

## SECTION 12: SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

### 12.1 Process Overview & Responsibilities

Financial Aid is defined as all federally-funded aid programs, all state-funded student assistance programs and institutional aid. In order to receive financial aid, students must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress. Federal regulations require each educational institution define a uniform Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy for all financial aid applicants. This policy must have both quantitative (completion rate) and qualitative (grade point average) components, and must be at least as restrictive as the institutional academic standing policy. The policy must measure a student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame.

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Advising Center runs SAP on all students, undergraduates and graduates, after each semester. If an undergraduate student is not making SAP, financial aid is cancelled and an email notification is sent to the student. If a student submits an appeal and it is approved by the Academic Action Committee, the Financial Aid Office is notified by email regarding the Academic Action Plan. If a graduate student is not making SAP, financial aid is cancelled and an email notification is sent to the student. If a student submits an appeal to the Financial Aid Office and it is approved, the Financial Aid Office establishes an Academic Action Plan the student must sign and submit back to the Financial Aid Office. The student is notified by email regarding the Graduate Academic Action Plan.

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### Resources

668.16(e)  
668.32(f)  
668.34  
2014–15 *FS&A Handbook*, p. 1-9  
2013–14 *FS&A Handbook*, p. 2-50



## 12.2 Same As or Stricter Than

The Satisfactory Academic Progress policy is the same as or stricter than the school's standards for students enrolled in the same educational program who are not receiving Title IV aid. This policy must have both quantitative (completion rate) and qualitative (grade point average) components, and must be at least as restrictive as the institutional academic standing policy. The policy must measure a student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame. The SAP policy is reviewed each year. The university Academic Standing Policy for undergraduates can be found under on the Online Catalog at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/>. The university Academic Standing Policy for graduates can be found under the Online Catalog at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/index.php>.

The university Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for undergraduates and graduates can be found on the Financial Aid Office website at <http://www.wcu.edu/apply/financial-aid/index.aspx>.

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### Resources

668.34(a)(1)  
2014–15 *FSA Handbook*, p. 1-9  
2013–14 *FSA Handbook*, p. 2-50

### 12.3 Categories of Students

The Financial Aid Office in conjunction with the Advising Center runs Satisfactory Academic Progress on all financial aid recipients, undergraduate and graduate students, after each semester. The policy measures each student's performance in the following three areas: completion rate, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and maximum time frame.

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#### Resources

668.34(a)(2)  
2014–15 *FSA Handbook*, p. 1-9  
2013–14 *FSA Handbook*, p. 2-50

## 12.4 Qualitative and Quantitative Measures

### Undergraduate

Students' Academic Standing is defined as either:

- Good Standing,
- Academic Warning,
- Academic Suspension, and Academic Dismissal ([http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=1385#acad\\_stan](http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=1385#acad_stan)).

All students are expected to earn and maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.0 each semester and to successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of their attempted semester hours. Successful completion of a course means that a student must have credit pending (i.e. incomplete) or must earn credit for the course with a grade other than F, U, NC or W.

A student's academic standing is measured by comparing the number of attempted semester credit hours with the semester credit hours earned at Western Carolina University. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Drop/Add period.

The following are considered when evaluating a student's academic standing:

- All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame.
- Withdrawals, incompletes and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Audited courses are not considered credits attempted or earned.
- If financial aid is awarded under the basis of a consortium agreement, those transfer hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Students enrolled in eligible teacher certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the program. These hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- If financial aid is awarded for a study abroad program, those hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

### Resources

668.34(a)(4),(11)  
ED Program  
Integrity Questions  
and Answers—  
Satisfactory  
Academic Progress,  
R-Q2 and R-A2  
2014–15 *FSA*  
*Handbook*,  
pp. 1-9 to 1-11

- Repeated courses are counted in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

## **Graduate**

### **Pace (Completion Rate):**

A student's SAP is measured by comparing the number of attempted credit hours with the credit hours earned at Western Carolina University. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Drop/Add period.

The following are considered when evaluating a student's SAP:

- All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame.
- Withdrawals, incompletes and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Audited courses are not considered credits attempted or earned.
- If financial aid is awarded under the basis of a consortium agreement, those transfer hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Students enrolled in eligible teacher certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the program. These hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- If financial aid is awarded for a study abroad program, those hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Repeated courses are counted in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

A graduate student must successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of all WCU attempted semester hours, regardless of whether the hours attempted are at the undergraduate or graduate level, to maintain SAP.

