Standards of Academic Progress

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Congress requires students receiving federal financial aid to make satisfactory academic progress. As a result, institutions of higher education are mandated to establish minimum standards of “satisfactory progress” for students in accordance with these regulations. These regulations apply to all terms of enrollment, whether or not aid was awarded or received. The College makes these standards applicable to all institutionally-awarded Federal and State funds for the purpose of maintaining a consistent policy for all students receiving assistance.

Effective Spring 2012, the following standards will apply to all students receiving any type of federal or state financial aid.

To Whom the Policy Applies:

First Semester Recipients

To receive Federal financial assistance for the first time, each eligible person will have met the admission and financial aid requirements of the college.

Continuing Recipients

Students will be expected to achieve certain minimum levels of progress toward the successful academic completion of course requirements for a degree or certificate. Progress toward the credential is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. There is also a maximum allowable time frame for completion of the credential.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by Congress, mandated institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of “satisfactory progress” for students receiving financial aid. The College makes these standards applicable to all institutionally-awarded Federal and State funds to include Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Grants, Federal Work-Study, Work Incentive for Student Education (WISE), HOPE Scholarships, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford Student Loans, and Federal Parent Loans (PLUS) to Undergraduate Students, for the purpose of maintaining a consistent policy for all students receiving assistance.

Satisfactory Academic Progress must be maintained by meeting three component standards, GPA Rule, Successful Completion Rule and the Maximum Time Frame Rule.

GPA Rule
Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0.

Successful Completion
Students enrolled in six (6) or more credit hours must satisfactorily complete at least 67% of the credit hours attempted, and on which financial aid was based. Students enrolled in less than six (6) credit hours must satisfactorily complete all hours attempted, and on which financial aid was based. Satisfactory completion is defined as a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or IP. Unsatisfactory completion is defined as a letter grade of F, I, W, or WF.

Attempted hours include all courses that have been transferred, withdrawn, and those that are unsuccessfully completed.
Developmental/remedial courses, repeated courses and transfer courses are included in the calculation of successful completion.

**Maximum Time-Frame**

Federal regulations limit receipt of federal financial aid to no more than 150% of the course work required for any particular degree or certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Requirement</th>
<th>Maximum Attempted Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>180</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Developmental/remedial course requirements will be added to the number of credits needed for program completion and will be included in the hourly limitation. Transfer credits and repeated credits will also be included in the hourly limitation.

**CLEP Tests** if credit is earned, the results are recorded by course, course number, and semester hours earned. Successful CLEP tests are credited toward graduation but do not carry grades or quality points. As a result, a successfully completed test will counted in the maximum timeframe to complete a program but not in the GPA or successful completion calculation.

**EVALUATION PERIODS AND COMMUNICATION**

The Office of Student Financial Services will evaluate satisfactory academic progress at the end of each term. All credit hours are measured whether the student received financial aid or not to pay for those credits. A student who is attending school part-time is evaluated in the same way as a full time student, unless otherwise noted above. Students will not receive credit hours earned for courses that are audits. Withdrawals and incompletes are counted as attempted courses and these grades will negatively affect a student’s satisfactory academic progress.

All Communications regarding satisfactory academic progress will be sent via email to the ABAC email address after all grades have been posted and the evaluations complete. The status is also posted in the Financial Aid Status section of the student’s Banner account. In addition, letters are sent via the US Postal Service when students have utilized the appeal process.

**APPEAL PROCESS**

Students with mitigating circumstances may appeal such decisions in writing. All students must complete the Satisfactory Academic Appeals Form and submit all of the documentation requested on the form. Failure to supply all of the requested documentation by the appeal deadline will result in a continued suspension until the next appeal deadline for a future semester. All appeals should be forwarded to the Office of Student Financial Services by the published deadline date and will be reviewed by the Student Financial Aid Committee.

**Mitigating circumstances** are defined as unanticipated and unavoidable events or situations beyond a student’s control that prevent him or her from successfully meeting the standards of academic progress.

Examples of mitigating circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- Serious accident or illness of the student
- Serious illness or death of immediate family member
- Immediate family or financial obligations
- Extreme weather conditions that significantly impacted your primary place of residence
Examples of unacceptable mitigating circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- withdrawal to avoid a failing grade
- too many courses attempted
- being unprepared for the college experience
- lack of effective study habits
- limited number of tests/assignments
- disagreement with instructor
- voluntary change in work hours
- inability to continue attendance without financial aid

If an appeal is granted, Students are expected to adhere to all the stipulations set forth in the reinstatement letter as well as any academic plans that are required for the student to regain compliance with the standards as outlined above. Students who regain eligibility and subsequently fail to maintain progress or fail to abide by the stipulations for reinstatement are no longer eligible for appeal.

