

NJIT

New Jersey Institute  
of Technology

# Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the term used to define successful completion of coursework and progression towards completion of degree and certificate programs. Financial aid satisfactory academic progress (SAP) differs from the institutions academic policy and includes both qualitative (maintaining the minimum required grade point average (GPA), quantitative (achieving a minimum rate of an academic progression each year), and maximum timeframe (completing the degree requirements within an established timeframe) standards. To remain eligible for federal, state and institutional aid the Office of Student and Financial Aid Services must determine whether a student is meeting these three SAP requirements. SAP evaluation occurs once a year at the end of the spring semester.

## Requirements and Standards of the SAP Policy

The following three components are measurements used to assess whether the student is meeting the SAP standards:

### Grade Point Average Requirements

The qualitative component is measuring the quality of the student's SAP by conducting a review of the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the end of the annual assessment after the Spring term. At the evaluation point, an undergraduate must have the minimum cumulative of 2.0 and graduate students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

(Specific federal, state and institutional scholarships and grants may require a different GPA for renewal. This is a separate requirement for continued eligibility for these funds. The scholarship GPA requirements, terms, and conditions are provided to students when the award is offered.)

### Academic Progression/ Calculating Pace Towards Degree Completion

The quantitative component measurement of academic progress or pace is the SAP measure at which the student must progress through his or her program of study to ensure his/ her program is complete within the maximum timeframe permitted. Pace completion is a ratio calculated by taking the cumulative number of credit hours the student has successfully completed in his or her program and dividing it by the number of attempted credit hours. To meet this requirement, the student's completion ratio must be 67% or higher (those with ratio of 65% or higher is rounded to 67%).

$$\text{Cumulative Earned Credits} / \text{Cumulative Attempted Credits} = \text{Completion Ratio} *$$

Example: During an academic year, a student who attempted 30 credits but only earned 24 credits has a completion ratio of 80%. (24/30). Because the calculated pace figure is equal to or greater than 67 %, **the student is passing the SAP quantitative measure.**  $24/30 = 80\%$  (passing benchmark is 67%)

### Maximum Time Frame Measure and Threshold

The quantitative component of measurement of academic progress is the amount of time measured in credits, in which a student should complete his program of study. The maximum timeframe cannot exceed 150% of the student's published length of the program.

$$\text{Maximum Timeframe} = \text{Minimum credits required for academic program} \times 150\%$$

The maximum time frame a student may attend and continue to receive aid generally cannot exceed 150 percent of the published length of his/her program as measured in credits. For example, 120 credits (program length) x 150% (maximum timeframe) = 180 (maximum attempted credits allowed). When a student will or has reached and/or has exceeded the maximum timeframe (as measured in credits), the student is no longer eligible for financial aid unless he or she successfully appeals.

#### Students who will Reach or Exceed Timeframe by the Next Payment Period

Students who are close to reaching or exceeding the maximum threshold by the next term/ payment period cannot receive aid. The below threshold is used to determine if the student **will** reach or exceed their maximum timeframe by the next payment period. Students who meet or exceed this threshold will be deemed as not meeting the maximum timeframe measurement standard and will be required to appeal.

- Undergraduate threshold - 24 credits within the 150 % maximum program timeframe ○

**Example:** Program credits required: 120

$$150 \% \text{ Maximum Timeframe: } 120 \times 1.5 = 180$$

$$\text{Maximum timeframe minus threshold: } 180 - 24 = 156$$

In this example, the student would have reached their timeframe by the next payment period and will be required to submit an appeal.

- Master's Students Graduate threshold - 18 credits within the 150% maximum program timeframe ○ **Example:** Program credits required: 30

$$150 \% \text{ Maximum Timeframe: } 30 \times 1.5 = 45$$

$$\text{Maximum timeframe minus threshold: } 45 - 18 = 27$$

In this example, the student would have reached their timeframe by the next payment period and will be required to submit an appeal.

- Graduate Certificate Student Threshold – 6 credits within the 150% maximum program timeframe ○ **Example:** Program credits required: 12 150 % Maximum Timeframe:  $12 \times 1.5 = 18$

$$\text{Maximum timeframe minus threshold: } 18 - 6 = 12$$

In this example, the student would have reached their timeframe by the next payment period and will be required to submit an appeal.

- PhD Graduate Student Threshold – .5 of a year within the maximum years allowed (7 years if admitted prior to Fall 2015 and 6 years if admitted after Fall 2015). The maximum years is measured by terms where each term is .5 of a year ○ **Example:** Program years required: 7

$$150 \% \text{ Maximum Timeframe: } 7 \text{ years}$$

$$\text{Maximum timeframe minus threshold: } 7 - .5 = 6.5 \text{ years}$$

In this example, the student would have reached their timeframe by the next payment period and will be required to submit an appeal.

#### **Attempted, Remedial, Repeated Courses, Transfer Credits, Withdrawals, Incomplete Grades, Late or Grade Changes**

##### Attempted Credits

Credits in which the student enrolls at the end of the official add/drop period are included in the attempted.