### **Cumulative GPA (Qualitative Component)**

Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or as defined by the Graduate School.

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## 12.5 Maximum Time Frame

### Undergraduate

A student cannot receive any financial aid funding after he or she has attempted 150% of the hours required to earn a degree. For example, students in programs requiring 120 hours earned for graduation will be eligible for financial aid during the first 180 attempted hours as an undergraduate. All attempted hours are counted, including transfer hours and part-time enrollment, whether or not financial aid was received or the coursework was successfully completed.

Occasionally, a student will complete all the requirements for a degree but will continue taking courses without accepting the degree. Western Carolina will determine that the student has earned his/her degree at the point the student has met all requirements according to their degree audit, whether or not the student has applied for graduation. This allows for dual degrees, change of degree and minors so long as the student has not exceeded their maximum time frame overall.

Refer to Sections 3a and 3b

a. **Degree Audits**

A degree audit will be used to determine whether or not a student has met degree requirements and is eligible to graduate based upon their declared program of study.

b. **Double Majors**

Students often have questions about the ability to receive federal financial aid for double/dual majors. A major consists of a group of prescribed and elective courses (27-64 hours) providing breadth and depth in an academic discipline. A double major, also referred to as a second major or dual major, is awarded when a student completes appropriate coursework specified in the major component of a degree program in addition to the work done for his/her primary major and degree. Some degree programs require double majors due to the number of hours in the primary major (if the major component of a degree program is between 30 to 40 hours, a minor or second major is required). In determining whether or not a student is eligible for federal financial aid for double/dual majors, the following question must be answered:

**Does the degree program require a double major or minor? If a student's degree program requires a double major or minor, s/he cannot graduate until the double major or minor has been completed.**

1. If the degree program **DOES** require a double major or minor, the student is allowed up to the 150% timeframe to complete both degrees. However, students can only be funded for the classes that are required for the double major or minor.

\*Example: If both degrees require 120 hours, the student can be funded up to 180 hours to complete both programs: 120 hours  $\times 150\% = 180$  hours. If one degree requires 120 hours and the other degree requires 128 hours, the student can be funded up to 192 hours to complete both programs: 128 hours  $\times 150\% = 192$  hours.

2. If the degree program **DOES NOT** require a double major or minor, student is allowed up to the 150% timeframe to complete one degree. Students can only be funded for the classes that are required for one degree. If a student continues to take classes after one degree is completed, the student will only be eligible for federal student loans.
3. List of Current Programs that require a double major, minor or other approved program

**a. College of Arts and Sciences**

1. Anthropology, B.A., B.S. & Forensic Anthropology Concentration
2. English, B.A. (all English programs)
3. History, B.A. & B.S.
4. Mathematics, B.S.
5. Philosophy, B.A. (all programs)
6. Political Science, B.A. & B.S.
7. Sociology, B.A. & B.S.
8. Spanish, B.A.

**b. College of Education and Allied Professions**

1. B.S.ED English
2. B.S.ED Mathematics
3. B.S.ED Music Education
4. B.S.ED Social Sciences
5. B.S.ED Spanish
6. Psychology, B.S.

**c. College of Fine and Performing Arts**

1. Art, B.A.
2. Music, B.A. & B.M.
3. Stage and Screen, B.A.

## **Transfer Student Maximum Time Frame**

A student with transfer hours cannot receive any financial aid after s/he has attempted 150% of the hours required to earn a degree. All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame. If transfer hours exceed 90, students may request a review of their status through the Financial Aid Office. In this case, the student must submit a Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal for 150% Time Frame, signed by the student and advisor, along with a current degree audit to the Financial Aid Office for review.

## **Second Undergraduate Student Maximum Time Frame**

A student pursuing a **second** undergraduate degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the second degree.

## **Graduate**

A student pursuing a graduate or doctoral degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the graduate or doctoral degree.

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## 12.6 Evaluation Periods

To ensure all financial aid recipients are progressing both quantitatively and qualitatively, the Financial Aid Office runs Satisfactory Academic Progress on all financial aid recipients, undergraduate and graduate students, after each semester.

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### 12.6.1 Financial Aid Warning

#### Undergraduate

##### Academic Warning

Continuing students are placed on Academic Warning if the student's cumulative Western Carolina University grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0 or if the student fails to complete 67% of their attempted hours at the end of a semester.

Additionally, students who also fail to complete 67% of their attempted hours in their prior term of enrollment **regardless of cumulative GPA** will be placed on Academic Warning.