If the appeal is denied, the student will need to enroll using their own resources until they are in compliance with the measures of academic progress for financial aid.

Levels of Appeal

Students who believe they have received inadequate consideration based on the measures outlined in number 3 below may appeal to the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs and the Dean of Academic Affairs.

1. **Student Financial Aid Committee**: Students may submit a written appeal, including any appropriate third-party documentation of the circumstances. Students are encouraged to present at least one letter of support from their academic advisor or a faculty member familiar with their situation. The Committee will notify students in writing of their decision within one week of the appeal meeting. The Committee reserves the right to advise students as to their course load and the possible need for counseling and/or academic advisement. The Committee will hear only one appeal per student per circumstance.

2. **Director of Student Financial Aid**: Students who have had their initial appeal denied by Committee may request a meeting with the Director of Student Financial Services to present additional information that may have been omitted in the initial appeal. The Director will inform such students in person and in writing of their decision. The Director will read only one appeal per student per circumstance and the decision of the Director of Student Financial Services is final.

3. **Vice President for Planning and Operations**: Students who have been denied by both the Committee and the Director of Student Financial Services, are eligible to appeal to the Vice President for Planning and Operations, if they can reasonably show that one of the following has occurred:

   - The student has not received due process.
   - The student has been discriminated against.
   - The student has not been treated in an equitable manner.
   - The decision of the Student Financial Aid Committee or Director of Student Financial Services was arbitrary and capricious.

**FINANCIAL AID WARNING STATUS**
The Financial Aid Warning Status is used for students who are not meeting the Overall GPA or 67% completion requirement for the first time. It is also used for students not meeting the 150% time frame requirement but are within one term of graduation. Student who are placed on Financial Aid Warning are not required to appeal. This is an automatic grace period that is granted that allows students one term to meet the Standards of Academic Progress.

A student cannot be placed on warning for successive periods.

**FINANCIAL AID PROBATION STATUS**

All students who have been reinstated to financial aid through appeal are reinstated on a provisional basis. Any student who is reinstated on provisional/probationary status and is expected to meet the Standards of Academic Progress after one term of attendance will not require an academic plan. Students who are reinstated on provisional/probationary status and are not expected to meet the Standards of Academic Progress after one term of attendance will require an academic plan. A provisional/probationary student for purposes of financial aid, will continue to be eligible for financial aid as long as they adhere to the reinstatement conditions and academic plan as outlined in their agreement.

The purpose of the academic plan is to ensure the student meets the standards of progress within a specified time period or is able to successfully complete a program of study successfully within a specific time frame.

**AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

The Office of Student Financial Services awards aid on a first-come first-serve basis. Students who have their financial aid awards cancelled for failure to meet the standards of academic progress should be aware that, receipt of originally awarded funds following reinstatement depends upon whether those funds have been awarded to other students and are available.

**HOPE GRANT PROVISIONS**

In order to maintain eligibility for the HOPE scholarship, degree-seeking HOPE scholars have the following additional GPA requirements, as set forth by the State of Georgia: Such students will be required to demonstrate a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 when they have attempted 30, 60, and 90 hours.

**NURSING & PRE-NURSING STUDENTS**

Nursing students should be aware that there are additional requirements that must be met for the successful completion or entry into the program. It is advised that you meet with your adviser to ensure you are on track for successful completion of the program.

*Note: All nursing and pre-nursing students who transfer credit to Abraham Baldwin must also be in compliance with the GPA, Successful Completion and Time frame Rules at the time of admission.*

**DEVELOPMENTAL CREDITS**

Developmental credits will be added to the number of credit hours needed for degree completion and evaluated as stated above.

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**
English as a Second Language courses are not required for degree completion and therefore do not increase the maximum time frame for program completion.

**MULTIPLE DEGREES AND SECOND MAJORS**

The list below outlines the number of degrees students are able to obtain while at ABAC. However you should be aware that you may violate the maximum time frame rule and become ineligible for financial aid if you are unable to complete the subsequent program of study with an additional term of study.

- Multiple B.A. and B.S. degrees
- Multiple B.A.S. degrees
- One A.A. degree
- One A.S. degree
- Multiple A.A.S. degrees
- Multiple certificate