

Title IV Satisfactory Academic Progress (T4SAP) Policy

I. Overview

The purpose of this policy is to specify the conditions and requirements, which students who are recipients of US Federal Aid should meet in order to continue receiving US Federal Aid. US Federal regulations (34CFR 668.16) stipulate that a student is required to be making satisfactory academic progress in order to receive federal aid from the US Department of Education. The American University in Bulgaria has a general policy for satisfactory academic progress, this policy applies specifically to students in receipt of Title IV funding.

II. Assessment

Title IV Satisfactory Academic Progress (T4SAP) is defined as follows:

Qualitative standard (grades): Students must achieve a minimum term grade point average of 2.00 in the most recently-completed semester, and a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00. Students must successfully complete all General Education Foundation courses by the end of their second semester at AUBG. They must also achieve the academic standing consistent with graduation requirements:

A student must have earned 27 credits for sophomore standing

A student must have earned 57 credits for junior standing

A student must have earned 87 credits for senior standing

Quantitative standard (pace): Students must progress through their program at a pace which ensures that they will graduate within the maximum timeframe. Undergraduate students are entitled to receive aid for a maximum of 150% of the allocated program timeframe (as measured in credit hours), which is usually 6 years for an undergraduate degree.

Both the qualitative and quantitative SAP standards are reviewed semi-annually, at the end of each semester prior to certification of funding for the continuation of study. During each evaluation, at which a student must progress through his or her educational program to ensure that the student will complete the program within the maximum timeframe, calculated by dividing the cumulative number of hours the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of hours the student has attempted. In making this calculation, AUBG is not required to include remedial courses.

Maximum Timeframe:

A full time or part time undergraduate student or graduate student is entitled to receive aid for 150% of the allocated course period:

1	year	degree	–	eligibility	for	aid	1.5	years
2	year	degree	–	eligibility	for	aid	3	years
3	year	degree	–	eligibility	for	aid	4.5	years
4	year	degree	–	eligibility	for	aid	6	years

100 % scheduled limit = 67% pace requirement
150 % maximum time

The maximum timeframe is used to determine the pace of completion required to ensure that a student completes the program within the maximum timeframe: The Maximum timeframe will be measured at each evaluation point. A student is ineligible at the evaluation point where indicated will exceed max timeframe NOT at the point when they reach the max timeframe.

III. Transfers, Withdrawals, Incompletes, and Repeats of Courses

Generally, all periods of a student's enrolment count when assessing progress, even periods when the student did not receive federal student loans. Some examples of changes to enrolment and how these impact on the measurement of SAP are outlined below.

Repetition due to academic failure

If you are required to retake a course and your attendance during that academic term is at least half time, you will be eligible for loans for this academic term year, subject to meeting the required pass rates and SAP warning/probation rules and 150% timeframe, as detailed. You may normally repeat no more than three courses during your career at AUBG, each of them only once, regardless of the grade received. Even though a repeated course will count only once toward your academic requirements and your GPA, each repeat is assessed separately and thus counts separately for aid purposes. The Dean of Faculty can waive the repeat limit in exceptional circumstances.

Incomplete grades

A grade of I (Incomplete) is given under extraordinary circumstances in which a student's inability to submit required work prevents a faculty member from assigning a regular letter grade. Incompletes are given only at the discretion of the individual professor until the beginning of the last week of classes. After the beginning of the last week of classes, a grade of I

requires the permission of both the appropriate department chair and the Dean of Faculty. Students on academic probation are not allowed to receive grades of Incomplete.

A proposed contract will be signed between the student and the professor explaining the rationale for the incomplete grade and detailing what the student must do to complete the course. This contract must include a deadline for completion of the incomplete work, and it must be approved by the appropriate department chair, who may suggest a revision of the contract or may reject the application entirely.

In all cases, students must complete all outstanding course requirements by the end of the fifth week of classes of the following semester. A grade of I that is not converted into a regular grade by these deadlines automatically becomes an F.

Incomplete grades may result in withdrawal of Title IV loans, if minimum pass rates and pace of credit completion have not been met.

