



SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Montana State University Bozeman (MSU) is required by federal statute and regulation, and Board of Regents policy, to have a Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and a procedure for measuring student academic progress for financial aid eligibility purposes. To be eligible for federal and state aid programs and most scholarships and tuition waivers, a student must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards *regardless of whether the student has received financial aid previously*. **Violation of any one of these standards will result in the loss of financial aid eligibility.**

These standards represent minimum performance requirements based on federal statute and regulation and do not necessarily coincide with academic program requirements. In addition to meeting these standards a student must fulfill all other requirements to receive financial aid.

STUDENT STANDARDS:

Scholastic Standard. Students must be in compliance with MSU's scholastic standards. *Students on scholastic suspension are not eligible for financial aid.*

Percentage (Pass Rate) Standard. Students must pass *67% (rounded up) of the cumulative credits attempted at MSU* in their degree level (i.e. undergraduate or graduate). Passed credits do not include transfer credits, courses taken for audit, courses for which no grade was received, or grades of I (incomplete), F (failure), W (withdraw) and N (continuing). Passing credit is only received once in the enrollment period a course is retaken and passed if a passing grade was previously received for the same course. Students not meeting this standard will lose aid eligibility due to a **percentage violation**.

Maximum Credit Hour Standard. Students are considered for financial aid up to a specified number of *cumulative attempted credits*. Transfer credits are included with MSU credits in determining if a student has exceeded the applicable maximum credit hour limit. Students not meeting this standard by exceeding the applicable limit will lose aid eligibility due to a **maximum credit hour violation**.

Undergraduate Maximum Credit Hour Limits *	
Pre Baccalaureate Students (not yet awarded a baccalaureate degree)	180 cumulative undergraduate credits
Post Baccalaureate Students (already awarded a baccalaureate degree)	240 cumulative undergraduate credits

* Measurement is based on cumulative undergraduate credits attempted. All undergraduate courses including minors, dual majors, dual/concurrent degrees and prior degrees must be completed within the applicable limit to avoid violation.

Graduate Maximum Credit Hour Limits **	
Non-degree Graduate Certification Students	60 cumulative graduate credits
Masters Degree Students	60 cumulative graduate credits
Doctoral Degree Students	120 cumulative graduate credits

** Measurement is based on cumulative graduate credits attempted. Masters degree credits are included in the doctoral student limit.

MEASUREMENT:

Student academic records are reviewed for **percentage violations** at the end of spring semester for students who attended fall and/or spring semester and at the end of summer session for those who attended summer session. **Maximum credit hour violations** are reviewed at the end of each enrollment period. Students will be notified if a violation occurs. However, it is the **student's responsibility to know** a violation has occurred whether or not the student receives notification from Financial Aid Services.

REGAINING ELIGIBILITY:

If ineligible for financial aid due to a **percentage violation**, a student may regain eligibility by enrolling at MSU without financial aid and passing sufficient credits to meet the percentage standard. The student must submit **written notification** to the Office of Financial Aid Services when this has been accomplished before aid eligibility will be reinstated.

APPEALS:

The University Scholastic Appeals Board must grant scholastic reinstatement to students on **scholastic suspension** before the Office of Financial Aid Services will consider an appeal for financial aid eligibility reinstatement. An appeal for aid eligibility reinstatement submitted by a student on scholastic suspension will be denied.

There is an appeal process through the Office of Financial Aid Services if a student who is ineligible for financial aid due to a **percentage and/or maximum credit hour violation** feels there is an error in institutional records, or there were mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards. A Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form is available, and is required, from Financial Aid Services or from our Web site at: www.montana.edu/wwwfa.

APPEAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

Personal, type written statement from the student that includes all of the following:

1. Title of "Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal."
2. Student's name.
3. Student's MSU identification number.
4. Student's current mailing address. (Indicate if this is a change of address.)
5. A detailed description of the mitigating circumstances that addresses all of the following:
 - a. The nature and timing of the circumstances (e.g., injury or illness, death of a loved one). A student with a maximum credit hour violation must address the circumstances that prevented their graduation within the applicable credit limit. Be specific when referring to credit amounts and time periods.
 - b. How the circumstances affected the student's ability to meet the standards. If more than one enrollment period was affected, each enrollment period and the relevant circumstances must be specifically addressed.
 - c. How the circumstances have been resolved or managed to permit the student to meet the standards.
6. Student's signature and date signed.

Supporting documentation verifying the circumstances in the personal statement (see item 5 above). Maximum credit hour violation appeals must also include a completed **Plan of Study Form** available from the Office of Financial Aid Services or on the web at: www.montana.edu/wwwfa. Medical circumstance documentation must be from an authorized medical representative. If a student feels it is impossible to document their circumstances, their personal statement must explain why. Documentation must be in written form. The Office of Financial Aid Services will not contact references on a student's behalf.

Supporting statements from an individual must specify the relationship of the individual to the student and be signed and dated. A statement from a third party may be deemed more credible than one from an individual who could benefit from the outcome of the appeal decision, depending on the circumstances.

APPEAL DEADLINES AND PROCESSING:

Appeals for financial aid eligibility reinstatement must be received in the Office of Financial Aid Services no later than **November 15 for fall semester**, no later than **March 31 for spring semester** and no later than **June 30 for summer session**. These deadlines apply regardless of the date the student became aware of the loss of eligibility. Appeals received will be reviewed by the Satisfactory Progress Appeals Committee on a case-by-case basis as soon as possible, but may take two weeks or more for an answer depending on the appeal volume at the time submitted.

In all cases, the outcome of any appeal will depend on the nature of the circumstances causing the violation, the quality of the documentation provided, and how well the student has demonstrated whether good progress is being made toward earning a degree.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more information contact the Office of Financial Aid Services at 406-994-2845, or in Room 183, Strand Union Building. For academic policy and graduation requirements review the Montana State University Graduate and Undergraduate Bulletin.

Note: The above financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is effective beginning Fall **Semester 2010** and replaces previous published academic progress policies. Exceptions or amendments to any of the specific provisions regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards may be made at any time, without publication, due to changes in federal, state or institutional regulations or policies.