specific conditions determined by the Office of Financial Aid. Appeals submitted without documentation will result in an automatic denial and will count toward the 2 maximum yearly appeals. Filing an appeal does not guarantee approval and the decision is at the discretion of the Financial Aid Office.

Appeals for exceptions to the policy must be submitted in writing using the Tech Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form with all appropriate documentation. Suggesting that the Office of Financial Aid contact doctors, professors, or other people for additional information is not considered adequate documentation. Appeals must be received no later than the deadline (stated on form or in a notification letter) for the specific quarter that you are requesting eligibility. We recommend submitting an appeal as soon as possible after the deficiency occurs so that the appeal can be evaluated before classes begin. A student may only appeal twice during an academic year at Louisiana Tech University. Federal regulations prohibit multiple appeals for the same set of circumstances.

If an appeal results in a student being placed on Probation, the student must meet SAP standards by the end of the quarter. If a student fails to meet SAP standards by the end of the quarter on Probation, they will be deemed ineligible. While a student can be placed on probation multiple times through an academic career, regulation does not allow for consecutive quarters with the status of probation without intervening compliance. A student that fails probation and then successfully appeals for a subsequent quarter, must be placed on an academic plan.

Appeals for excessive aggregate hours (150% Rule) must include in the letter an explanation from the student for the need for additional hours, documentation that supports your explanation, an Academic Degree Completion Plan signed by the advisor (found on the Financial Aid Forms page), which includes the exact courses a student will take for each specific quarter, and an expected graduation date. These documents must be furnished with the appeal. A successful appeal will allow you to be "on completion plan". Any deviation from the completion plan will result in cancellation

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of aid, except when an updated completion plan is approved by both the student's academic advisor and the Office of Financial Aid.

**Informal Review:** If a student is determined to be ineligible when the annual SAP evaluation is conducted at the end of the Spring quarter, but meets SAP eligibility requirements in a subsequent quarter, but before the next annual SAP evaluation period, a student may submit a request for an informal review of their SAP eligibility. During the Informal Review the Office of Financial Aid shall determine if the student has regained aid eligibility by meeting SAP standards. If the student has regained aid eligibility, they will be eligible to receive federal aid for current and/or future quarters. Aid cannot be reinstated for a prior quarter in which the student was determined SAP ineligible.

**Additional degrees:** Students seeking additional degrees are limited as follows:

Associate.....60 credit hours beyond prior degree (not to exceed the maximum for one bachelor's program)

Bachelors.....60 credit hours beyond prior degree

Masters.....45 credit hours beyond prior degree

Students seeking a third Associate, Bachelor's, or Master's Degree are not eligible for federal financial aid. Doctorates are considered terminal degrees thus no federal aid is available for a second doctoral program.

Developmental/ESL/Remedial courses are counted as hours attempted and, if successfully completed, hours earned unless the aggregate total exceeds 30. Developmental/ESL/Remedial courses in excess of 30 hours are not counted when determining enrollment level for federal aid.

**Double Majors and multiple minors:** Students seeking double majors must complete their degree program for the primary major within the limits set for that major. Additional hours will not be allowed for double majors, multiple minors or concentrations.

**Repeated Courses:** All attempts at a repeated course will be computed into the cumulative grade point average. For courses that cannot be repeated for credit, only the last attempt is computed into the total hours earned. Students who earn an "F" in a course must repeat the course with a passing grade in order to earn credit. The last attempt of a repeated course is considered as the final grade.

#### Financial Aid Eligibility Status Descriptions

**Eligible** – Student is meeting Cumulative GPA and PACE requirements without conditions.

**Ineligible** – Student is not meeting SAP standards, and no exceptions have been granted.

**Probation** – Student failed to meet SAP standards and had their appeal approved to receive aid. Probation is a one quarter status, and the student must meet SAP standards at the end of probation. If the student fails to meet SAP standards by the end of the Probation period, they will be ineligible for Title IV aid. Students who fail the Probation will be required to submit a new SAP appeal if they intend to receive Title IV Aid.

**Academic Plan** – Student failed to meet SAP standards and had their appeal approved to receive aid. A student may be required to achieve specific academic performance levels such as 100% successful completion, no dropped courses, F's, or withdrawals, and a specified GPA. Students who appeal for the 150% rule must take and pass the exact courses defined in the Academic Degree Completion Plan approved with the SAP Appeal. Students must agree to the terms and conditions of the plan laid out by the Office of Financial Aid.

### Other Academic Status Descriptions

Academic Probation: has no direct correlation to eligibility for federal financial aid. Contact the Registrar's Office at (318) 257-2176 for further information.

Academic Suspension: Students are ineligible for financial aid while suspended. An explanation of cumulative grade point averages and their effect on enrollment is found in the Louisiana Tech University Catalog. Contact the Registrar's Office at (318) 257-2176 for further information.

Unconditional Admission: Graduate students must be admitted UNCONDITIONALLY to the graduate school in a valid degree program before they will be considered for graduate level financial aid. Proof of unconditional admission may be requested by the Financial Aid Department.

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