

# Ashland University

## Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

### Graduate & Bachelor's Plus Students

#### INTRODUCTION

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Federal regulations require that an institution develop and enforce a satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy for all Ashland University students. This policy is administered by the Financial Aid Office and pertains to all graduate students (including Pre-Doctor of Ministry and bachelor exempt) and Bachelor's Plus students enrolled at Ashland University.

This is a separate policy and appeal process from the academic policy administered by the Academic Standards and Graduation Committee. Therefore, students may be permitted to enroll at Ashland University, but may not be financial aid eligible due to not meeting the standards in the SAP policy.

#### STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENT

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Ashland University is required to monitor academic progress based upon the *qualitative* and *quantitative* standards in this SAP policy. It is the recipient's responsibility to ensure they are meeting these standards to maintain financial aid eligibility. Annual reviews take place at the conclusion of the spring semester.

Measurement	Standard of Measurement	Evaluation Timeline
Qualitative	Cumulative grade point average (GPA)	Annually
Quantitative	Pace of Completion	Annually
Quantitative	Maximum Timeframe	Annually

#### Qualitative Standards

Grade Point Average (GPA) – Students must achieve a minimum *cumulative* grade point average (GPA). Students who do not meet GPA standards will immediately lose financial aid eligibility.

Academic Degree/Program	Minimum Cumulative GPA
Bachelor's Plus	3.0
Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing	
Master of Arts in American History and Government	
Master of Arts in Corporate and Strategic Communication	
Master of Arts in Teaching American History & Government	
Master of Business Administration	
Master of Education	
Master of Science in Applied Exercise Science	
Doctor of Nursing Practice	
Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies	
ATS Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)	3.0
ATS Master of Arts (non-CMHC program)	2.0
ATS Master of Divinity	
ATS Doctor of Ministry (including Pre-Dmin)	

\*ATS = Ashland Theological Seminary

Students in the *Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing* program must demonstrate reasonable progress towards annual completion of credit hours of relevant coursework as determined by the Financial Aid Office and the MFA department. A grade of “S” is assigned a 3.00 grade value in order to generate a cumulative GPA for satisfactory academic progress review purposes. Students who receive a “U” are required to retake the course and cannot proceed to the next course until they pass. Students academically dismissed from the MFA program are ineligible for aid at Ashland University.

### **Quantitative Standards**

Pace of Completion – Students must successfully complete at least 66.67% of their *cumulative* attempted credits. Attempted credits are determined by the number of credits a student is registered for at the end of the drop date for any registered course. This percentage will be calculated by taking the number of completed credits divided by the number of attempted credits. Students who do not meet this standard at the time of review will immediately be ineligible for financial aid. Reinstatement of aid may occur through the appeal process or once the student attains the required percentage of completed credits at Ashland University, provided the student meets all other policy standards.

Maximum Timeframe – The maximum timeframe for Graduate and Bachelor Plus students to complete their program of study is 150% of the minimum degree/licensure requirements rounded up to the nearest full credit hour. After exceeding the 150% maximum timeframe restriction, the student is no longer eligible for financial aid. Classes withdrawn after the drop deadline for that semester will be considered attempted credits for maximum timeframe purposes. A chart showing the maximum timeframe hours for all AU Graduate and Bachelor Plus programs is available on our website at <http://www.ashland.edu/sap-max-credits>.

Additionally, a student who cannot mathematically complete a degree within the allotted maximum credits is also ineligible for aid. Affected students who have reached or exceeded the credit hours allowed due to academic program changes, changes in major, transfer hours accepted from other schools, or pursuit of a second degree (e.g., a second Master of Education degree) can have their status reviewed by submitting an appeal.

### **ADDITIONAL FACTORS IMPACTING SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

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**Repeated Coursework** – A student who repeats a failed course will receive financial aid for the repeated course each time it is attempted. A student who repeats a previously passed course in order to receive a higher grade can only receive financial aid for the repeated course one time. Repeat coursework will count towards the number of attempted hours for pace of completion and maximum timeframe purposes; however, only the highest grade will be used in the calculation of the student's grade point average.

**Transfer Credits** – Transfer credits do not impact a student's Ashland University GPA, and thus are not included when evaluating the *grade point average (GPA)* standard in this policy. In addition, the number of semesters attended at another school will not be considered when determining the minimum cumulative GPA required. Transfer credits will impact a student's pace of completion and maximum timeframe calculation, regardless if courses are relevant or not to the student's current major or program.

**Incomplete Grades or Approved Extensions** – A course assigned a grade of “I” or “E” is considered an “F” until the course is completed. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office once the course has been assigned another grade.

**S, P, and U Grades** – A course assigned a grade of “S” (satisfactory) or “P” (passing) is assigned a 3.00 grade value and is factored into the cumulative GPA for satisfactory academic progress purposes only. A grade of “U” (unsatisfactory) is not assigned a grade value and is not factored into the cumulative GPA.

**Course Withdrawals** – Financial aid eligibility may be affected if a student elects to remove a class from their schedule after the semester drop date and a “W” grade is assigned on their transcript. These courses will be considered attempted courses for pace of completion and maximum timeframe purposes.