At the end of the term of academic warning, students must achieve the following:

- Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester,  
**AND**
- Raise the cumulative GPA to good standing (2.0),

#### **OR**

- Earn a 67% completion rate on the hours attempted for the semester,  
**AND**
- Earn a minimum 2.30 term GPA during the probationary term.

Failure to achieve one of the above criteria will result in academic suspension.

#### **Resources**

668.34(a)(3)  
2014–15 *FSA Handbook*, p. 1-10

668.34(a)(8)(i)  
668.34(b), *Financial aid warning*  
668.34(c)(1),(2)(i)  
2014–15 *FSA Handbook*,  
pp. 1-11 to 1-12

## Graduate

Graduate Students are not placed on Academic Warning. A graduate student must successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of all WCU attempted semester hours, regardless of whether the hours attempted are at the undergraduate or graduate level, to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or as defined by the Graduate School.

### 12.6.2 Academic Suspension

#### Undergraduate

Students who are on Academic Warning and who fail to meet the criteria necessary for continued enrollment will be suspended. Students who earn all F grades or a combination of all F, U, or W grades will be suspended without a period of Academic Warning. Students who are suspended are not eligible to enroll at the university during the next regular (fall or spring) semester but may apply for readmission after they have served one semester of Suspension.

When students return from Suspension with a successful appeal, they are placed on Academic Probation and must have an academic action plan. Failure to meet the terms of the Academic Action Plan (see Section 4) will result in Academic Dismissal from the university.

In addition to the above criteria, first-semester freshmen and new transfer students who are placed on Academic Warning must meet specific guidelines in order to continue enrollment in the University. First-semester freshmen and new transfers who earn a cumulative GPA within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their

#### Resources

668.34(a)(8)(ii),  
668.34(b), *Financial  
aid probation*  
668.34(c)(2)(ii),  
(3),(4),(d)(2)  
2014–15 *FSA  
Handbook*,  
pp. 1-12 to 1-13

first semester may return to the University for their second semester only if they choose to participate in the Learning Contract program.

## **Graduate**

Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or as defined by the Graduate School. The Graduate School notifies the Financial Aid Office by email if a student is suspended or dismissed.

### **12.6.3 Academic Dismissal**

#### **Undergraduate**

Students who have served a semester of suspension and who, while still on Academic Probation, fail to meet the 2.00 cumulative GPA and 67% successful completion rate or the terms of their academic plan will be dismissed from the university. Students who are dismissed must sit out for two years before they will be eligible to reapply for future enrollment at Western Carolina University.

#### **Graduate**

Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or as defined by the Graduate School. The Graduate School notifies the Financial Aid Office by email if a student is suspended or dismissed.

### **12.6.4 Learning Contract**

#### **Undergraduate**

Students who are given a Learning Contract option and who choose not to participate in the Learning Contract program are not eligible to continue enrollment in the University for one term. If readmitted after a lapse in

enrollment, students are reminded that they will return to Western Carolina University under the general guidelines for academic warning.

The Learning Contract Program specifies that these students work closely with an academic advisor. The student and advisor will discuss academic performance issues, set realistic goals, and make plans to reach those goals, including linking students with the campus resources that can help them succeed. Follow-up contacts will occur throughout the semester. These students must successfully complete all the conditions of their Learning Contract. Failure to meet these criteria will result in Academic Suspension.

## **Graduate**

Graduate students do not have a Learning Contract Program. Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or as defined by the Graduate School. The Graduate School notifies the Financial Aid Office by email if a student is suspended or dismissed.

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## 12.7 Appeals and Documentation

### Undergraduate

All students have the right to appeal prior to the published appeals deadline.

Students who are granted an appeal will be required to participate in an Academic Action Plan. Appeals for reinstatement without having to serve a specified period of suspension are approved or denied by the Academic and Admission Appeals Board. The Board's decision is final and is based upon the student's letter of appeal, which should include the following:

- The reasons for the student's poor academic performance,
- Documentation of extenuating circumstances, and
- A plan for rectifying the academic performance and raising the GPA to acceptable standards.

Requests for reinstatement must be submitted to the Advising Center by the deadline stated in the Academic Suspension Notification Letter, which also includes instructions for completing the request for reinstatement. A student whose appeal for reinstatement is approved will be designated as "Academic Action Plan" on his or her academic record and allowed to continue their enrollment under the academic action plan.

