

Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress – Undergraduate Students

Federal Regulations require all schools who participate in Federal financial aid programs (i.e. Direct Loans, Perkins Loan, Pell Grant, SEOG, and Work-Study) to measure a student’s progress toward meeting graduation requirements or Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). These SAP requirements only impact eligibility for Federal aid programs. **They do not impact any Rensselaer merit or need-based scholarships or grants.**

The following Glossary of Terms, Federal SAP requirements, and Frequently Asked Questions will assist you in understanding the terminology, requirements, and process surrounding Federal SAP.

Glossary of Terms:

Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): A student is expected to have a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) as s/he progress through an academic program of study as well as a minimum semester GPA. Refer to the Federal SAP chart to determine the CGPA and/or semester GPA you must have for the semester you would receive federal aid. In addition, the student is required to complete a program of study within a particular timeframe. This is called Pursuit of Program (POP) or Pace. Pace is calculated by taking the total completed credits divided by the total attempted credits. The result must be $\geq 67\%$.

Prior to the semester of the student's semester:	1	2	3	4	5 and each semester thereafter
Minimum CGPA:	N/A	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0
Minimum Semester GPA:	N/A	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Completed Credits Divided by Attempted Credits must be \geq to:	N/A	67%	67%	67%	67%

Students are evaluated at the end of each semester to determine if Federal SAP requirements are being achieved. Those students not making Federal SAP are notified of their status. In addition a student may review his status using his RPI Student Information System (SIS) access.

Federal Financial Aid Warning: This status applies to a student who is not making Satisfactory Academic Progress and who has never been on *Federal Financial Aid Warning* previously while attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and in the semester previously attended was considered meeting Federal SAP. An individual in this status may continue to receive Federal financial aid for one semester. A student is only granted *Financial Aid Warning* status once while attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as an undergraduate (co-terminal students are considered undergraduate students). This status is granted automatically to a student; no appeal is considered nor required. It is also important to remember that you could be granted this status regardless if you are a Federal aid recipient for the term you are designated on *Financial Aid Warning*.

Federal Financial Aid Probation: An individual who is not meeting SAP is granted this classification upon successfully outlining the reasons not being able to attain SAP requirements and be able to demonstrate that SAP requirements will be met within a prescribed timeframe. If the appeal is approved, an individual in this status may continue to receive federal financial aid. While it is possible for a student to remain on *Financial Aid Probation* for consecutive semesters, a student may not be on this status for more than three consecutive semesters.

Additionally, a student who has been on *Financial Aid Probation*, regained SAP, who then later loses SAP may only be granted one additional *Financial Aid Probation* while attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as an undergraduate (co-terminal students are considered undergraduate students). This also applies to a student who while on *Financial Aid Probation*, fails to meet the academic plan outlined, appeals and is granted an additional *Financial Aid Probation* status. In other words, a student may be granted Federal Financial Aid Probation twice, with each *Financial Aid Probation* lasting a maximum of three semesters.

For consideration of *Financial Aid Probation* a student MUST have an academic plan provided by the appropriate individual within his/her school that will outline what the student needs to accomplish academically in order to regain SAP. The student is reviewed on a semester by semester basis. If the student is not meeting the requirements of the plan the student will lose federal aid eligibility. In such instances, the student may appeal again, and provide a new/updated academic plan within the context of the maximum number of *Financial Aid Probations* allowed as noted above.

Appeal of loss of Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress: A student who has been notified that s/he is not making SAP may appeal for *Financial Aid Probation* by completing the [Request for Federal Financial Aid Probation Form](#). The appeal must articulate the reason(s) why the student was unable to meet the SAP requirements, provide complete documentation as appropriate (i.e. medical reasons must have appropriate medical documentation to support the claim).

Incomplete appeals will automatically result in a denial of the appeal. All appeals are reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid Federal SAP Committee. Any appeal that is denied means that the student cannot receive federal aid until such time as s/he attains SAP.

The loss of Federal financial aid eligibility does not necessarily impact a student's academic standing at Rensselaer.

Frequently Asked Questions

We have developed some common questions in anticipation of the new guidelines. We will add/update questions that we believe are useful to students in general. We know the new process might be confusing. Please feel free to contact us at 518.276.6813 or email to finaid@rpi.edu with any questions you may have.