## APPEAL PROCESS

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Students not meeting the minimum standards for satisfactory academic progress are ineligible for federal, state, and institutional financial aid (e.g. grants, scholarships, work study, and loans). However, students may request reinstatement of their financial aid eligibility by submitting a written appeal to the Financial Aid Office. The appeal must explain the unusual or extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting satisfactory academic progress standards. The committee will consider any unusual or extenuating circumstances, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Death of a relative
- Family difficulties, such as divorce or illness
- Injury or illness of the student
- Severe mental or emotional stress
- Physical or mental hardship

The Financial Aid Office will review appeals and make a final determination as to whether financial aid eligibility will be approved for another semester. The student will be notified of the committee’s decision in writing, and the decision will be notated in the student’s file.

The Financial Aid Office may approve a student to receive aid for one additional semester under a **Financial Aid Probation** or for a longer period of time under an **Academic Plan**. The student’s academic progress will be reevaluated each semester to determine if appeal conditions were met. Students who meet all appeal conditions for the semester will be approved to receive aid for the next semester. If SAP conditions are not met at the time of review, the student will become ineligible for financial aid in the next semester. Students can submit another financial aid appeal explaining why they were unable to meet appeal conditions. There is no limit to the number of appeals a student may submit, and appeals must be turned in by the published deadlines. New documentation supporting the extenuating circumstance must accompany subsequent appeal requests.

## INTERPRETATION AND ENFORCEMENT

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The Director of Financial Aid will have primary responsibility for the interpretation and enforcement of this policy. Unusual issues related to this policy may be directed to the Financial Aid Office.

## APPENDIX

The following definitions apply to this financial aid SAP policy only. Please refer to the academic catalog on Ashland University website for the specific academic requirements for the University or your program of study.

1. **Academic Plan:** A guided plan of action assigned to students who are mathematically unable to meet SAP standards after one semester.
2. **Enrollment Status:** Based on the number of credits enrolled during a regular semester:

Enrollment Status	Bachelor's Plus and *Pre-Dmin	Bachelor's Exempt		▲ Graduate	Doctor of Ministry
	<i>Credit Hours</i>	<i>Less than 90 Credit Hours</i>	<i>90 or more Credits Hours</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
Full-time	12	12	6	6	4
Three-quarter time	9	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Half-time	6	6	3	3	2

\* Eligibility for financial aid is limited to one-year for Pre-Doctor of Ministry students.

▲ Also applicable to Doctorate of Education and Doctorate of Nurse Practitioner students.

3. **Financial Aid:** Title IV federal, state, and/or institutional aid. Institutional aid includes any grant, scholarship, or discounts including tuition waiver or tuition exchange.
4. **Grade Point Average (GPA):** A measure of a student's academic achievement at an institution, calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credit hours completed.
5. **Grade of Incomplete (I) or Extension (E):** A grade assigned by a professor allowing the student more time to complete course requirements.
6. **Graduate Student:** A student attending Ashland University or Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS) who has earned a Bachelor's degree and is pursuing additional education in a specific field. Students designated as bachelor's exempt may be considered undergraduate students for financial aid purposes until specific criteria are met. Pre-Doctor of Ministry and Bachelor Plus students are not considered graduate students, but must meet the academic standards included in the Graduate and Bachelor's Plus SAP policy.
7. **Maximum Timeframe:** An institution must establish a maximum timeframe in which a student is expected to complete degree requirements for each program of study. The maximum timeframe is 150% of the minimum degree/licensure requirements rounded up to the nearest full credit hour.
8. **Preparatory Coursework:** A student not enrolled in a degree program is eligible for Federal Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loans for up to one consecutive 12-month period beginning on the first day of the loan period if the coursework taken is necessary for enrollment in an eligible program. The courses must be part of an eligible program otherwise offered by the school, though the student does not have to be in that program.

9. **Repeated Course:** Any courses a student has completed and is now enrolling in again either due to failure to meet program requirements or to obtain a better grade.
10. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** There are minimum standards for GPA, pace of completion, and maximum timeframe that a student must meet in order to be eligible for financial aid as outlined in this SAP policy.
11. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Statuses**
- **Satisfactory** – student is eligible to receive financial aid.
  - **Unsatisfactory** – student is not eligible for financial aid since SAP standards are not met.
  - **Maximum Timeframe Exceeded** – student is not eligible for financial aid since the 150% maximum timeframe restriction has been reached.
12. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Statuses:** a student not meeting satisfactory academic progress standards can request the reinstatement of financial aid through an appeal process. Possible appeal results may include:
- **Approved under a one-semester probation** – the student has been granted one additional semester of financial aid eligibility to reach SAP standards.
  - **Approved under an academic plan** – the student has been granted one or more semesters of financial aid eligibility to reach the standards outlined in this policy.
  - **Approved maximum timeframe extension** – the student can receive financial aid to complete their degree up to the number of semesters specified in their approved appeal.
  - **Denied** – the student cannot receive financial aid based on the appeal submitted.
  - **Denied Forever** – the student cannot receive financial aid and is not eligible to re-appeal.
13. **Transfer Credits:** Courses taken at another institution that are accepted by Ashland University. Transfer credits count toward the student's pace of completion and maximum timeframe calculation.