### Graduate

Students who receive a notice of ineligibility for federal aid based on the SAP guidelines may submit a signed Graduate Student Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal. The Graduate Student Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal must also include:

- All necessary documentation to support the existence of the circumstances described in the statement of academic intent and financial aid appeal and evidence that the circumstances have been resolved.
- List of courses required for the upcoming two semesters.

### Resources

668.34(a)(9),  
668.34(b), *Appeal*  
668.34(c)(3)(i),  
(ii), (d)(2)(ii), (iii)  
668.42(c)(2)(ii)  
2014–15 *FS&A*  
*Handbook*,  
pp. 1-12 to 1-13  
2013–14 *FS&A*  
*Handbook*, p. 2-50

Events/circumstances that merit an appeal of financial aid eligibility include, but are not limited to:

1. Student suffered a personal illness or injury (**excluding chronic conditions-students are responsible for properly balancing school work with known chronic conditions**) or personal family emergency.
2. Student suffered a death in his/her immediate family. Immediate family is defined as parents, grandparents and siblings for a dependent student and includes spouse and children for an independent student.
3. Student has been absent from Western Carolina University for more than one semester and can document that the time away from the university was spent in pursuit of activities that should make the student better prepared to succeed academically.
4. Student was the victim of a natural disaster that caused him/her to miss school for at least five consecutive days.
5. Student came a semester at own expense to Western Carolina University and earned 9 hours and 3.0 semester GPA (graduate).
6. If a student does not meet the terms of the Academic Action Plan and does not meet SAP, they must come a semester at their own expense at Western Carolina University and earn 9 hours and 3.0 semester GPA (graduate) to appeal for 2<sup>nd</sup> and final Academic Action Plan.

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee will consider the appeal and render a decision, which will be conveyed to the student by letter and/or email.

A student can appeal financial aid eligibility determinations based on maximum time frame only if (1) the student demonstrates that s/he has a documented disability that requires this accommodation, or (2) the student documents other exigent circumstances beyond his/her control. Appeals based on disability will be considered in cooperation with Western Carolina University's Office of Student Disability Services.

**Students seeking to reestablish financial aid eligibility remain ineligible to receive financial aid assistance or deferment of payment until the appeal process is complete and a decision has been made by the Financial Aid Office Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee. Students should be prepared to pay tuition, fees and other educational expenses.**

### **12.7.1 Maximum Time Frame Appeal**

A student can appeal maximum time frame only if (1) the student demonstrates that s/he has a documented disability that requires this accommodation, or (2) the student documents other exigent circumstances beyond his/her control. Appeals based on disability will be considered in cooperation with Western Carolina

University's Office of Student Disability Services. Students who successfully appeal determinations based on maximum time frame will be permitted to an extension of the maximum time frame up to a maximum of twelve additional semester hours attempted. If an appeal of maximum time frame is approved, the student must elect in writing to the Financial Aid Office either one of two enrollment options: (1) to enroll as a full-time student with twelve additional semester hours attempted in one semester; or (2) enroll as a part-time student with six additional semester hours attempted in each of two successive semesters.

An undergraduate or a graduate student can appeal maximum time frame by going to the Financial Aid Office website <http://www.wcu.edu/apply/financial-aid/index.aspx> and printing FORM 503 (Undergraduate Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal for 150% Time Frame) or FORM 504 (Graduate Student Statement of Academic Intent and Financial Aid Appeal).

## 12.7.2 Academic Plans

### Undergraduate

When a student does not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards but an appeal has been approved, an Academic Action Plan is developed on a student-by-student basis, and designed in such a way that, if followed, the student will be meeting SAP standards. Each student must pass and earn 67% of all WCU attempted hours with a 2.3 semester GPA or an overall 2.0 GPA.

If a student submits an appeal and it is approved by the Academic Action Committee, the Financial Aid Office is notified by email regarding the Academic Action Plan. Academic Action Plans are reviewed at the end of each semester by the Registrar's Office and Advising Center. If an Academic Action Plan needs to be extended to the following semester or a student does not meet the terms of the

668.34(c)(3)(iii)(B),  
(d)(2)(iii)(B)  
*Federal Register*,  
10/29/10, p. 66886  
2014–15 *FS&A*  
*Handbook*,  
pp. 1-12 to 1-13

*Federal Register*,  
10/29/10, p. 66886

Academic Action Plan, the Advising Center notifies the Financial Aid Office by email.

