

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies and Procedures

### **Purpose:**

All financial aid recipients are required to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to federal regulations and policies set by UNC Charlotte. The intent of these policies is to ensure that students who are receiving financial aid are making measurable progress toward completion of an approved major. Satisfactory Academic Progress is evaluated by qualitative, quantitative, and maximum timeframe standards.

### **Policy:**

In determining a student's SAP status, all credit hours, including transfer credit(s), and all periods of attendance at UNC Charlotte, are included regardless of whether financial aid was received for these periods. Students must meet the following progress standards in order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress and receive financial aid:

#### GPA Standard

Undergraduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 as computed by the Financial Aid Office. Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA as dictated by the Graduate school (starting with the spring review of 2021).

#### Pace Standard

Students must demonstrate a 66.6% or greater pace of completion of cumulative credit hours attempted each semester. For example, if the student has attempted 50 credit hours, the student must successfully complete 33 credit hours ( $50 \text{ hours attempted} \times 66.6\% = 33 \text{ hours}$ ). Successful completion is defined as the number of credit hours from each term at UNC Charlotte for which the student received a passing grade of A, B, C, D, P, S, H. Students must also meet or be able to meet both the qualitative and quantitative measures at a pace that insures graduation prior to reaching the Maximum Time Frame threshold to graduate. Students who cannot meet this requirement cannot be approved. Impact on pace from transfer credit(s) from previous institutions is later described in this policy statement.

#### Maximum Time Frame Standard

To remain eligible for financial aid at UNC Charlotte, students (both undergraduate and graduate) must complete their degree program requirements within 150 percent of the published length of their degree program. All attempted hours are counted, including transfer hours, whether or not financial aid was received.

*Example:* If a degree program requires 120 semester credit hours to complete, then a student is eligible for financial aid during the first 180 attempted credit hours. ( $120 \times 150\% = 180$  maximum attempted credit hours for financial aid eligibility).

#### Second Degree-Seeking Students

A student pursuing a second undergraduate degree (if the first degree is from UNC Charlotte) is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the second degree (maximum of 228 hours). All transfer credit from a prior degree from another institution will count toward the 228 credit hour maximum.

If a student has already completed a graduate degree with UNC Charlotte and returns to complete another, they will receive a base level credit for the previous degree (s). The breakdown for previously earned degrees will be as follows:

Certificate: 9 hours

Masters: 33 hours

Doctorate 63 hours

Example: A student is enrolled in a Masters degree program that requires 30 hours to complete and they earned a previous Masters at Charlotte prior to starting this degree. The student would receive 45 hours ( $30 \times 1.5$ ) for their current program and an additional 33 hours for their previous degree. These hours were determined by taking the median credit hour requirement after a random sampling of 10 programs in each category.

### **Procedure:**

- I. Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals
  - A. Students who do not meet one or more of the SAP standards are not eligible for further financial aid. Students may request a SAP appeal based off extenuating circumstances. A student may complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form, either online or paper, explaining the extenuating circumstances that have affected academic performance and what has changed that will allow him/her to now maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in the future. If a student can regain the required cumulative GPA (2.0 undergraduate and 3.0 graduate) and cumulative 66.6% completion rate within one semester of enrollment, an appeal may be approved without an academic plan.
  - B. All forms, along with supporting documentation if needed, must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to, serious injury, death of a family member, or other extenuating circumstances that occurred during the term the student received failing grades and/or withdrew from classes.
  - C. Students who cannot regain financial aid eligibility after one semester on an appeal adhere to the academic plan to continue receiving aid. A semester GPA (2.5 undergraduate or 3.2 graduate) and 75% or greater completion rate is required for each semester of the academic plan or the student will be placed back on unsatisfactory status.
  - D. If an unsatisfactory status is appealed and approved, a status of Probation is assigned. This status requires undergraduate students to maintain both a term GPA of at least 2.50 and a 75% term completion rate while graduate students must maintain a term GPA of at least 3.2 and a 75% or greater completion rate. If a student's probationary term completion rate or GPA is below the requirement, the student will return to a unsatisfactory status. **Students may have a maximum of three approved appeals throughout their academic career; however, submission of an appeal does not guarantee approval.**

