

Satisfactory Academic Progress Information Sheet

Undergraduate & Post-baccalaureate



Northern Illinois University

Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

Student Financial Aid Office
Swen Parson Hall 245
DeKalb, IL 60115

Federal financial aid regulations require students to meet standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). These standards may be calculated differently than academic standing with NIU. SAP is evaluated at the end of each semester using cumulative grade point average (GPA), completion percentage (Pace), and Maximum Timeframe.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Eligibility Requirements:

- **Cumulative GPA:** A student who is a candidate for academic dismissal due to GPA have failed to meet the cumulative GPA standard of academic progress even if the student is reinstated.

Undergraduates must also meet the following:

- **1.60 or higher** - attended three or fewer semesters and have less than 45 credit hours
- **2.00 or higher** - all other undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students
- **Completion Percentage (Pace):** Earned hours must equal or exceed 67% of all cumulative attempted hours since beginning degree. 66.6% will be rounded up. Courses that are withdrawn, incomplete, or have grades of F and U are considered attempted but not earned hours. Audit courses are not used for any financial aid purpose. Repeated courses will count each time taken in attempted hours. If a repeated course is passed more than once, the course will only count once in earned hours. For the purpose of calculating Pace, hours transferred to NIU are treated as both attempted and earned hours.
- **Maximum Timeframe:** A student is eligible for financial aid until they have attempted 150% of the minimum credit hours required to earn a specific degree.
 - Program length for most baccalaureate degrees is 120 credits therefore, for most first-time undergraduate students, the Maximum Timeframe is 180 attempted credits ($120 \times 150\%$).
 - For a student in a program that requires additional credits, Maximum Timeframe will be adjusted to 150% of the program length as part of the appeal review.
 - A post-baccalaureate student exceeds Maximum Timeframe once 225 undergraduate hours have been attempted inclusive of the minimum 120 transfer or NIU hours for the first baccalaureate.
 - A student pursuing a double major may attempt 150% of the number of credit hours required to complete only one degree.
 - If a student has taken all courses required for a degree or certificate program, the student is no longer eligible for financial aid even if the student has not applied for graduation.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Statuses:

- **Warning (Aid Eligible):** At the end of the first semester that a student does not meet either the GPA or Pace standard or is academically dismissed, the student is placed on **Warning** for his/her next semester of enrollment at NIU. During the warning semester, the student has the opportunity to improve GPA or Pace. There is no warning semester for a student who has exceeded Maximum Timeframe.
- **Not Meet (Not Aid Eligible):** A student who does not meet the standards of SAP at the end of the warning semester and students who exceed Maximum Timeframe will immediately move to the status of Not Meet.
- **Probation (Aid Eligible):** A student whose SAP appeal has been approved and the course plan indicates the student will be meeting all SAP standards after the next semester of enrollment at NIU will be placed in a Probation status.
- **Academic Plan (Aid Eligible):** A student whose SAP appeal has been approved and whose course plan indicates multiple semesters will be required to return to meeting SAP standards will be placed in an Academic Plan status. A student's progress will be monitored at the end of each semester to ensure continued progress according to the outlined Student Course Plan.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals

A student who loses aid eligibility has the right to appeal to have financial aid reinstated based on extenuating circumstances. Each appeal is decided on a case-by-case basis. The appeal must be in writing with specific information about the circumstances that prevented academic progress and what has changed to prevent those circumstances from impeding progress in the future. Extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to illness or injury, death of relative, and other circumstances that could not be anticipated, were beyond the student's control and prevented a student from meeting SAP standards. Third party documentation should be attached whenever applicable. Generally, a lack of academic preparation and effort prior to or during a semester is not considered an extenuating circumstance.

Maximum Timeframe Appeals

Appeals for exceeding Maximum Timeframe may also be based on a change of major and previously completed coursework that is not applicable to the current degree. A student that has reached 120 attempted hours prior to changing majors will only be approved with a recommendation of the dean/academic advisor. Coursework that does not apply to the NIU degree will also be evaluated as a change of major. The academic plan for a student exceeding Maximum Timeframe must include each course remaining for the program and **must be the shortest path to completion** excluding courses necessary for double majors or minors/certificates.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Student Course Plan

A student must also submit a Student Course Plan signed by the dean/academic advisor. The SAP committee will review the Student Course Plan and use it as the basis to determine the Financial Aid SAP Plan. A student with an approved appeal and plan will have financial aid reinstated and future financial aid will be contingent on meeting the standards established by the plan. Plans longer than four semesters will only be approved in extraordinary circumstances.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Deadlines

SAP appeal documents must be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the end of the semester. A student in short term courses needs to submit materials at least a week before last course ends. Exact deadline dates can be found at <http://www.niu.edu/fa/policies/sap.shtml>

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Decisions

The Student Financial Aid Office (SFAO) may deny or approve an appeal and plan as submitted, or approve an appeal with changes to the plan. The SFAO will inform the student of the result of an appeal and any changes made to the plan. A student who does not meet SAP standards and loses aid eligibility and does not appeal or has an appeal denied may continue to attend, provided they are eligible under all other rules and policies of the University, but will not receive financial aid. If the ineligibility is based on GPA or Pace, financial aid will be reinstated for future semesters once the student returns to meeting SAP standards.