## **Graduate**

Students who fail to make Satisfactory Academic Progress, who have appealed, and have had eligibility for aid reinstated, will be placed on an Academic Action Plan if their cumulative completion rate falls below 67% or if their cumulative GPA does not meet the defined standards. Students who are placed on an Academic Action Plan for the upcoming semester/academic year will be sent an email or letter to notify them that they must agree and meet the terms of the Academic Action Plan to remain eligible. The SAP standards are outlined in the Academic Action Plan and the student is responsible for meeting the standards by the next review cycle. Academic Action Plans are reviewed at the end of each semester. As part of each semester review, if the student does not meet regular SAP guidelines, but meets the terms of the Academic Action Plan, the student's degree audit will be reviewed to confirm that the student is taking classes required for their degree and progressing toward graduation.

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## 12.8 Regaining Eligibility

### Undergraduate

Student grades will be reviewed at the completion of each semester to determine eligibility for the upcoming semester. If a student has a break in enrollment or is suspended/dismissed, then SAP will be reviewed at that time.

Students who are currently under an Academic Action Plan will continue to be reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who fail to meet the terms of their Academic Action Plan will be ineligible for further aid after the term in which they break the Academic Action Plan, unless they meet regular SAP guidelines.

Any student who does not meet the academic standing guidelines at the time of the semester review will be ineligible for federal financial aid for the upcoming semester and will be sent notification of their ineligibility. Each student is responsible for knowing his/her own status, whether or not s/he receives this notification. Students may access their SAP status via myWCU.

### Graduate

Student grades will be reviewed at the completion of each semester to determine eligibility for the upcoming semester.

- *Students who fail to meet the terms of their academic action plan will be ineligible for further aid unless they met regular satisfactory academic progress guidelines.*

Any student who does not meet the SAP guidelines at the time of the review each semester will be ineligible for federal financial aid for the upcoming semester and will be sent notification of their ineligibility. Each student is responsible for knowing his/her own status, whether or not s/he receives this notification.

Students may access their SAP status via myWCU.

### Resources

668.34(a)(9)(i),(10)  
2014–15 FSA  
*Handbook*, p. 1-13

A student may regain eligibility for financial aid after any academic term by earning the number of credit hours for which s/he is deficient or improving the GPA without financial aid. These hours must be earned at Western Carolina University. Hours and GPA earned at another institution will not transfer towards meeting satisfactory academic progress.

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## 12.9 Treatment of Non-punitive Grades, Repeated Courses, Audited Courses, Pass/Fail Courses, Withdrawals, & Incompletes

### Undergraduate

All students are expected to earn and maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.0 each semester and to successfully complete (earn) at least 67% of their attempted semester hours. Successful completion of a course means that a student must have credit pending (i.e. incomplete) or must earn credit for the course with a grade other than F, U, NC or W.

A student's academic standing is measured by comparing the number of attempted semester credit hours with the semester credit hours earned at Western Carolina University. This includes any course for which the student has remained enrolled past the Drop/Add period.

The following are considered when evaluating a student's academic standing:

- All transfer hours count when calculating maximum time frame.
- Withdrawals, incompletes and failures are considered attempted but not earned hours.
- Passing credits received for pass/fail courses are considered attempted and earned credits; failing grades in pass/fail courses are considered attempted but not earned.
- Audited courses are not considered credits attempted or earned.
- If financial aid is awarded under the basis of a consortium agreement, those transfer hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Students enrolled in eligible teacher certificate programs may receive financial aid only for those courses that are required to complete the program. These hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- If financial aid is awarded for a study abroad program, those hours will be considered in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.
- Repeated courses are counted in the overall calculation of both attempted and earned hours.

### Resources

668.34(a)(6)  
2014–15 *FSA Handbook*,  
pp. 1-10, 1-12 to 1-13  
2013–14 *FSA Handbook*, p. 2-50

### **12.9.1 In-Progress**

An IP (In-Progress) is assigned only in courses that have been approved for IP grading. An IP grade indicates that a grade is pending until the sequence of courses is completed. A grade of IP is appropriate as long as work remains in-progress. Once work is complete the IP grade will be replaced with an evaluative grade appropriate for the course. If a student changes programs, or changes options within a program such that credit is no longer needed to complete program requirements, or if the student ceases enrollment and the work is not completed within a year, an evaluative grade will not be issued and the IP grade will be administratively replaced with NG (No-Grade) to indicate that work is no longer in-progress.

### **12.9.2 Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory**

Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U) grading is limited to courses in which standard or traditional grading is rendered difficult by the nature and purpose of the courses. There is no limit on the credit hours a student may earn in S/U grades except that imposed by the types of courses approved for such grading. S/U grades may not be awarded in courses unless specified in the course descriptions in this catalog and in the master class schedule. S and U are the only grades assigned in these courses. Neither grade is used in calculating the GPA, but an S allows hours of credit while a U does not.

