Standards of Academic Progress Policy 2016-2017

It is each individual student’s responsibility to read and adhere to the Standards of Academic Progress Policy. The policy is in place because the Higher Education Act of 1965 was amended with Program Integrity regulations passed on October 29, 2010 that mandates institutions of higher education to establish a standard of satisfactory academic progress for a student who receives any financial aid. A student’s entire academic history at all schools attended including transferrable hours is reviewed at the end of the first semester and each semester thereafter whether or not Title IV funded aid was received to ensure compliance with the policy.

What this means to you is that in order to remain eligible to receive financial aid you must meet the standards specified for acceptable academic performance and satisfactory progress toward the completion of your program of study. The progress standards are established within the framework of federal regulations and specifically for the purpose of determining the eligibility of students to receive financial aid under Title IV and State aid programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, Federal PELL Grant, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-Study, Georgia’s HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarship and Federal Direct Loan Programs.

The University will complete a review of compliance with this policy for all students at the end of the first semester and each semester thereafter.

SAP Status

A student’s SAP status will be evaluated at the completion of each semester of enrollment. At each evaluation period, one of the following SAP statuses will be assigned:

**Satisfactory** – Student is meeting the requirements. Student is eligible to continue receiving financial aid.

**Warning** – Student is not meeting either the Academic Performance or Progress Toward Degree Completion requirements (or both). Student is eligible to continue receiving financial aid for one semester only. Students are notified by email when they are placed in a WARNING status and no appeal is necessary to receive aid for this status. Students on financial aid WARNING will have their progress checked at the end of each semester to determine compliance. **Students must meet the SAP requirements at the end of the term of enrollment or lose financial aid eligibility.** Students may not have two consecutive Warning terms. If student has met the Credit Hour Limit then they are not eligible for a WARNING status.
Suspension – Student is not meeting either the Academic Performance or Progress Toward Degree Completion requirements (or both) after a WARNING semester. Student is not eligible to continue receiving financial aid until the student is meeting the required minimum standards. If student has met the Credit Hour Limit for their degree program then the student is not eligible to continue receiving financial aid. Students on suspension may submit an appeal based on mitigating circumstances.

Probation – Student has submitted a SAP appeal and the Armstrong SAP Committee has approved the appeal. Student is eligible to continue receiving financial aid for one semester only. Students on financial aid PROBATION will have their progress checked at the end of each semester to determine compliance.

In some cases, a student must complete the requirements of an Academic Plan developed with their Academic Advisor, which will be monitored by the Office of Financial Aid. Student is eligible to continue receiving financial aid based on the performance and terms of the Academic Plan. The student’s continued eligibility beyond the PROBATION semester will be determined at the conclusion of each semester. Failure to meet any part of the Academic Plan will result in the appeal being rescinded and the immediate loss of financial aid eligibility.

Standard of Academic Progress Requirements

1. Academic Performance:
   Undergraduate students who have attempted
   - 0-29 semester hours must have a 1.8 cumulative grade point average (GPA),
   - 30-45 semester hours must have a 1.9 cumulative grade point average (GPA),
   - Over 45 semester hours must have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA),

   Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).

   The cumulative GPA is derived from all hours accepted by and earned at Armstrong, including transfer work from other institutions whether or not the hours apply toward your degree.

2. Progress Toward Degree Completion: All students must make significant progress toward completion of degree requirement in order to receive aid. A mandated minimum completion rate of 67% is the standard for acceptable progress toward degree completion. When computing this percentage the numbers are not rounded up or down. The formula for this calculation is as follows:

   \[ \frac{\text{Cumulative number of hours successfully earned}}{\text{Cumulative hours attempted}} = \% \text{ competed} \]
Grades of W, WF, WH, V (audit), F, U, I and NR are not considered successful course completion. In addition, all attempts of repeated courses and non-credit coursework are included in the cumulative attempted number.

3. **Credit Hour Limit:** A maximum number of attempted hours in which to complete a degree is established. Students who exceed this limit will lose their eligibility to receive financial aid. That maximum number of attempted hours is based on 150% of the average degree program requirements.
   
   - Associate programs must be completed by the 90th attempted semester hour.
   - Undergraduate programs must be completed by the 186th attempted semester hour.

Post-Baccalaureate programs must be completed by the 90th attempted semester hour.

- Graduate (Master’s Degree) programs requiring less than 40 credit hours must be completed by the 51st attempted semester hour.
- Graduate (Master’s Degree) programs requiring more than 40 credit hours must be completed by the 74th attempted semester hour.
- Degree programs above the Master’s level require completion by the 201st attempted semester hour.

Learning support classes will be counted as attempted hours for these purposes.

Exceptions for second degree seekers will be considered upon receipt of a written Standards of Academic Progress Appeal Form.

