

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients

Federal and state regulations require that students receiving financial aid maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Durham Technical Community College (Durham Tech) applies these standards to all federal and state financial aid funds in order to maintain a consistent process for all students receiving assistance.

Durham Tech reviews students' satisfactory academic progress at the end of each semester after grades are due, including summer. In order to be eligible for financial aid, students must meet the following minimum guidelines:

Qualitative Standard - A student must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0.

Quantitative Standard - Must earn 67% of the total cumulative credit hours attempted (e.g., if the student has attempted 50 credit hours, the student must have earned credit for at least 34 hours). The number of hours attempted is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which they were enrolled at the census date of each term. The total number of hours earned is defined as the total cumulative number of credit hours for which the student received a passing grade as noted on the students' academic transcript.

Maximum Time Frame - Must complete program of study in a time frame not to exceed 150 percent of the published length of the program, excluding the first 30 attempted credit hours of developmental education. This will be measured in credit hours (e.g., if the academic program length requires 60 credit hours, maximum time frame cannot exceed 90 credit hours **attempted**). Once students have earned an associate degree from Durham Tech, they may not be eligible for additional financial aid.

Special Notes:

Withdrawal – An excessive number of withdrawals (either official or unofficial) will affect a students' ability to meet the qualitative standard as described above. We encourage students to discuss any plans to withdraw from one or more courses with a Financial Aid Advisor before they do so to see how this will affect their future financial aid eligibility.

Grades of Incomplete – Students receiving a grade of incomplete (I) at Durham Tech will be treated as an F grade for SAP calculation purposes. If a grade other than "F" is submitted on the students' behalf, a recalculation of the students' SAP standing will be conducted.

Repeated Courses - Durham Tech permits students to retake courses. If a student has already earned a passing grade ("D" or better) for the course, they may only repeat the course once for financial aid purposes. The new grade earned from a repeated course and all grades from previous attempts will be used to determine eligibility. The previous hours attempted and earned will continue to be counted in the total hours attempted and earned.

Developmental Coursework – Developmental Education courses (designated by course numbers below 100, ex., MAT 070, ENG 011, etc.) beyond the first 30 credit hours attempted **are included** in the calculation of satisfactory academic progress. Developmental credit hours attempted in excess of 30 total semester credit hours cannot be counted towards enrollment status.

Transfer Credit – Transfer credit hours accepted from other institutions are included in the calculation of completion rate and maximum timeframe, but not GPA.

Change of Program – Hours attempted and GPA earned in other programs at Durham Tech are included in the SAP calculation.

Additional Credits – Effective Summer of 2020, Institutional, Transfer, Developmental, Transfer of Developmental, and Non-Course credit applied to a student’s record are evaluated for SAP purposes. If a credit does not have a grade associated with it, it is not counted for GPA purposes.

P-Grades – Any grade with a P or a P prefix will count as a 4.0 for GPA purposes.

Students with Previous Appeals

Probation - Prior to the Fall of 2020, Durham Tech would place students on Probation for one term if appeals were granted. Probationary status is effective for the next term the student enrolls. Students who were placed on Probation prior to 6/1/2020 and did not enroll in the Summer of 2020 will have their probation status in effect for whichever term they return. Students on Probation are eligible for all of their federal aid they qualify for. After the completion of the probation term, if the student is not satisfactory, they must appeal and if approved, are placed on the appropriate Academic Plan described below.

Recalculated Students – Prior to the Fall of 2020, Durham Tech would recalculate students who earned a degree from Durham Tech and were pursuing additional degree(s) under the conditions of qualitative, quantitative and max time frame (for the new program) standards. Since the current guidelines are stricter for these students, these students are grandfathered in to their original recalculation. If they become unsatisfactory for reason, any appeal will be based on the current standards.

Warning Status and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

Following the first term of failure to maintain **cumulative** satisfactory academic progress, students will be granted **one term** to regain satisfactory academic progress. This term is known as their “Warning” term. During a Warning term, students will continue to receive financial aid provided they are otherwise eligible.

If students are able to regain satisfactory academic progress with the courses completed successfully during their Warning term, the Warning status is lifted. If they have not regained satisfactory academic progress, they are placed on “suspension” and are no longer eligible for financial aid at Durham Tech until their cumulative progress is again satisfactory. Students may regain satisfactory academic progress by restoring their cumulative GPA to 2.0 and/or overall completion rate to 67%. If students fail to restore their academic progress by the end of the warning term, they will have the option to submit a suspension appeal form to the Financial Aid office.

Appeal Process

If students become ineligible for financial aid due to a failure to meet the minimum guidelines for satisfactory academic progress or because they have reached their maximum time frame to earn a degree, they may appeal their status to the Financial Aid office. Students will be notified via their Durham ConnectMail email account of their SAP status. If students are suspended due to failing to

meet the minimum guidelines, they must follow the instructions provided in the email and submit the appeal form. Appeals will be considered for various circumstances and are reviewed on a case by case basis.