### **12.9.3 Audit**

When space is available, a registered student may audit a course with the approval of the adviser, the instructor, and the head of the department offering the course. A completed course audit form must be submitted in order to enroll. Change from

audit to credit, or the reverse, is permitted only during the regular schedule adjustment period. No credit is earned for auditing, but the audited course must not add hours in excess of the student's maximum load. An audited class will be noted on the student's transcript. Audit courses do not count toward the twelve hours required for full-time enrollment. Participation in class activities is optional with the instructor. Tuition and fees for audited courses are determined by the hour value of the courses.

#### **12.9.4 Incompletes**

The instructor may grant a student an "I" grade for work not completed if there is a reasonable prospect that the student can pass the course by making up the work missed if the incompleteness is unavoidable and not caused by the student's negligence. All incomplete grades must be removed and a grade of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, S, or U must be submitted to the Registrar. The work must be made up and a grade received by the Registrar by the last day of classes of the next regular semester (excluding summer), or the grade will become an F. A student may not re-register for the course until the "I" is removed or changed to an F. The instructor is required to list the conditions to remove the "I" and send them to the department head. If the instructor is no longer employed by the university, the department head will remove the "I" upon completion of the stated requirements. In extenuating circumstances, students should refer to the "Academic Appeals Procedure" section in the Undergraduate Catalog.

#### **12.9.5 Repeated Courses**

A student may be repeatedly paid for repeatedly failing the same course (normal satisfactory academic progress policy still applies to such cases), and if a student

withdraws before completing the course that he or she is being paid Title IV funds for retaking, then that is not counted as his or her one allowed retake for that course. However, if a student passed a class once, then is repaid for retaking it, and fails the second time, that failure counts as their paid retake, and the student may not be paid for retaking the class a third time. If a student is required to retake all of the coursework for a term in which a student fails a course, any courses retaken that were previously passed in this case are not eligible for Title IV aid.

### **12.9.6 Withdrawals**

A student may find it necessary or advisable to withdraw from one or more courses during a term. In some cases, s/he may find it necessary to withdraw from the university. After consultation with their academic advisor and the instructor of the course, a student may withdraw from any course prior to the expiration of one-half of the term. Course withdrawals must be completed in myWCU. Students are not permitted to withdraw from courses after one half the expiration of the term. Course withdrawals affect satisfactory academic progress which also affects academic standing. Course withdrawals do not count toward the twelve hours required for full-time enrollment and no refund is given. Students may withdraw from a maximum of 16 hours of courses during their career at Western Carolina University and receive a grade of W. Any withdrawal beyond the limit will result in a Withdrew-Failing (WF) which will affect the semester and cumulative GPA as if it were an F.

### 12.9.6.1 University Withdrawals

During the fall and spring semesters, a student may withdraw from the University through the last withdrawal date, as indicated by the Registrar's Office. During summer sessions, a University withdrawal occurs only if the student withdraws from all summer sessions. University withdrawals will affect satisfactory academic progress and course completion rates but will not count towards the student's 16-hour course withdrawal limit.

The University withdrawal process is initiated in the Advising Center, located in 214 Killian Annex. In the event of a University withdrawal, the student will receive a grade of "W" ("Withdrawn") for all courses in which the student was enrolled. The "Fees, Expenses and Financial Aid" section of the Catalog provides information regarding the effects of University withdrawal upon tuition and fee payments and financial aid.

A student may not use this policy for courses in which penalty grades were assigned as a result of academic misconduct. In all cases, the withdrawal date is noted on the student's permanent record.

**After the Withdrawal Deadline.** There are three exceptions to the University withdrawal policy that will allow a student to withdraw from all courses. The exceptions are medical withdrawals, withdrawals for deployment or other military contingency and withdrawals for extenuating circumstances.

### **12.9.6.1.1 Medical Withdrawals**

Western Carolina University is under no obligation to grant a medical withdrawal after the withdrawal deadline if a grade has been issued or if final examinations have been taken. W's entered on the permanent record as a result of a withdrawal from all classes for medical reasons will affect satisfactory academic progress and course completion rates but will not count toward student's 16-hour course withdrawal limit. A designated physician or her or his designee at Western Carolina University Student Health Services reviews all medical withdrawals and evaluates the medical documentation. Medical withdrawals are of two types:

### **12.9.6.1.2 Regular Medical Withdrawal (Withdrawal for Current Semester)**

The regular medical withdrawals require medical documentation from a private physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist. If the student has not been seen at Western Carolina University Student Health Services or Western Carolina University Counseling and Psychological Services, appropriate medical records from an outside provider are required.