Visit our website for further information and directions for preparing your appeal:

<http://www.niu.edu/fa/policies/sap.shtml>

Meet with a Dean, Dean's Designee, or Major College Advisor.

Academic Advising Center
Academic Advising Center 107
815-753-2573

College of Engineering
Engineering Building 331B
815-753-1442

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Zulauf Hall 201
815-753-0114

College of Business
Barsema Hall 201E
815-753-1325

College of Health and Human Sciences
Wirtz Hall 227
815-753-1891

College of Visual and Performing Arts
Music Building 141
815-753-8374

College of Education
Gable Hall 138
815-753-8352

Satisfactory Academic Progress - Student Course Plan



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Part I – All Students

Printed Student Name:			Z-ID:	Date:
Student Signature:			Major:	Expected Graduation Date:
Term Appeal	Fall <input type="checkbox"/>	Spring <input type="checkbox"/>	Summer <input type="checkbox"/>	Year: 20_____
Dean (Designee) or Major College Advisor:			Dean / Advisor Signature:	

We highly recommend that students visit our website for further information and directions for preparing your appeal: <http://www.niu.edu/fa/policies/sap.shtml>

Part II – Pace and Cumulative GPA: To be completed if the pace and/or cumulative GPA standards are not met. Other documents approved by the Advising Dean may be attached in lieu of completing the sections below.

Semester:	Year:
Course Title / Number	Hours
Minimum Semester GPA:	Cumulative GPA:
FA Office Use Only:	

Semester:	Year:
Course Title / Number	Hours
Minimum Semester GPA:	Cumulative GPA:
FA Office Use Only:	

Semester:	Year:
Course Title / Number	Hours
Minimum Semester GPA:	Cumulative GPA:
FA Office Use Only:	

Semester:	Year:
Course Title / Number	Hours
Minimum Semester GPA:	Cumulative GPA:
FA Office Use Only:	

Satisfactory Academic Progress - Student Course Plan

Part III – Maximum Timeframe: To be completed if maximum timeframe has been exceeded.

Student Instructions: Make arrangements to meet with the dean/academic advisor to determine the remaining courses required for graduation and agree upon an academic plan. Provide a copy of this signed form along with the completed SAP appeal.

Academic Advisor Instructions: This student is nearing or exceeding the maximum allowable timeframe to complete his/her degree. Therefore, the student must appeal to have his/her financial aid reinstated. The student must meet with you to discuss and evaluate the student's transcript and provide the information requested below.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact our office at finaid@niu.edu

Did the student transfer to NIU? Yes No **If Yes**, how many credit hours accepted for transfer **DO NOT** count toward the student's NIU degree requirements? _____

Did the student change majors during their academic program? Yes No **If Yes**, how many credit hours from the prior major **DO NOT** count toward the student's NIU degree requirements? _____

Required Documentation: Provide an unofficial transcript on which the dean/academic advisor has clearly indicated which courses **DO NOT** meet any degree requirements based on the current degree.

- Only one change in undergraduate major will be considered in a maximum timeframe appeal.
- A changes of major that occurs after an undergraduate student has attempted 120 hours will only be allowed if recommended by an academic advisor.
- If a student has taken all courses required for a degree or certificate program, the student is no longer eligible for financial aid even if the student has not applied for graduation.

List the required courses remaining to complete degree: A student who has exceeded maximum timeframe and has an approved appeal may only receive financial aid for the shortest path to degree completion.

Courses for minors, double majors, areas of specialization or certificates that are part of a degree program or other courses associated with the student's program are only eligible if the degree cannot be awarded without completion of the course. Please note, the maximum timeframe limit provides opportunity for a student to take additional coursework. It is only after maximum timeframe is exceeded that these course restrictions apply.

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Anticipated Term

NOTES:

- Financial aid will not be disbursed until course registration is reviewed each term.
- Only the courses on this list that are approved by SFAO in the SAP plan will be used in determining aid eligibility.
- Students seeking a student loan are advised to take sufficient courses from the approved list to be at least half-time.