

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards To Receive Financial Aid

All institutions of higher education must measure students' academic progress toward graduation as required for participation in the Federal Title IV student aid programs, state need-based program, some Winthrop programs, and some private loans. These programs include Pell, Supplemental Educational Opportunity (SEOG) and TEACH Grants; Work-Study; Direct Student and PLUS (Graduate/Parent) Loans, South Carolina Grant, Winthrop academic scholarships, need-based aid and Private Loans.

Types of Measurement

Academic progress for financial aid must be measured by both qualitative and quantitative standards. Qualitative measurement refers to grade point average. Quantitative refers to the percentage of hours earned over a period of time. Students who fail to meet either the qualitative or quantitative standards of satisfactory academic progress are ineligible to receive federal student aid.

Qualitative (Grade Point Average)

Winthrop's qualitative measure is consistent with the University's determination of undergraduate students' academic eligibility according to the standards published in the *Academic Regulations* section of the Undergraduate Catalog. All undergraduate students must **maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA**.

Undergraduate students meeting the qualitative standards, who are eligible to continue enrollment at Winthrop, are deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress so long as the student also meets the quantitative standards.

Graduate students are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress by qualitative standards as long as the student meets the Graduate School's academic requirements for continued enrollment.

Quantitative (Hours Earned)

The quantitative measurement consists of two parts: Maximum time frame (total hours attempted) and percentage of hours earned out of hours attempted.

Maximum Time Frame: Students must complete a first baccalaureate degree within 150% of the published time to complete the degree program. Therefore, students who attempt more than 180 semester hours have met the maximum time frame for obtaining a first baccalaureate degree at Winthrop and are, therefore, not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress. Total hours attempted include hours attempted at Winthrop plus hours accepted for transfer from other institutions.

Graduate students must complete coursework within 150% of the time limit established for degree-granting purposes as published in the graduate catalog.

Percentage of Hours Earned: Students must cumulatively earn 66.67% (two-thirds) of all hours attempted to make sufficient progress toward their first baccalaureate degree within the maximum time frame stated above. This also applies to students seeking a second baccalaureate degree and students seeking a graduate degree or graduate certificate.

The percentage of hours earned is determined by dividing the total cumulative number of hours earned by the total cumulative number of hours attempted. The resulting percentage must equal or exceed 66.67 for a student to be considered making satisfactory academic progress.

***Transfer Hours:* Credit hours from another institution that are accepted by Winthrop are counted as both attempted and earned hours when calculating the percentage of hours earned.**

Credit hours with grades of S/U and CR/UN are included in quantitative calculation as attempted, with “S” and “CR” grades also included in credit hours earned.

Students who attended Winthrop University anytime in Spring 2020 through Spring 2023, who were previously determined by the Office of Financial Aid to have had academic issues caused by COVID-19, will have non-passed coursework during those affected terms excluded from the quantitative calculation (undergraduate and graduate). Federal regulations prevent this exception from being retroactively granted after spring 2023.

Repetitions, Withdrawals and Incomplete Grades

Repeating courses and Academic Forgiveness: In accordance with Winthrop’s academic policy, students are allowed to repeat courses under certain conditions. The grade earned in the original course is excluded from calculation of the cumulative grade point average and is replaced with the grade earned in the repeated course. However, the credit hours of the original course and the repeated course will both count in the student’s attempted hours for calculation of percentage of hours earned. Due to federal regulations, any courses previously taken at Winthrop University and granted *academic forgiveness* will still have to be counted in the qualitative and quantitative SAP calculations.

Withdrawal and incomplete grades: Credit hours where “N” grades were assigned for withdrawal beyond the drop/add period and credit hours for courses where incomplete, “I”, grades were assigned will count in the student’s attempted hours for calculation of percentage of hours earned, but not count as earned hours.

Frequency of Measurement

Winthrop University evaluates a student’s academic progress annually, at the conclusion of each spring term. Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory academic progress will be ineligible for financial aid that requires SAP in subsequent semesters until satisfactory academic progress has been achieved.

Exception – Students who have completed their fourth term at Winthrop, regardless of which term that occurs in, will have their academic progress reviewed to ensure their cumulative Winthrop GPA is at least a 2.0. Students who do not demonstrate this GPA will be ineligible for financial aid that requires SAP in subsequent semesters until satisfactory progress has been achieved.

Notification of Satisfactory Academic Progress

After satisfactory academic progress is determined, students who are determined to be making insufficient academic progress are then notified in writing (via mail and/or campus email).

Appeal Process

Students who have been notified of insufficient academic progress may file an appeal if the student has experienced extenuating circumstances which interfered with his/her ability to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards. Extenuating circumstances include situations such as student illness or family illness or death. For exceeding maximum timeframe, an extenuating circumstance may include change of major.

Appeals must be submitted to the Office of Financial Aid. **Documentation must accompany all appeals.** A *Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal* form is available from the “Forms Online” link at www.winthrop.edu/finaid.

Filing an appeal does not guarantee eligibility for student financial aid. Approval of the appeal is determined by the Office of Financial Aid and is contingent upon sufficient documentation of the student’s circumstances. The type of aid that will be available if the SAP Appeal is approved will depend on the time of year and what is allowed under applicable regulations.

Academic action plan: Approved appeals most often will require the student to meet certain minimum academic conditions as determined on a case-by-case basis; this is called an **academic action plan**. The student’s academic action plan may include a minimum grade point average requirement and/or earned credit hour requirement to ensure the student is on track to regaining satisfactory academic progress.

Number of Appeals: Students are limited to a maximum of **three** approved appeals during their program of study (e.g. first undergraduate degree). This is not applicable to students who met the terms of their current academic action plan, but need to remain on Financial Aid Probation because they are not meeting overall SAP standards yet.

Time Frame: SAP Appeals are typically reviewed within 2-4 weeks from the time an appeal is submitted and deemed complete. Students are responsible for adhering to all fee payment deadlines, even if they have a SAP appeal under review. Incomplete appeals will be denied by mid-semester.

Notification: Student will receive email notification of status of SAP Appeal each time status changes (incomplete, approved or denied). Wingspan will also be updated to show the status.

Approved Appeals - Financial Aid Probation

A student whose appeal is approved due to extenuating circumstances may receive aid under a *probationary status* for one term only. At the end of the probationary term, the student’s academic progress will be reviewed to determine whether the student adequately met the conditions of the approved appeal and his/her academic action plan and can continue on Financial Aid Probation. Failure to meet the conditions by the end of the probationary term will result in a termination of eligibility for student aid that requires SAP until the student has regained eligibility by meeting the requirements discussed in the Regaining Satisfactory Academic Progress section below.

Denied Appeals

If an appeal is denied, the student is not eligible to receive federal aid, state need-based aid, and most institutional scholarships. Aid that does not require SAP will still be processed.

Regaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students who are ineligible to receive financial aid due to insufficient academic progress and who cannot document extenuating circumstances may regain eligibility by meeting the qualitative and quantitative requirements outlined in this policy. The student is responsible for reporting a change in status to the Office of Financial Aid, should grade changes cause the student to regain satisfactory academic progress before the next review period.