All appeals must be made in writing to document the unusual circumstance and to explain and document that these situations are resolved. Students may obtain the Appeal form from the Financial Aid office or print a copy from the Durham Tech [Financial Aid website](#). Submit the appeal and non-returnable documentation to the Financial Aid office two weeks before the end of the semester for which you are appealing. Documentation supporting your circumstance may be required and is encouraged. Suspended students should be prepared to pay for the semester expenses. A students' appeal will be reviewed and their approval or denial notice will be sent to their Durham Tech ConnectMail email account.

Effective 3/19/2020, due to challenges from the Covid-19, Durham Tech has removed the requirement for students to have academic advisor signatures on SAP appeals. The effective date of the appeal is the date that the appeal is reviewed, even if the appeal is completed prior to the 3/19/2020 date.

Appeal Decisions

The appeal decision is made by anyone with one of the following titles:

Assistant Director, Financial Aid Operations; Assistant Director, Financial Aid Processing; Assistant Director, Financial Aid or Director of Financial Aid and Veterans' Services.

Students should work with their assigned Financial Aid Advisor for assistance with the appeal process.

Approved Appeals

If a students' appeal is approved, they will be placed on an Academic Plan in relation to the reason for their suspension. The following are the terms of all suspended students based on status:

Qualitative and Quantitative Appeals

All qualitative and quantitative appeals require the student to complete all aspects of the appeal form associated with their type of suspension. In addition, the following standards are applied:

- **Completion Rate Suspension:** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.0 and complete 100% of their coursework each term or their plan is terminated.
- **GPA Suspension:** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.5 and complete at least 75% of their coursework each term or their plan is terminated.
- **Completion and GPA Suspension:** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.5 and complete 100% of their coursework each term or their plan is terminated.

Students, if reaching Maximum Time Frame on this Academic Plan, are required to appeal under Maximum Time Frame standards and if approved, a new Academic Plan is created.

Max Time Frame Appeals

All Max Time Frame appeals require the student to complete all aspects of the appeal form associated with the reason they are suspended for Max Time Frame.

- **Degree earned at Durham Tech, Degree transferred in from another school or at least 50% of the Published Program Length (in credits, not time) transferred in to Durham Tech –** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.0 and complete at least 75% of their coursework each term. In addition, they may not change their program of study unless mandated by an academic advisor and must graduate in or before the term listed as the expected graduation date by an Academic Advisor. Failure to meet any of these terms will result in the Academic Plan being terminated.

Students who are pursuing an additional degree from Durham Tech after earning a degree from Durham Tech, if suspended for Max Time Frame, must appeal to be considered to receive Financial Aid. These will be considered on a case by case basis.

- **Change of Academic Programs –** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.0 and complete 100% of their coursework each term. In addition, they may not change their program of study unless mandated by an academic advisor and must graduate in or before the term listed as the expected graduation date by an Academic Advisor. Failure to meet any of these terms will result in the Academic Plan being terminated
- **Less than 50% of the Published Program Length (in credits, not time) transferred in to Durham Tech or any other reason:** Approved students with this status must earn at least a 2.0 and complete 100% of their coursework each term. In addition, they may not change their program of study unless mandated by an academic advisor and must graduate in or before the term listed as the expected graduation date by an academic advisor. Failure to meet any of these terms will result in the Academic Plan being terminated. These students should submit supporting documentation of the situation that led to their failed course work or withdraw(s) from courses or provide an explanation why documentation is not available to be considered for approval.

Mandatory Change of Programs

The Financial Aid office recognizes there are reasons why students may be forced to change programs. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, being admitted into a limited enrollment program or a new catalog / course code becomes available that better suits a students' academic interests. If a student on a Maximum Time Frame Academic Plan changes programs, they will be sent a form to verify that it was mandated by an academic advisor. The Financial Aid office will use this to determine if the change of program was necessary on a case by case basis. If the Financial Aid office determines that the change of program was mandated, the student is said to have met the terms of their Academic Plan.

Denied Appeals

If a students' appeal is denied or if they do not meet the conditions of an approved appeal, they will be asked to attend at their own expense and earn the deficiency either in the hours, GPA or both (students cannot make up a deficiency if their appeal was due to exceeding the maximum timeframe to earn a degree). If they did not maintain SAP due to a deficiency in credit hours, they may take the credit hours at another institution as long as Durham Tech accepts the transfer hours. After the student completes this semester (or semesters), they must submit an appeal form to the Financial Aid office so their progress can be reevaluated.

Any denied student has the right to appeal the decision to the Director of Financial Aid and Veterans Services. In the event the Director of Financial Aid and Veterans Services made the decision, no appeal of a decision is allowed.

Academic Plan Failures

If a student fails any of the terms of their academic plan, they are suspended and must re-appeal to be considered for aid.

It is possible to not meet the terms of an academic plan but re-gain Satisfactory standing. For example, if a student has a 66% completion rate and complete 75% of their courses with a 2.0, their completion rate could now be above 67%. In the event this occurs, the student is considered Satisfactory despite not completing 80% of their courses.

After failure of an academic plan, a student may be put on another Academic Plan. There is not a limit to the number of Academic Plans a student can have, however each plan requires new circumstances that led to the failure of the Academic Plan.

NOTE: All notices regarding a students' academic progress for financial aid purposes will be sent to their Durham ConnectMail email account and is available on their Self Service portal. Students are responsible for monitoring this.