



METHODIST UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID POLICY OF
SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Methodist University Office of Financial Aid Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Undergraduate Students

The Higher Education Act mandates institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP). The SAP regulations, at Sec. 668.34(a)(3)(ii), require that, for programs that are longer than one academic year, the student's SAP must be evaluated "at the end of each payment period or at least annually to correspond with the end of a payment period;" Annually means a 12-month period. An institution is expected to review a student's SAP at least once every 12 months. Methodist University evaluates a student's SAP annually for students enrolled in at least 12 semester hours in the Day program and after each payment period for all other students and makes these standards applicable to **all** financial aid offered at Methodist University. Methodist University reserves the right to check a student's SAP more frequently. This includes Federal (Title IV), State (North Carolina), and Institutional (Methodist University) funding. Federal regulations require the university to establish SAP standards in the following areas: (1) Cumulative GPA; (2) Minimum Semester Hours Earned/Completion Rate; and (3) Maximum Time Frame. In addition, the school's SAP policy must include the student's total academic history. Programs administered by agencies other than Methodist University, such as private scholarships, or grants given by states other than North Carolina, may have their own academic standards for students. Students will need to contact such agencies to determine what those requirements are.

GENERAL SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS PRINCIPLES

1. Federal Regulations require the university to establish SAP standards in the following areas: (1) Cumulative GPA; (2) Minimum Semester Hours Earned/Completion Rate; and (3) Maximum Time Frame. In addition, a school's SAP policy must include the student's total academic history.
2. These general principles apply to all Methodist University's degree programs. In addition to the general principles, students must meet specific guidelines for their individual academic program(s). Program specific requirements are listed in the academic catalogue.
3. SAP will be determined **once per academic year for students enrolled in at least 12 semester hours in the Day program**, specifically, at the end of the Spring payment period. SAP will be determined after each payment period for all other students. SAP will be evaluated before the following Fall semester, regardless of when the student's enrollment began at Methodist University.
4. A student who fails SAP, **MUST** successfully appeal to continue to receive financial aid and be placed on financial aid probation (PROB). PROB cannot be given automatically. More details are provided under Financial Aid Probation (PROB).
5. A student who fails to make SAP at the end of the probation payment period, is placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS).
6. To earn hours at Methodist University, a student must receive a grade of A, B, C, or D. Any other grade does not earn hours.
7. Classes, from which a student has withdrawn will be counted as hours attempted but not hours earned, therefore, **will negatively impact** a student's ability to satisfy SAP.
8. Classes in which a student receives a grade of Incomplete (I) count as hours attempted but not as hours earned; therefore, **will negatively impact** a student's ability to satisfy SAP. If the Incomplete later changes, no reevaluation of SAP will be completed.
9. When a student repeats a course, the total *attempted* hours will increase with each repeat, but the student will only *earn* hours for a completed course once. Therefore, repeating classes **will negatively impact** a student's ability to satisfy the 67% passage rate but may significantly increase a student's cumulative GPA.
10. Included in attempted hours are all coursework attempted, including transfer credits, passed, repeated, incomplete, failed, and withdrawn courses. Attempted hours do not include credits earned through Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or other similar testing programs.

Addendum:

There is an exception under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) for courses the student does not complete, **including pass/fail courses the student does not complete**. Per the CARES Act, "[I]n determining whether a student is maintaining satisfactory academic progress...an institution of higher education may, as a result of a qualifying emergency, exclude from the quantitative component of the calculation any attempted credits **that were not completed** by such student without requiring an appeal by such student." This is an option MU has chosen to utilize. Therefore, since Methodist University does not assign grades to pass/fail courses, the pass/fail courses that a student does not complete in Spring 2020 will be completely ignored in the Spring 2020 SAP evaluations.

11. Cumulative GPA

The cumulative number of credits attempted in the undergraduate schools of the university includes those credits attempted at the end of the schedule adjustment (drop/add). Multiple attempts of the same course will be counted for each attempt for financial aid purposes.

Credits Attempted	Minimum Cumulative GPA
1 – 48	1.4
49 – 77	1.6
78 – 109	1.8
110 – 129	1.9
130 – Max Time Frame	2.0

Minimum Semester Hours Earned/Completion Rate

Each semester (fall, spring, and summer) an undergraduate student must earn a minimum of 67% of the hours registered for at the end of schedule adjustment. Schedule adjustment is also known as drop/add. Schedule adjustment typically ends on the Friday of the first week of classes at 11:59 p.m (usually 5 days into the semester). Please check the University's Academic Calendar for specific dates.

- To find the minimum hours required, take the number of credit hours at the end of schedule adjustment, and multiply it by .67. For example: if a student had 12 hours at the end of schedule adjustment, then the student would have to earn at least 8 hours to remain eligible for further financial aid ($12 \times .67 = 8.04$). The credit hours will always be rounded.

Any student with a quality point deficit of 40 or more as calculated by the Registrar will be deemed academically ineligible, and therefore, will be placed directly on Financial Aid Cancellation without a probation period. The calculation in determining the quality point deficit is the total credit hours attempted, as established by the Registrar, times 2 minus the total quality point.

Maximum Time Frame

Undergraduate students must complete their degree requirements within 150% of the published length of their academic program to remain eligible for financial aid. At Methodist University, students must complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree within a maximum number of credits attempted (including transfer credits). This is the maximum allowable time for receipt of federal and state financial aid regardless of whether the student did or did not receive financial aid during any period of his/her enrollment. A student cannot have more than 150 % of the published length of the education program to graduate. For most students, 12 semesters is the maximum time frame allowable for degree completion (standard 8 semesters or 100 % plus an additional 4 semesters or 50 %). Students will be allowed to receive institutional financial aid for a maximum of ten (10) semesters or five (5) years regardless of whether they are making SAP or not. A student can appeal the 150% maximum timeframe (see Appeals).