**Appeal for Reinstatement of Financial Aid**

If your academic progress was reviewed at the end of the semester and you lost your eligibility for financial aid, you can regain financial aid in two possible ways:

1. By continuing to work toward a degree without financial aid, successfully accomplishing all the Standard of Academic Progress requirements and providing written notice of that by filing an appeals form with the Office of Financial Aid.
2. By filing an appeal of the loss of eligibility for financial aid that identifies **mitigating circumstances**.

**Mitigating circumstances** are defined as unanticipated and unavoidable events or situations beyond a student’s control that prevented him or her from successfully completing courses or meeting the terms of a prior appeal. Examples of mitigating circumstances could include (but are not limited to) serious accident or illness of the student, serious illness or death of immediate family member (parents, grandparents, siblings,
spouse, children), unexpected financial obligations, etc. **Examples of unacceptable mitigating circumstances** include (but are not limited to) withdrawal to avoid a failing grade, too many courses attempted, limited number of tests/assignments, disagreement with instructor, voluntary change in work hours, and incarceration.

If you choose to file an appeal you must do so through the formal Appeal Form. In your appeal you need to clearly explain:

1. Why you failed to meet the progress requirements
2. What corrective measures you have undertaken to improve your future performance.
3. Provide written and signed documentation of any mitigating circumstances that impacted your performance.
4. Students who are not meeting requirements, due to being over max time frame must submit a letter from their advisor which includes:
   a. Number of attempted hours that go toward current degree
   b. Hours remaining in degree program
   c. Expected term of graduation

A Standards of Academic Progress Committee will review your appeal and supporting documentation and either approve or deny your appeal. Approvals result in the following conditions.

1. Approved for one semester
2. Academic Plan
3. Reinstated

Approved for one semester
Financial aid granted for one semester if you are deemed able to achieve the progress standard in one semester.

**Academic Plan**
On a case by case basis, the Committee may offer an academic plan to students exhibiting documentable, mitigating circumstance. If it is mathematically possible for a student to regain SAP, then the student will be given and Academic Plan. Students will be reviewed for compliance at the end of each semester. If the student fails to adhere to the Academic Plan, then the student will be denied financial aid until such time as the student is back in compliance with the SAP standards.

**Reinstatement**
Student has regained compliance with SAP.
Denial
Automatic denials are given to students for whom it is mathematically impossible for them to gain compliance with SAP.

Approval of all appeals is determined on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed. You will be notified in writing of the Committee’s decision through a document called the Standards of Academic Progress Agreement which you must sign and return to the Office of Financial Aid.

You will remain ineligible for financial aid until fully compliant with the Standards of Academic Progress Policy.


Terms and Conditions of Award

It is especially important that you understand the conditions of your awards and your responsibility as a financial aid recipient. Our policies are explained fully in the Armstrong Catalog. You are required to take course work that applies toward your declared degree objective at Armstrong. All aid will be calculated based on your degree program. Be sure you read and understand the conditions of your award.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at 912-344-3266.
2016-2017 Appeal Form
For the Standards of Academic Progress Committee

Name: ___________________________________________ Student ID: 907

Address: __________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip: ________

Major: __________________________________________

I AM REQUESTING THAT MY APPEAL BE REVIEWED FOR: (CHECK ONE)

☐ FALL 2016  ☐ SPRING 2017  ☐ SUMMER 2017  ☐ Reinstatement (No documents required)

Armstrong State University’s Office of Financial Aid is required by Federal Regulations to monitor the progress of aid recipients. To receive aid at Armstrong, a student must maintain a satisfactory grade point average, make progress toward their degree objective and successfully complete their degree within the maximum number of hours allowed. Based on our records you have not met one or more of these requirements. Along with this appeal form you must attach a legible well-written explanation that addresses WHY you failed to meet the requirements and WHAT corrective measures you have taken to improve your future performance. You MUST include supporting documentation of your mitigating circumstance(s) that impacted your performance that corresponds to the dates for which you were not making satisfactory academic progress. A mitigating circumstance is something beyond your control (i.e.; personal or family illness, death or accident, etc. Appeals based on immaturity, unpreparedness for college, childcare issues, etc. will not be considered). Armstrong is Title IX Compliant. Please see the Student Handbook for the policy.

Please note that the appeals review process is lengthy due to the consideration given to each appeal. You are encouraged to submit your appeal and the supporting documentation as soon as possible. Once the committee has reviewed your appeal you will be mailed a Satisfactory Academic Progress Agreement. This agreement must be signed and returned in order to complete your file. If you fail to comply with the agreement or your appeal is denied, you may only regain aid after meeting all Standards of Academic Progress requirements and providing written notice via the Standards of Academic Progress appeal form to the Office of Financial Aid. Students who have attempted more than the maximum number of hours allowed and have not earned a degree may not reinstate via appeal. If your appeal has not been reviewed and approved by the fee payment deadline, you MUST pay your bill in full by the posted payment deadline. There is no guarantee your appeal will be approved.

Note: If the Standard of Academic Progress Committee determines that your explanation is not credible or finds a lack of supporting documentation, the appeal will be denied and will not be reconsidered until the student amends the submission.