Withdrawal from a course

Following add/drop and before the conclusion of the seventh week of classes, courses may be dropped at the request of the student with a resulting grade of W. Ws will count neither toward the credit hours earned nor in the calculation of GPA. They do count toward hours attempted.

Withdrawal from a course may affect the student's pace of study and result in exceeding the maximum timeframe for completion of the program of study (150%).

Transfer credits

Approved credits transferred from other institutions will be included in the number of credits attempted and completed and will be counted towards the maximum timeframe for completion (150%). However, transfer credits will not be used in grading calculations.

Example of changes that will not affect your SAP progress

- Period of approved suspension/suspension of status
- Change of program of study (unless elements contribute towards the new program and/or maximum timeframe allowable)

IV. T4SAP Warning and T4SAP Probation

In order for students to receive continued loan funding, they must meet the minimum requirements above for both academic progress and program duration. Where the satisfactory

academic progress requirement has not been met, the student will be advised in writing by the AUBG Academic Standing Committee. The student will be placed on T4SAP Warning for the period of the next academic term (semester) and will continue to be eligible to receive funding for that period. The Academic Standing Committee will review the student's progress again at the end of the semester in which the student is on T4SAP Warning.

- If the student meets the requirements for T4SAP at the end of the subsequent semester, the student is removed from T4SAP Warning and returns to good standing.
- If the student does not return to good academic standing by the end of the first semester after being placed on T4SAP Warning, he/she becomes ineligible for continued US Federal Aid. The student remains ineligible for as long as T4SAP requirements are not met. If the student is later able to meet the T4SAP requirements, eligibility for US Federal Aid is restored.
- A student who is informed that he/she is losing eligibility for continued US Federal Aid may appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standing Committee within 5 business days of receipt of the notice of lost eligibility. See the section on appeals below.
- The Academic Standing Committee will review all appeals. If an appeal is not granted, the student loses eligibility for US Federal Aid. If the appeal is granted, the student is placed on T4SAP Probation.
- Each student placed on T4SAP Probation will remain eligible for continued funding, subject to meeting the conditions of the T4SAP Probation. These requirements will include following an academic plan under the supervision of the Advising Center Coordinator or faculty member designated by the Dean of Faculty. The academic plan will specify a path by which the student can restore T4SAP within one or more semesters.
- A student on T4SAP Probation remains eligible for continued funding if he/she meets the conditions for T4SAP, or if the conditions of the academic plan associated with the T4SAP Probation are met.
- If the student is on T4SAP Probation and the subsequent academic performance is insufficient to restore the student to T4SAP and fails to meet the conditions set forth in the academic plan associated with the Probation, the student's eligibility for funding will be terminated.

The decision of the Academic Standing Committee will be communicated to the student in writing within 10 days of submission.

If the Academic Standing Committee determines that the student will not be able to meet the T4SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, or has not met the minimum requirements of T4SAP Warning or T4SAP Probation, then the student will be ineligible for further disbursements of US student loans until he/she restores compliance with the T4SAP standards.

The student can regain eligibility only by submitting a successful appeal to be placed on probation or by taking action that brings him or her into compliance with the T4SAP standards.

V. Appeals

Students who have received written advice that their federal student loan funding has been terminated may appeal within 7 days of receiving the written notification. The appeal must explain why the student did not meet the T4SAP requirements. Appeals are likelier to be granted where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Death of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, sibling, etc.)
- Extended illness of an immediate family member
- Extended illness or personal injury of the student
- Other exceptional circumstances as determined by the Academic Standing Committee

Students will be required to explain why they have failed to make T4SAP and what has changed in their situation that will allow them to restore T4SAP. Students will also be asked to submit documentary evidence in support of their appeal where possible (e.g. medical notes, death certificates). Appeals must be submitted in writing, either by email to: provost@aubg.edu or by post to: AUBG Registrar's Office, 1 Georgi Izmirliiev Sq., Blagoevgrad 2700, Bulgaria.

Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days. The Academic Standing Committee will review the appeal within 7 days. The Academic Standing Committee may require extra evidence or documentation, in which case these timescales will be extended. The decision of the Committee in response to the appeal is final.