



## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Montana State University Bozeman (MSU) is required by federal regulations and Board of Regents policy to have a Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy 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. The following standards represent minimum performance requirements to receive financial aid and do not necessarily coincide with academic program requirements. **Violation of any one of these standards will result in the loss of financial aid eligibility.**

### STUDENT STANDARDS:

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

**Grade Point Average Standard:** Students enrolled in a program that is longer than two academic years must, at the end of their second year (60 credits), have a grade point average of at least a **2.0** throughout the rest of their undergraduate enrollment. Until the completion of 60 credits, undergraduate student grade point averages will be evaluated under the scholastic guidelines used by the University Scholastic Appeals Board. Graduate students must maintain the grade point average required by the Graduate School for continued enrollment.

**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 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 received only once for repeated coursework; however each repeat of a course is included in the attempted credits negatively affecting the pass rate. Please note that students can only receive aid for one repeat of a previously passed course.

**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.

Undergraduate Maximum Credit Hour Limits *	
First Undergraduate degree:	180 cumulative undergraduate credits
Subsequent Undergraduate degrees:	240 cumulative undergraduate credits

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

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

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

Gallatin College Programs	
Certificate of Applied Science (CAS):	45 cumulative CAS credits
Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS):	100 cumulative AAS credits

### MEASUREMENT:

Student academic records 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.

### WARNING PERIOD:

Students who fail to meet the 67% percentage (pass rate) standard for the first time will be placed on warning status and will remain eligible to receive financial aid for one additional semester. Students must meet all standards at the end of the one semester warning period or will be placed on financial aid suspension.

## REGAINING ELIGIBILITY:

A student may regain eligibility by enrolling at MSU without financial aid and passing sufficient credits to meet the percentage and/or grade point average 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 Satisfactory Academic Progress violation feels there is an error in institutional records, or there were mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the policy standards. A Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal form is available, and is required, from Financial Aid Services or from our website at: [www.montana.edu/wwwfa](http://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.
7. Attach 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](http://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.

## 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 will be reviewed by the Satisfactory Progress Appeals Committee on a case-by-case basis as soon as possible. The review may take up to two weeks 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, how the circumstances are being resolved or managed, and how well the student has demonstrated whether good progress is being made toward earning a degree. If an appeal is approved and eligibility is reinstated, the student will be required to follow an academic plan until the standards are met.

## 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 Catalog. The above financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is effective beginning **Fall Semester 2011** and replaces previously published policies. Exceptions or amendments to any of the specific provisions regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards may be made at any time due to changes in federal, state or institutional regulations or policies.