How do you determine if I am making Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

Remember, there are 3 points that have to be reviewed: Pace (POP), Cumulative GPA (CGPA), and semester GPA (GPA). You can lose federal aid eligibility if you do not meet the standard for any of these 3 points.

Step 1 - Pace

- A. In order to assess your pace, or Pursuit of Program (POP) we take the number of credits that are normally required to earn your degree multiply it by 150% to determine the maximum number of attempted credits you can have while pursuing your degree.

Schools of HASS, Management, and Hydrogeology & Geology majors in School of Science

124 Credit Program = 186 maximum attempted credits, except GSAS 128 Credits, 192 maximum

School of Science and Information & Web Science

128 Credit Program = 192 maximum attempted credits, except Physics & Math 124 Credits, 186 max.

School of Engineering, Except Chemical Engineering

Aeronautical, Biomedical, Civil/Environmental, Materials, Industrial & Management, Electrical Engineering 128 Credit Program + 192 maximum attempted credits

Mechanical Engineering 129 Credit Program = 194 maximum attempted credits

All others, 130 credit program = 195 maximum attempted credits

Chemical Engineering

132 credit program = 198 maximum attempted credits

Architecture

168 credit program = 252 maximum attempted credits, for students enrolled fall 2014 and after

171 credit program = 257 maximum attempted credits for students enrolled before fall 2014

- B. Next, we take the total number of completed credits you have earned divided by the total credits you have attempted. This gives us the percentage of attempted coursework you must complete each time you are evaluated. At Rensselaer, this value is 67% (no rounding is allowed). So, if you are an undergraduate student, we will look to the total number of credits you have completed divided by the total number of credits you have attempted. If the result is less than 67% you will be considered not to be making POP and potentially lose your federal aid eligibility. This rule applies to co-terminal a student too.

For example, Roberta Red is a HAAS student, who has attempted 85 credits and completed 60 credits. She is making Pace because she has completed 70% of her attempted credits. Ian Trouble is a Engineering student who has attempted 32 credits and completed 20 credits. He is not making Pace because he has only completed 62.5% of his attempted credits.

Step 2 – Cumulative GPA (CGPA) and Semester GPA (GPA)

A. You must meet the minimum CGPA and semester GPA as outlined on the following chart:

Prior to the semester of the student's semester:	1	2	3	4	5 and each semester thereafter
Minimum CGPA:	N/A	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0
Minimum Semester GPA:	N/A	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Completed Credits Divided by Attempted Credits must be >= to:	N/A	67%	67%	67%	67%

B. Some additional items for you to know:

1. Please bear in mind that it does not matter if you attend full time or part time, you still must meet the CGPA and GPA requirements above.
2. Transfer credits are always counted as both attempted and completed credits. AP (Advance Placement) courses are treated in the same way. However, grades from transfer credits or AP courses are not included in your GPA or your CGPA. However, because transfer credit and AP credit are counted toward meeting your degree requirements they can impact the CGPA that you have to attain in order to make SAP. The following rules apply:

Required CGPA	
1.5	Freshman status with < 16 total completed credits (including AP/Transfer credits)
1.8	Freshman/Sophomore status with => 16 total completed credits (including AP/Transfer credits)
2.0	Junior/Senior status with any computed AP/Transfer credits

3. Repeat coursework can influence your Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress. Repeated coursework is always counted as attempted hours. However, only a passing grade is counted in the CGPA. You should also be aware that the most recent grade of a repeated course is considered for your CGPA. Repeated coursework can also influence your eligibility for federal aid within a particular semester without regard SAP. Federal regulation stipulates that you may only receive federal aid for a repeated course once unless you previously had not received a passing grade. Thus, if you were taking a course a third time, that course cannot be considered when determining your cost of attendance or enrollment status which could impact on the amount of federal aid you can receive.
4. Incomplete grades are not calculated in your completed credits and are assumed to be failing grades when determining your CGPA and GPA. You cannot retroactively restore your eligibility for Federal aid programs for a following semester unless you make up the incompletes PRIOR to the

start of the next semester you would attend after receiving an Incomplete grade or by being placed on Financial Aid Probation.