Appeals based off the same recurring circumstances will generally not be considered. Undergraduate students are eligible for **ONE APPROVED APPEAL** for maximum timeframe appeals. Graduate students are eligible for **THREE APPROVED APPEALS** for maximum timeframe appeals, effective Spring 2025 review. If the student does not enroll in the semester for which the Financial Aid Probation status was assigned, they will need to appeal again if they return to UNC Charlotte (updated starting with the spring 2021 review). The approved appeal that was not used does not count against the student's

## II. Appeal Deadlines

- A. Students who would like to submit an appeal for the fall or spring semesters must have the appeal submitted prior to the conclusion of add/drop for the semester of the appeal. Any student's appeal that is considered incomplete must have the requested additional information submitted by the census date of the term being appealed in order to be considered.

## III. Appeal Decisions

- A. Appeal results will be communicated via email and Banner Self-Service, with a status of either *Denied* or *Approved for Financial Aid Probation*. Appeals are approved for one probationary term at a time. At the end of the probationary term, each student with an approved appeal will be reviewed for continued aid eligibility. Students meeting all approval requirements from the probationary term will continue to be eligible for aid. Students not meeting all approval requirements will be ineligible for further aid and may submit another appeal if the student has not reached the appeal limit. **All appeal determinations made by our office are final.** Students that meet the probationary GPA and completion rate standard and have a cumulative GPA (2.0 for undergrads or 3.0 for graduates) and 66.6% completion rate will return to satisfactory status. If the student does not enroll in the semester for which the Financial Aid Probation status was assigned, they will need to appeal again if they return to UNC Charlotte. The approved appeal that was not used does not count against the student's three approved appeal maximum.

## IV. Monitoring

- A. The Office of Financial Aid measures a student's academic performance annually, at the end of each spring semester. Students who fail to meet one or more of the SAP standards are immediately ineligible for further financial aid. Eligibility to receive aid may be re-established with an approved SAP appeal or by otherwise meeting the minimum SAP standards without financial aid. Re-establishing financial aid eligibility is later described in this policy statement.
- B. Students enrolled in a certificate program only that can be completed in one year or less, based on full time enrollment, will be reviewed at the completion of each semester. Students failing to meet any of the SAP requirements at the conclusion of the term will be immediately ineligible for further financial aid.

- V. Satisfactory Academic Progress Notifications
  - A. The Office of Financial Aid will notify students of their failure to meet the standards of SAP by email and through the Banner Self-Service system. Students are responsible for staying informed of the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress standards and to monitor their own academic progress.
- VI. Regaining Eligibility
  - A. Undergraduate students who attend UNC Charlotte may regain financial aid eligibility by achieving a cumulative 66.6% completion rate and earning a cumulative 2.0 GPA without financial aid. Maximum timeframe eligibility must also be maintained. Previously ineligible students will be re-evaluated for aid eligibility by the Financial Aid Office at regular intervals and students will be notified of any changes in aid eligibility.
  - B. Graduate students who attend UNC Charlotte may regain financial aid eligibility by achieving a cumulative 66.6% completion rate and earning a cumulative 3.0 GPA without financial aid. Maximum timeframe eligibility must also be maintained. Previously ineligible students will be re-evaluated for aid eligibility by the Financial Aid Office at regular intervals and students will be notified of any changes in aid eligibility.
- VII. Financial Aid Statuses
  - A. Satisfactory
    - 1. Satisfactory status is achieved when the student maintains an undergraduate 2.0 cumulative GPA or graduate 3.0 GPA and 66.6% pace of completion within maximum timeframe standards.
  - B. Unsatisfactory
    - 1. Students who do not maintain SAP will be placed on "unsatisfactory" financial aid status. The student is no longer eligible for financial aid and his or her aid is terminated immediately. The unsatisfactory status will remain until the student has an approved appeal or enrolls in a future semester(s), without financial aid, and regains satisfactory academic progress.
  - C. Maximum Time Frame
    - 1. Students who have attempted the maximum allowable credit hours, 150% of their program of study, will have their financial aid suspended. Undergraduate students maximum time frame appeals are approved for one semester to allow the student to graduate. Graduate students are eligible for three approved appeals.
  - D. Probation/Academic Plan
    - 1. Students are placed on financial aid "Probation" status when the unsatisfactory status is appealed and approved. Financial aid will be reinstated during the probationary term. Undergraduate students on probation must maintain a term GPA of at least 2.50 and 75% or greater term completion rate. Graduate students on probation must maintain a term GPA of at least 3.2 and 75% or greater term completion rate. Students that do not meet these standards in the probationary term will return to an unsatisfactory status, unless the minimum SAP standards are regained.
- VIII. Treatment of Selected Grades