The regular medical withdrawals require documentation from outside providers to a designated Western Carolina University physician or counselor. Documentation may be by mail, by fax, or hand-delivered, but must be in writing. This documentation must specifically recommend withdrawal and must give a specific date of withdrawal.

Regular medical withdrawals will not be granted if any final examinations for the current semester have been taken.



### **12.9.6.1.3 Retroactive Medical Withdrawal (Withdrawal for a Previous semester)**

Retroactive Medical Withdrawals require medical documentation from a private physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or therapist. If the student has not been seen at Western Carolina University Student Health Services or Western Carolina University Counseling and Psychological Services documentation for the previous term from a physician, psychologist, or counselor who treated the student is required.

Retroactive Medical Withdrawals require documentation from outside providers to a designated Western Carolina University physician or counselor. Documentation may be by mail, by fax, or hand-delivered, but must be in writing. This documentation must specifically recommend withdrawal and it must give a specific date.

Students who attempt the final exam in a class will not be allowed to medically withdraw.

Retroactive Medical Withdrawals must be completed by the end of the next regular semester (fall or spring).

### **12.9.6.1.4 Medical Withdrawal from One Course**

A student may not typically withdraw from individual courses for medical reasons. This includes courses in which penalty grades were assigned as a result of academic misconduct. A request to withdraw from a course or to reduce your academic load is not a University medical withdrawal.

Students who wish to withdraw from fewer than all of their current classes for medical reasons may appeal to the dean of the division in which the course/s is/are being offered. In these cases, the student must provide documentation to the dean regarding the medical problem treated at Western Carolina University

Student Health Services or Counseling and Psychological Services. If treatment has not occurred at the Western Carolina University Student Health Center, documentation from the outside provider will be required.

Western Carolina University is under no obligation to grant a medical withdrawal if final examinations have been taken. Such situations must be handled as grade replacements.

A notation of “W” is entered on the permanent record of the student for all withdrawals from the University for Medical Reasons and will affect satisfactory academic progress and course completion rates but will not count towards the student’s 16-hour course withdrawal limit.

#### **12.9.6.1.5 Military Deployment or Other Withdrawals**

When a student is called to active military service during an academic term, he or she may choose one of the following two options:

- The student may request retroactive withdrawal to the beginning of the semester, with a full refund of tuition and fees.
- If at least 75 percent of the term has been completed, the student may request that the faculty member assign a grade for the course based on the work completed. The final decision about grading is left to the faculty member.
- If the faculty member assigns a grade of “I,” the student must complete course requirements within one semester or make alternative arrangements with the faculty member (see “Incompletes under Credits, Grades, and Quality Points”).
- If a student decides to enlist in the military, s/he will be subject to the regular withdrawal process.

#### **12.9.6.1.6 Extenuating Circumstance Withdrawals**

Students can petition the Office of the Provost to withdraw from the University for extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include: death or serious illness within the immediate family, major life event in the family (e.g. loss of home, incarceration), financial hardship, pregnancy, and others as deemed appropriate by a member of the Office of the Provost. Withdrawal for extenuating

circumstances will affect SAP and course completion rates but will not count towards the student's 16-hour withdrawal limit.

**Last Updated:** November 2, 2017

## 12.10 Treatment of Remedial, Enrichment, & English as a Second Language Courses

Western Carolina University does not offer financial aid to students in remedial, enrichment and/or English as a Second Language courses. In order to qualify for financial aid, a student must be degree-seeking.

**Last Updated:** November 2, 2017

### Resources

2013–14 *FSA Handbook*, p. 2-50

## 12.11 Treatment of Consortium, Change of Major, Second Degree, & Second Major Courses

### Consortium Agreement

A consortium agreement is a written agreement between two schools so that a student can continue to receive FSA funds while studying at a school other than their own home school. (A home school is the one that will grant the student a degree.) Therefore, under a consortium or contractual agreement (including study abroad), the home school must give credit for courses taken at the other school on the same basis as if it was providing the education itself. The assumption of this agreement is that the host school's academic standards are equivalent to its own and a completely acceptable substitute for its own instruction.