If I don't meet the at least one of the standards required, how do I appeal?

Complete the Request for Federal Financial Aid Probation form. Remember, your request must include:

1. The reason(s) why you were unable to meet the SAP requirements, provide complete documentation as appropriate (i.e. medical reasons must have appropriate medical documentation to support the claim),
2. What you will do in order to regain Federal SAP. You MUST include an academic plan provided by the designated individual within your school that will outline what you need to accomplish each semester you are requesting Financial Aid Probation in order to regain SAP. **For information about the designated individual in your school to assist you in your academic plan, contact ALAC (Advising & Learning Assistance Center) Associate Director, Jeannie Steigler at 518.276.6269 or visit <http://alac.rpi.edu/setup.do>.**

Incomplete appeals will automatically result in a denial of the appeal. All appeals are reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid SAP Committee. If your appeal is denied it means you cannot receive federal aid until such time as you attain SAP. Appeal decisions are final and will not be reconsidered.

If I appealed for Federal Financial Aid Probation, and my appeal is approved what happens?

If your appeal is approved, you will be placed on *Financial Aid Probation*. *Financial Aid Probation* may only last for one semester of attendance UNLESS your academic plan approved by the appropriate individual in your school and/or the Health Center as appropriate indicates you may take longer (however no academic plan may take longer than three semesters to regain SAP). The plan MUST outline what you will need to accomplish each subsequent semester in order to regain SAP. Remember, the academic plan may differ from what you may need to accomplish in order to meet the academic requirements of the school. Federal financial aid eligibility can differ from the academic standard. If your academic plan approved requires that you meet certain objectives that will allow you to regain federal SAP, it will be necessary for you to be evaluated at the end of each semester to ensure you are meeting the goals outlined for you. If you are not, then you will be removed from *Financial Aid Probation* and no longer considered eligible for federal aid until you regain federal SAP.

Also, remember if you are on *Financial Aid Probation* your federal SAP eligibility is reviewed at the end of every term you attend even if you are not receiving federal aid, including summer sessions.

If you are placed on *Financial Aid Probation*, and you regain federal SAP because you meet the standard SAP requirements, your *Financial Aid Probation* status will cease.

You may only be on *Financial Aid Probation* twice as an undergraduate student. Each *Financial Aid Probation* may not exceed three semesters.

Example:

Start of Semester:	Initial SAP Status	Outcome	Final SAP Status
Fall 2012	Not Eligible	Appeals, approved for <i>Financial Aid Probation</i> for two	1 st <i>Financial Aid Probation</i> for Fall 2012. Eligible to

		consecutive semesters	<i>receive Federal aid.</i>
Spring 2013	1 st <i>Financial Aid Probation</i>	Academic Plan is reviewed; meeting plan.	1 st <i>Financial Aid Probation</i> (continued) for Spring 2013. <i>Eligible to receive Federal aid.</i>
Fall 2013	Making SAP	Since making SAP, no action required.	Making SAP for Fall 2013. <i>Eligible to receive Federal aid.</i>
Spring 2014	Not Eligible	Appeals, placed on <i>Financial Aid Probation</i> for one semester	2 nd <i>Financial Aid Probation</i> for Spring 2014. <i>Eligible to receive Federal aid.</i>
Fall 2014	Not Eligible	Because student has been granted 2 <i>Financial Aid Probations</i> may not receive federal aid until making SAP. Cannot appeal.	Not eligible to receive Federal aid for Fall 2014 and beyond until attaining SAP.

I was already on *Financial Aid Probation* at the end of the Spring 2012 semester. How will these new rules apply to me?

To accommodate the change in RPI Federal SAP rules due to federal regulation, a student who was on *Financial Aid Probation* or *Financial Aid Warning* prior to the end of the Spring 2011 semester and is not making Federal SAP may appeal as any other student. Any student who was granted *Financial Aid Probation* prior to August 1, 2011 the *Financial Aid Probation* status granted prior to this date will NOT be included when determining if a student has received the allowable maximum number of two (2) *Financial Aid Probation* statuses.