

## **If You Don't Make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), Here Are Your Options:**

You can regain eligibility only by taking action that brings you into compliance with both the qualitative and quantitative standards of Clarion University's SAP policy. Neither paying out-of-pocket for one's classes, nor sitting out for a semester, is sufficient by itself to re-establish eligibility. If you want to re-establish your SAP eligibility status, you should select one of the following options:

1. Attempt to make up any necessary credits over the summer, either at Clarion or at another accredited institution. We recommend that you consult with your academic advisor before selecting courses. Since you will not be eligible for federal and/or state aid, you may want to consider a private loan. Remember, it is **your responsibility** to ask Student Financial Services (SFS) staff to review your eligibility for aid when you believe you have regained SAP. Please contact the SFS Office at either 1-800-672-7171, opt #2 or [stfinservice@clarion.edu](mailto:stfinservice@clarion.edu).

If you take courses at another institution, it is **your responsibility** to contact the SFS Office when your transfer credits have been posted by the Registrar's Office.

2. Make up any necessary credits/cumulative grade point average by enrolling at Clarion at your own expense during the fall, spring, or winter session. The university's payment plan can help make this expense more affordable by making monthly payments. For additional information regarding the payment plan, please go to [www.clarion.afford.com](http://www.clarion.afford.com), or call 1-800-722-4867.
3. You may file a Financial Aid Appeal.
4. Transfer to another institution until you earn the necessary credits to regain SAP and then return to Clarion. Generally when you transfer to another institution, you begin with a "clean slate" for federal academic progress purposes. This means that you would be eligible for federal financial aid at the new institution. Earning credits at another institution will also help you because Clarion will only consider the transfer credits accepted back to Clarion. However, transferring credits to Clarion will NOT improve your grade point average, because the credits transfer, but not the grades.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You are responsible for regaining eligibility for aid by re-gaining SAP. SFS staff cannot provide definitive advice to students as to how many credits it might take to regain SAP, how to raise a cumulative grade point average, or how long it will take to regain SAP.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If it appears that you will be unable to complete a degree program because it is mathematically impossible for you to graduate within the maximum time frame (150% of the "normal" degree completion time frame—180 credits for BA/BS degree students, 90 credits for AA/AS degree students) federal regulations require the university to terminate your eligibility for federal financial aid funds. This requirement is NOT negated even if you are permitted to continue your enrollment at the university.*

## Financial Aid Appeals:

If mitigating circumstances beyond your control (death in the immediate family—parent, sister, brother, or child--hospitalization or serious illness; adversity or other undue hardships) prevented you from making SAP, you may appeal the loss of your federal or state financial aid. Please note that simply experiencing a mitigating circumstance does not guarantee an exception to the SAP regulations. Typically, pregnancy/birth of a child, previously diagnosed learning, physical or psychological disability, lack of understanding of SAP policies, inadequate preparation for post-secondary studies, and issues within your control are generally **not** examples of mitigating circumstances.

You must complete and submit the following documents to the SFS Office NO LATER THAN 30 days following the date you were notified of your ineligible SAP status. Your complete appeal (including all documentation) must be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Services before the first day of classes. As per federal regulations, appeals cannot be granted after drop/add.

1. Signed "Federal Academic Progress Appeal Rights and Responsibilities Form", clearly indicating where a response to your appeal should be sent.
2. Federal regulations require that your appeal includes a signed letter of explanation regarding why you failed to make SAP, and what has changed in your situation to enable you to overcome this issue. Your appeal cannot be considered without both of these explanations.
3. Supporting documentation--for instance, a signed AIP plan, copy of an immediate family member's death certificate, hospitalization documentation, etc.

All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. You may appeal more than once, but it is unlikely that more than one exception will be granted. Please note that the decision of the SFS SAP Appeal Committee is **final**—you cannot appeal their decision to another office. The US Department of Education (USDE) dictates much of the financial aid appeal process. This means that SAP appeal requirements may differ from other university academic or billing processes. Remember, you **MUST** submit a written appeal to the SFS Office even if you received an official medical withdrawal from the university (cancellation of tuition and fees), or if you withdrew for health, medical, military or judicial reasons.

Members of the Armed Forces who are called to active duty and who must then withdraw from a semester will always be considered for a SAP "exception" (in other words, your SAP eligibility will be reinstated for the following term of enrollment IF you submit the mandatory SAP appeal documentation, including a DD214).

**Academic Improvement Plans:** If you have been placed on an academic improvement plan by the Office of Academic Affairs, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Student Financial Services to see if your federal financial aid eligibility is, or will be affected. Students whose grade point averages fall below the required 2.00 are normally placed on AIPS. Federal financial aid eligibility may or not be impacted, depending on when the student is placed on the AIP (Satisfactory academic progress is checked at the end of the academic year, NOT mid-year) (A cumulative GPA below 2.00 for an undergraduate student at the end of the academic year would mean that the student failed to make SAP, and federal financial aid eligibility would be negatively affected).