### Remedial Courses

Courses such as remedial or bridge courses will count in the calculation of the credit completion pace measurement (quantitative component) and the grade-based (qualitative) component of SAP according to the student's program.

### Repeated Courses

Generally, the SAP policy is consistent with University policy on repeats for undergraduate and graduate students. Repeat courses are counted when measuring pace and timeframe and will follow University policy pertaining to GPA assessment; therefore, affects all three SAP measurements. To know more on the university's academic policy go to <https://www.njit.edu/registrar/policies/>

### Transfer Credits

Transfer credits accepted by the institution towards a program of study are included in credits earned, credits attempted which affect pace, and maximum timeframe but not GPA since grades for transfer credits are not included in the GPA calculation.

### Withdrawal Grades

If the student withdraws from a course after the official add/drop period during any given semester (e.g., student receives a grade of W for the course), the course credits are included in the count of attempted credit hours. Therefore, withdrawn courses are calculated in the pace ratio calculation and maximum time frame measures and will have a negative effect on the total number of earned credits for the year. The GPA is not affected for withdrawals.

### Incomplete Grades

Credits for an incomplete course (e.g., student receives a grade of I for the course) are always counted as credits attempted for pace and maximum timeframe SAP measurements. However, incomplete grades are not included in the GPA until the incomplete grade changes to a passing or a failing grade at the next annual assessment as students have the end of the subsequent regular term from when the I grade was given, to complete the incomplete. If the incomplete is not fulfilled, it will convert to a failed grade and will negatively affect the pace progress as the total earned and attempted credits will be impacted. It will also negatively affect the GPA SAP requirements.

### Late Grades or Grade Changes

Students who had a grade changed will be reviewed and will have their SAP reassessed using the new grade. The grade change could affect both the quantitative (pace progression) and qualitative (cumulative GPA component) SAP assessment.

### Failing Grades

Any grade of 'F' will have a negative effect on the student's academic record, decreasing GPA and academic progression as the credits are counted as attempted but not in earned and in the GPA calculation.

### Change of Major

Students who change their major by the annual assessment in the Spring, and who have had successfully completed the Course Exclusion Form, will have the courses that no longer apply to their new major, excluded from their records which impacts the attempted, earned and GPA SAP assessments. Students

who fail SAP and formally change majors, will have to complete the SAP Appeal Form to state their case. A total of two change of majors are allowed for SAP appeal purposes.

### Pursuing another Degree at NJIT

Generally, all attempted and earned credits and GPA within the student's current program level are used in the SAP calculation. All credits from both degrees within the same level will count in the pace ratio calculation, maximum timeframe and GPA requirements. Pursuing another degree in the same level may mean that the student will reach the maximum timeframe faster and become ineligible for aid.

### **Frequency of Monitoring**

The Office Student and Financial Aid Services monitors all students for SAP (excluding international students who do not receive the pertinent Title IV aid). The annual SAP evaluation occurs at the end of the spring semester payment period, after the grade-reporting deadline has passed. Students enrolled in a graduate certificate programs will have their SAP assessment done at the end of each term/ each payment period.

### **Not Eligible for Financial Aid**

At the time of evaluation if a student fails one or more of the three measurements the student is not eligible for federal, state, or certain institutional financial aid, which includes grants, scholarships, work study and loans. Students not making Satisfactory Academic Progress toward their degree will receive correspondence via their campus e-mail or their Highlander Pipeline. Correspondence will include reason/s for failure and instructions for the SAP appeal process.

### **Notification Process**

Students not making Satisfactory Academic Progress toward their degree will receive a notice via their campus email address. This notice will include the email and appeal process instructions.

### **Restoring Financial Aid Eligibility**

- I. Restoring aid without an appeal: Students who fail to meet one or more of the SAP standards can restore financial aid eligibility by enrolling for one or more payment periods (e.g. terms) at their own expense until they achieve the minimum financial aid SAP standards (i.e., achieve a 67% completion ratio of all attempted credits, a 2.0 cumulative GPA for undergraduates and a 3.0 for graduates, and meet their maximum timeframe allowed for their program as explained in the timeframe section of this document).
- II. Students failing SAP standards who have had mitigating circumstances (i.e., death in the family, illness, involuntary military leave or other special circumstances) may request reinstatement of their financial aid eligibility by completing the SAP Appeal form for Financial Aid. Students must submit all required supporting documents, signatures as detailed on the appeal form, and a statement addressing what has changed and how he/she expects to meet the SAP standards by the next evaluation period.

### **SAP Appeal Procedures**

An SAP appeal is the process by which a student is not meeting the SAP standards and petitions for reconsideration of eligibility. The student must have a mitigating circumstance (such as death in the family, illness, involuntary military leave or other extenuating circumstances). The appeal must be typed

and include the following requirements as well as a signature from the student's Academic Advisor (in lieu of a wet signature, Academic Advisors may send an email to [finaid\\_sap@njit.edu](mailto:finaid_sap@njit.edu) attesting their review and endorsement of the appeal):

1. Detailed explanation for failure to meet SAP standards
2. Documentation to support the reason for failure.
3. Detailed explanation of what has changed that will now allow the student to make Satisfactory Academic Progress at the next evaluation. Explanation must demonstrate how he/she will meet the standards at the next evaluation.