Failure to Meet SAP

Notification of Denial

Students who are currently enrolled will receive a certified letter of denial with the SAP Guidelines enclosed outlining why they were denied and the appeal process. Students who withdraw, are suspended, and/or expelled from the university, will be notified by email with the SAP Guidelines attached.

Financial Aid Probation (PROB)

A student who fails SAP must successfully appeal (see Appeals) to be placed on PROB. PROB CANNOT be given automatically. Methodist University must review the student's progress at the end of that one payment period, as probation status is for one payment period only. At the end of one payment period on PROB, the student must make SAP or must be meeting the requirements of the academic plan. A student may be placed on PROB for one payment period per appeal. It is possible that a student could be placed on probation more than once in his or her academic career.

- If Methodist University determines, based on the appeal, that the student should be able to meet the SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, the student is placed on PROB without an academic plan. MU must review the student's progress at the end of that one payment period, as PROB status is for one payment period only. At the end of one payment period on PROB, the student must make SAP or will be ineligible to receive financial aid.
- If Methodist University determines, based on the appeal, that the student will require more than one payment period to meet SAP, the student will be placed on PROB and an academic plan must be developed for the student. The student's academic advisor or the Office of Academic Services and the student should develop a plan (class schedule) that ensures that the student is able to meet the Methodist's SAP standards by a specific point in time. The student will need to contact his/her academic advisor or call the Office of Academic Services at 910-630-7151. The plan could specify that the review takes place at the next point when the rest of Methodist University's population is reviewed, which could mean every payment period or annually. The plan could also specify that the student is reviewed more frequently than the rest of the institution's population; however, a student on an academic plan would not be reviewed less frequently than the rest of the institution's population. An academic plan could take the student to program completion, rather than meeting the institution's SAP standards at a specific point in time.
 - a. **If the academic plan shows that the student can make SAP**, the student will be placed on PROB and Methodist University MUST review the student's progress at the end of one payment period as is required of a student on PROB status, to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan, the student is eligible to receive financial aid as long as the student continues to meet those requirements and is reviewed according to the requirements specified in the plan.
 - b. **If the academic plan does NOT show that the student can make SAP**, then the student will NOT be eligible for financial aid and will be immediately placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS). Students who are placed on FAS will be ineligible for all federal, state, and institutional financial aid. This includes any alternative loans that require certification by Methodist University.

At the end of the PROB period, the student's SAP is evaluated. If the student is making SAP, then the student is no longer on PROB. **Students on PROB who still do not meet the SAP standards will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS). Students who are placed on FAS will be ineligible for all federal, state, and institutional financial aid. This includes any alternative loans that have an SAP requirement.**

Transfer students will be evaluated at the time of enrollment using the same SAP standards. However, credits transferred to Methodist University are not used in calculating grade point average.

Students returning to Methodist University while they are on PROB or FAS must meet Methodist's SAP policy to regain eligibility for financial aid.

Financial aid may be reinstated by the Director upon demonstration of mitigating circumstances which must be documented to the satisfaction of the director along with a typed letter of appeal from the student.

Appeals (PROB, FAS, 150% Time Frame)

- The appeal for a student to be put on PROB must include a typed letter of appeal from the student and appropriate documentation as to why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next payment period. **Please note that an appeal based on your need for assistance or your lack of knowledge of the academic progress requirements to remain in good standing is NOT a valid justification for an appeal and will NOT be approved.** If the Director determines, based upon the appeal that the student will require more than one payment period to meet SAP, the appeal must also include an academic plan from the student's academic advisor designed to ensure the student will be able to meet SAP by a specific point in time. The specific point in time is at the discretion of the Director of Financial Aid. **If the plan does NOT show that the student can make SAP, then the student will NOT be eligible for an appeal.**
- The appeal for a student who is on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS), for failure to make SAP at the end of the probation payment period, must include a typed letter of appeal from the student and appropriate documentation as to what had changed that caused the student to not make SAP during the probationary payment period and why the student should be able to meet SAP on the terms of the academic plan, if applicable. **Please note that an appeal based on your need for assistance or your lack of knowledge of the academic progress requirements to remain in good standing is NOT a valid justification for an appeal and will NOT be approved.**
- The appeal for the 150% Time Frame must include a typed letter of appeal from the student and appropriate documentation as to why the student has exceeded the 150% Time Frame and the time frame in which the student will complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree. **Please note that an appeal based on your need for assistance or your lack of knowledge of the academic progress requirements to remain in good standing is NOT a valid justification for an appeal and will NOT be approved.**

Examples of mitigating circumstances and appropriate documentation for appeals, include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Serious illness or injury of student—notarized statement from physician that illness interfered with student's ability to meet SAP along with typed letter of appeal from student.
2. Serious illness or injury of immediate family member—notarized statement from a physician along with typed letter of appeal from student.
3. Death of an immediate/close family member—death certificate and/or notarized statement from a minister, nearest relative, or an unbiased concerned adult along with typed letter of appeal from student.
4. Disruptive internal family problems—legal/court documentation from lawyer, statement from parents, minister, or an unbiased concerned adult along with typed letter of appeal from student.

However, the Financial Aid Director may choose to request additional documentation when a particular student circumstance warrants it and may decide to require more extensive documentation on an initial appeal and an update statement on a subsequent appeal. The Director also has the discretion to deny the appeal if the documentation received is not sufficient.