A. Withdrawals

1. Courses for which a student has withdrawn and a W or WE are assigned, are counted as attempted but not earned credit hours and are not included in the GPA calculation. Please note, although a W is not included in the GPA calculation students who withdraw may have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress requirements. There is a limit of 16 credit hours of withdrawals throughout a student's academic career at UNC Charlotte, pursuant to University of North Carolina System Office policy.

B. Incompletes, and Missing Grades

1. Grades of I, IP, U, NG or N are included in attempted hours, but do not count toward successfully completed hours nor are they included in the GPA calculation. Students with incompletes (I) may have difficulty meeting the satisfactory academic progress (completion) requirements at time of evaluation, but may request re-evaluation upon receiving a final grade.
  - a. The grade of "U" does have a GPA component at the graduate level. It is counted as a 0 Grade Point Per Credit Hour

C. Failing Grades

1. Grades of F are included in the GPA calculation and attempted hours. Since no credit hours are earned, F grades count against completion rate.

D. Pass and Satisfactory Grades

1. Grades of P and S are included in attempted hours and count toward successfully completed hours. They are not included in the GPA calculation.

E. Audit

1. Grades for audit AU or NR are not considered attempted coursework nor are they included in the grade point average or completion rate determinations. A student cannot receive financial aid for audited coursework.

F. Remedial or ESL Coursework

1. Remedial and ESL coursework are treated the same as other coursework for financial aid purposes. Both the attempted and earned hours count in the calculation of completion ratio and maximum allotted hours. Financial aid recipients may receive aid for up to a maximum of 30 attempted credit hours of remedial courses. Once the 30 attempted credit hour limit is reached there is no appeal option available.

G. Repeat Courses

1. All repeated credits are included as hours attempted and count towards maximum time frame requirements. All attempts of a course count toward

GPA calculations. Students are allowed to re-take a previously passed course once for financial aid purposes.

H. Forgiven Grades

1. For students who are readmitted into the University under the grade forgiveness policy, only courses in which the student received a grade of C or above (or H or P) can be used for academic credit. All other classes are considered “forgiven” and removed from their cumulative GPA. For SAP purposes all credits are included as hours attempted and count toward the maximum time frame requirements as well as toward the GPA calculations

I. Transfer Credit

1. Transfer credits from other institutions that are accepted by the University are factored into the completion rate requirement and maximum timeframe as both attempted and completed credits. Transfer credits are not included in the GPA calculation.

IX. Change of Majors

- A. Students who change their major are still responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the procedures as outlined. A review of satisfactory academic progress will be based on the student's current major.

X. Complete Academic Record

- A. In order to measure a student's satisfactory progress toward an eligible major, the student's total academic record at UNC Charlotte must be evaluated whether or not the student received financial aid for the entire time of enrollment. Grades excluded with Academic Forgiveness (denoted by Q followed by a letter grade) are not excluded from the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculation. When students complete course work for more than one program, University and financial aid progress standards must be met for all programs to receive financial aid. When a student completes an undergraduate degree and moves to a graduate program, their record will reset and only the graduate classes will count toward their standing. UNC Charlotte does not count prerequisite classes for the graduate program into the graduate calculations.

XI. Returning Students

- A. Returning students are evaluated on a continuous basis from the first enrollment at UNC Charlotte unless an extenuating circumstance is considered. Returning students who were previously enrolled under an academic progress policy other than the current academic progress policy will be required to meet the standards of the current policy upon returning. Students who have been re-admitted are still subject to Satisfactory Academic Progress standards for all attempted coursework at UNC Charlotte. All prior coursework, attempted and earned, is reviewed in the determination of SAP (denoted by R followed by a letter grade).
  1. **DISCLAIMER:** UNC Charlotte reserves the right to change this policy at any time, and without prior notice.