- Consortium agreements are used during the regular school year as well as summer for distance students only. An exception may be made for a student who needs a course to graduate and the course is not offered at Western Carolina University in his/her graduating semester.
- Students must receive a passing grade in consortium hours. Even though the grades are not counted towards the GPA, the hours must be used in calculating the quantitative component of the student's Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- A consortium agreement can apply to all FSA programs as long as the courses are applicable to the student's degree or certificate program.
- A consortium agreement can be an agreement for each student, a separate agreement with each host school, or a blanket agreement with a group of schools. The home school is responsible for disbursing funds and maintaining information on the student's eligibility, how the award is calculated, what money is disbursed, and documentation from other schools. Any school paying FSA funds is responsible for returning any funds when necessary.

### Change of Major

If a student changes majors, the overall attempted hours cannot exceed the 150% maximum timeframe.

### Second Degree

A student pursuing a **second** undergraduate degree is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 150% of the hours required for the second degree.

### Resources

ED Program  
Integrity Questions  
and Answers—  
Satisfactory  
Academic Progress,  
SAP-Q5 and SAP-  
A5  
2013–14 *FSA*  
*Handbook*, p. 2-50

## Second Majors

Students often have questions about the ability to receive federal financial aid for double/dual majors. A major consists of a group of prescribed and elective courses (27-64 hours) providing breadth and depth in an academic discipline. A double major, also referred to as a second major or dual major, is awarded when a student completes appropriate coursework specified in the major component of a degree program in addition to the work done for his/her primary major and degree. Some degree programs require double majors due to the number of hours in the primary major (if the major component of a degree program is between 30 to 40 hours, a minor or second major is required). In determining whether or not a student is eligible for federal financial aid for double/dual majors, the following question must be answered:

**Does the degree program require a double major or minor? If a student's degree program requires a double major or minor, s/he cannot graduate until the double major or minor has been completed.**

- If the degree program **DOES** require a double major or minor, the student is allowed up to the 150% timeframe to complete both degrees. However, students can only be funded for the classes that are required for the double major or minor.

\*Example: If both degrees require 120 hours, the student can be funded up to 180 hours to complete both programs:  $120 \text{ hours} \times 150\% = 180 \text{ hours}$ . If one degree requires 120 hours and the other degree requires 128 hours, the student can be funded up to 192 hours to complete both programs:  $128 \text{ hours} \times 150\% = 192 \text{ hours}$ .

- If the degree program **DOES NOT** require a double major or minor, a student is allowed up to the 150% timeframe to complete one degree. Students can only be funded for the classes that are required for one degree. If a student continues to take classes after one degree is completed, the student will only be eligible for federal student loans.
- List of Current Programs that require a double major, minor or other approved program

- **College of Arts and Sciences**

- Anthropology, B.A. & B.S.
- English, B.A. (all English programs)
- History, B.A. & B.S.
- Mathematics, B.S.
- Philosophy, B.A. (all programs)
- Political Science, B.A. & B.S.
- Sociology, B.A. & B.S.
- Spanish, B.A.

- **College of Education and Allied Professions**

- B.S.ED English
- B.S.ED Mathematics
- B.S.ED Music Education
- B.S.ED Social Sciences
- B.S.ED Spanish
- Psychology, B.S.

- **College of Fine and Performing Arts**

- Art, B.A.
- Music, B.A. & B.M.
- Stage and Screen, B.A.

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## 12.12 Completion of Degree Requirements

Students can only receive financial aid for the courses needed to complete his or her degree. If a student has met all degree requirements and continues taking classes, the student can only receive federal student loans. The student is considered pursuing a second degree and only is eligible for federal student loans.

**Last Updated:** November 2, 2017

### Resources

2014–15 *FS&A Handbook*, p. 1-10



## 12.13 Notices

The university Academic Standing Policy for undergraduates can be found under on the Online Catalog at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/>. The university Academic Regulation for graduate students can be found under the Online Catalog at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/index.php?catoid=34>.

The university Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for undergraduates and graduates can be found on the Financial Aid Office website at <http://www.wcu.edu/apply/financial-aid/index.aspx>.

Each academic year, the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy is reviewed and updated by the WCU Financial Aid Office, Advising Center, Office of the Registrar and the Graduate School.

Link to Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Construction Guidelines:

<http://ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/sap.html>

General Definitions: [34 CFR 668.2](#)

Standards of Administrative Capability: [34 CFR 668.16](#)

Student Eligibility: [34 CFR 668.32](#)

Satisfactory Academic Progress: [34 CFR 668.34](#)

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## Resources

668.16(e)

668.42(c)(2)