

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards To Receive Financial Aid

All institutions of higher education must measure students' academic progress toward graduation as required for participation in the Federal Title IV student aid programs, state need-based program, some Winthrop programs, and some private loans. These programs include Pell, Supplemental Educational Opportunity (SEOG) and TEACH Grants; Work-Study; and Perkins, Direct Student and PLUS (Graduate/Parent) Loans, South Carolina Grant, Winthrop academic scholarships, need-based aid and Private Loans.

Types of Measurement

Academic progress for financial aid must be measured by both qualitative and quantitative standards. Qualitative measurement refers to grade point average. Quantitative refers to the percentage of hours earned over a period of time. Students who fail to meet either the qualitative or quantitative standards of satisfactory academic progress are ineligible to receive federal student aid.

Qualitative (Grade Point Average)

Winthrop's qualitative measure is consistent with the University's determination of undergraduate students' academic eligibility according to the standards published in the *Academic Regulations* section of the Undergraduate Catalog. Beginning in fall 2012, all undergraduate students must **maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA**.

Undergraduate students meeting the qualitative standards, who are eligible to continue enrollment at Winthrop, are deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress so long as the student also meets the quantitative standards.

Graduate students are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress by qualitative standards as long as the student meets the Graduate School's academic requirements for continued enrollment.

Quantitative (Hours Earned)

The quantitative measurement consists of two parts: Maximum time frame (total hours attempted) and percentage of hours earned out of hours attempted.

Maximum Time Frame: Students must complete a first baccalaureate degree within 150% of the published time to complete the degree program. Therefore, students who attempt more than 180 semester hours have met the maximum time frame for obtaining a first baccalaureate degree at Winthrop and are, therefore, not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress. Total hours attempted include hours attempted at Winthrop plus hours accepted for transfer from other institutions.

Graduate students must complete coursework within the time limit established for degree-granting purposes as published in the graduate catalog.

Percentage of Hours Earned: Students must cumulatively earn 66.67% (two-thirds) of all hours attempted to make sufficient progress toward their first baccalaureate degree within the maximum time frame stated above.

The percentage of hours earned is determined by dividing the total number of hours earned by the total number of hours attempted. The resulting percentage must equal or exceed 66.67 for a student to be considered making satisfactory academic progress.

***Transfer Hours:* Credit hours from another institution that are accepted toward a student's degree program are counted as both attempted and earned hours when calculating the percentage of hours earned.**

Credit hours with grades of S/U and CR/UN are included in quantitative calculation as attempted, with "S" and "CR" grades also included in credit hours earned.

For students where we can determine that a withdrawal (official or unofficial) due to COVID-19 pandemic meets the reasons allowed by the federal Department of Education, we will exclude non-passed coursework from the quantitative calculation (undergraduate and graduate students). Also, we will exclude non-passed classes in spring 2020 for students whose program was traditionally offered on campus due to the closing of Winthrop campus in March 2020.

To ensure progression toward a degree, second-degree undergraduate and graduate students must also earn 66.67% of all attempted hours.

Repetitions, Withdrawals and Incomplete Grades

Repeating courses: In accordance with Winthrop's academic policy, students are allowed to repeat courses under certain conditions. The grade earned in the original course is excluded from calculation of the cumulative grade point average and is replaced with the grade earned in the repeated course. However, the credit hours of the original course and the repeated course will both count in the student's attempted hours for calculation of percentage of hours earned.

Withdrawal and incomplete grades: Credit hours where "N" grades were assigned for withdrawal beyond the drop/add period and credit hours for courses where incomplete, "I", grades were assigned will count in the student's attempted hours for calculation of percentage of hours earned, but not count as earned hours.

Frequency of Measurement

Winthrop University evaluates a student's academic progress annually, at the conclusion of each spring term. Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory academic progress will be ineligible for financial aid in subsequent semesters until satisfactory academic progress has been achieved.

Exception – Students who have completed their fourth term at Winthrop, regardless of which term that occurs in, will have their academic progress reviewed to ensure their cumulative Winthrop GPA is at least a 2.000. Students who do not demonstrate this GPA will be ineligible for financial aid in subsequent semesters until satisfactory progress has been achieved.

Notification of Satisfactory Academic Progress

After satisfactory academic progress is determined, students who are determined to be making insufficient academic progress are then notified in writing.

Appeal Process

Students who have been notified of insufficient academic progress may file an appeal if the student has experienced extenuating circumstances which interfered with his/her ability to meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards. Extenuating circumstances include situations such as student illness or immediate family illness or death.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Office of Financial Aid. **Documentation must accompany all appeals.** A *Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal* form is available from the “Forms Online” link on the financial aid Web site at www.winthrop.edu/finaid.

Students without an extenuating circumstance, who have met or exceeded the maximum 180 attempted hours for a first baccalaureate degree may also file an appeal. The appeal must be based on admission to a second-undergraduate program or change in major during enrollment (creating additional hour requirements beyond the typical needed for graduation).

With an appeal and extenuating circumstances, students may be able to regain eligibility by completing a sufficient number of credits to demonstrate academic progress is being made. The number of credits needed would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Financial Aid.

Please note that filing an appeal does not guarantee eligibility for federal student aid. Approval of the appeal is determined by the Office of Financial Aid and is contingent upon sufficient documentation of the student’s circumstances. Students will be notified of the outcome of the appeal and, if approved, the academic conditions of approval.

Academic action plan: Approved appeals most often will require the student to meet certain minimum academic conditions as determined on a case-by-case basis; this is called an **academic action plan**. The student’s academic action plan may include a minimum grade point average requirement and/or earned credit hour requirement to ensure the student is on track to regaining satisfactory academic progress.

Financial Aid Probation

A student whose appeal is approved due to extenuating circumstances may receive aid under a *probationary status* for one term only. At the end of the probationary term, the student’s academic progress will be reviewed to determine whether the student adequately met the conditions of the approved appeal and his/her academic action plan. Failure to meet the conditions by the end of the probationary term will result in a termination of eligibility for student aid until the student has regained eligibility by meeting the requirements discussed in the Regaining Satisfactory Academic Progress section below.

Regaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students who are ineligible to receive financial aid due to insufficient academic progress and who cannot document extenuating circumstances may regain eligibility by meeting the qualitative and quantitative requirements outlined in this policy. The student is responsible for reporting a change in status to the Office of Financial Aid, should grade changes cause the student to regain satisfactory academic progress before the next review period.