**SAP APPEAL DEADLINES:**

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Date</b>
Summer 2022	June 26, 2022
Fall 2022	August 18, 2022
Spring 2023	January 10, 2023

If the student's appeal is approved, it will be approved for only one payment period and the student will be placed in a "probation" status during that time. The record will be reviewed and a determination whether the student met the SAP standards or if the student's Academic Plan requirements were satisfied after the conclusion of the probation status.

**SAP Appeals Committee and Decision**

The SAP Appeals Committee is comprised of members of the staff of the Office of Student Financial Aid Services. The OSFAS will notify the student of the decision via NJIT email. The appeals decision will be rendered within 15 business days from when a completed appeal has been received and during peak times up to 30 days. The appeals decision is final. The Office of Student Financial Aid Services reserves the right to request additional documentation. If additional documentation is not submitted in a timely manner, the appeal will be considered incomplete and will be denied. If the student is granted probation for a semester in which he or she does not enroll, the appeal will automatically be granted for the subsequent semester.

**Financial Aid Probation**

Financial Aid Probation status is assigned to a student who fails to meet the SAP standards, but is allowed to continue to receive aid under the condition he/she will meet the SAP standard by the next SAP calculation. A student who is placed on Financial Aid Probation may receive financial aid for one payment period during probation. During Financial Aid Probation, a student may be required to meet certain terms and conditions as designated in the Academic Plan. An Academic Plan cannot exceed no more than two payment periods. At the conclusion of the SAP Academic Probation payment period, the student must either meet the SAP standards or fulfill the requirements specified in the Financial Aid Academic Plan to continue to receive aid.

**The SAP Academic Plan:**

The Academic Plan is separate from an Academic Improvement Plan, which requires students who fail to maintain the required university academic standing. Students who successfully appeal for SAP and are approved for one payment period are considered to be on probation for financial aid purposes. To gain eligibility in the subsequent term, a student must meet the standards of SAP or meet the requirements of his or her academic plan.

Terms and Conditions of the Academic Plan are as follows:

1. Achieve a minimum *term* GPA of 2.0 for undergraduates and 3.0 for graduates.
2. Successfully complete and pass all attempted coursework during the probation period. (Withdrawals or failed grades are not allowed).
3. Complete two Financial Literacy online sessions and submit certificate of completion.
4. For students failing due to timeframe, the course schedule plan as specified on the appeal must be followed.

Students are only allowed to be on an Academic Plan for no more than two semesters within the academic year. At the conclusion of the term for which the student was on an academic plan, the student must meet the SAP standards on their own or meet the requirements of their Academic Plan. A student will be ineligible for financial aid, but can appeal once again according to the appeals deadline.

### **SAP Academic Denial after Probation:**

If the student fails to meet SAP Financial Aid standards or the requirements set forth in the SAP Academic Plan, the student will be denied financial aid. The student is ineligible for financial aid with this status. A student with SAP denial status will remain ineligible for financial aid until the student meets the minimum SAP Policy requirements (cumulative 2.0 GPA for undergraduates or 3.0 for graduates, earn at least 67% of attempted credits, and/or not exceed the 150% maximum timeframe for their program see timeframe section), or submits a successful appeal by the deadline.

### **COVID-19 SAP Related Policies**

#### **Policy**

NJIT will exclude the attempted credits for NAD (not academic credit), W (withdrawal) and I (incomplete) grades from the quantitative component (pace and timeframe) of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for a student who was unable to complete the course because of the COVID-19 national emergency.

#### **Rationale for Excluding Credits from Quantitative Measurement**

Institutional policy provided the use of special grades in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. Per the institutional policy, such grades do not factor in the GPA but are included in the student's attempted credits, therefore negatively impacting a student's "pace" progression and 150% maximum timeframe. However, Section 3506 of the CARES Act allows NJIT to exclude attempted credits a student was unable to complete as a result of COVID-19 national emergency from the quantitative component (pace measurement) of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) calculation. Therefore, we are utilizing this flexibility for our students.

#### **Procedure**

Students failing for only pace or timeframe progression who received a grade of NAD (not academic credit), W (withdrawal statuses of MD, MW, WD ) as of March 1, 2020, and I (incomplete) due to COVID-19 related circumstances, and where the exclusion of such credits would allow the student to meet the standards, will not need to complete an appeal but rather complete the [COVID-19 Special Grading SAP Reasonable Determination online form](#) and the [Signature Page](#). If approved, students will have their SAP calculation re-assessed. Students are required to provide a typed explanation of the COVID-19 related circumstance (wet signatures are required) and attach supporting documentation, as applicable. Depending on the COVID-19 circumstance, some examples of supporting documentation may include but not limited to a medical note, hospital discharge papers, employer letter or paystubs, and military discharge papers. If supporting

documentation cannot be provided, students are required to explain in the statement. The online [COVID-19 Special Grading SAP Reasonable Determination form](#) must be completed by the below deadlines:

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Date</b>
Summer 2022	June 26, 2022
Fall 2022	August 18, 2022
Spring 2023	January 10, 2023