Students who have been placed on AIPS and whose federal aid eligibility has been negatively impacted due to the student's failure to make satisfactory academic progress for federal financial aid purposes may submit SAP appeals according to the guidelines outlined in this policy. Students who submit successful appeals should remember that Clarion University's requirements for them on an AIP may be different than the federal financial aid requirements outlined in their letters of financial aid probation from the Office of Student Financial Services. For example, students on a SAP exception/probation may NOT fail any classes, nor may they withdraw from them after drop/add. Students on an AIP, for example, may be required to meet with their academic advisor at least twice per week, and also may be required to meet with a Success Coach.

Students who wish to regain good academic standing AND retain their eligibility for federal financial aid should be very careful to adhere to both their AIPs and their letters of probation (from the Office of Student Financial Services).

### **What happens after I submit a SAP appeal?**

The Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee will review your appeal. If your appeal is approved, you will be given either one semester ("probation") to regain SAP (cumulative GPA at 2.00 or higher; cumulative pace at 67% or better); or you will be asked to develop an Academic Improvement Plan with the assistance of your academic advisor. If you are placed on an AIP, you must adhere exactly to the terms of the plan, or you will lose eligibility for federal financial aid.

Alternatively, the Committee could decide that you do not have grounds for an appeal, and you would be notified (by email, letter, or both) of the denial.

# Federal Academic Progress Appeal Rights and Responsibilities Form

1. I understand that this is an appeal to have my eligibility for federal financial aid reinstated after I failed to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) towards my degree. This is not an appeal for an academic suspension. Winning an appeal for an academic suspension, or being placed on an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) does not mean that I will automatically have my eligibility for federal aid reinstated.
2. Attached is the documentation to support my appeal. This includes a signed copy of this form, a signed letter of explanation indicating why I previously failed to make satisfactory academic progress for federal financial aid purposes, and a brief description of what has changed that will now allow me to make SAP, and any supporting documentation (such as a signed Academic Improvement Plan (AIP), immediate family member's death certificate, hospitalization or physician documents, etc.) regarding my special circumstances. Submit all of these documents to: [stfinservice@clarion.edu](mailto:stfinservice@clarion.edu), or fax them to, 814-393-2520, or mail them to:

Student Financial Services Office  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
840 Wood Street  
Clarion, PA 16214

3. I acknowledge that if my SAP appeal is incomplete because all requested documentation is not submitted, it will be denied. I understand that all SAP appeals must be submitted before the first day of classes.
4. I understand that if my appeal is granted, I will only have one term of "exception" (financial aid probation) during which I will be eligible for federal financial aid. If I do not re-gain SAP by the end of the term, I will lose eligibility for future federal aid until such time as I once again meet all SAP requirements. A SAP exception does not "re-set" my cumulative academic record.
5. In cases where the SFS SAP Committee determines that it may take more than one semester for me to regain SAP or in cases where I have exceeded, or am close to exceeding maximum credits, I understand that I am required to submit an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) that has been signed by my advisor or other university academic representative that specifies which courses I need to take each term in order to re-gain SAP and/or graduate. My AIP may contain other stipulations as well as a term-by-term sequence of courses, including mandatory academic support counseling and/or tutoring. If my appeal is granted, I will be required to adhere to my AIP, or I will become ineligible for federal aid.
6. I certify that the information I submit is true, accurate, and complete. I understand that submitting false, incomplete, or inaccurate information is a violation of the Clarion University Code of Conduct. I give my permission to the SFS SAP Appeal Committee members at Clarion University to speak with faculty and other university personnel in regard to my appeal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print your name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clarion ID

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address or email where we should mail the response to your appeal

For which semester (summer, fall, winter) and year are you requesting reinstatement of financial aid?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Summer) \_\_\_\_\_ (Fall) \_\_\_\_\_ (Spring)      Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Your expected month and year of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Appeal Letter (Failure to Successfully Complete 67% of Attempted Credits)

Date

Student Financial Services Office  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
840 Wood Street  
Clarion, PA 16214

Dear SAP Appeals Committee:

I recently received a letter in the mail advising me that I am not eligible for financial aid because I failed to make satisfactory academic progress. Please consider this my letter of appeal.

I was enrolled at Clarion University during the 2011-12 academic year. On March 25, 2012, my father passed away. I did not make satisfactory academic progress because I became depressed, and was unable to function at school or at work. My father's death certificate is attached, as well as a note from my doctor.

I would like to return to Clarion for the fall semester 2012. I've completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and I hope that you will consider me for an exception to the federal academic progress regulations.

I feel that I can now make satisfactory academic progress because I am receiving on-going counseling in addition to medication. As per the attached letter, my counselor believes that I will be emotionally ready to begin school in the fall semester of 2012.

Please also find attached my father's death certificate, and medical information release forms from my primary care physician and from my psychologist.

Sincerely,

Jane E. Doe

123 Main Street  
Anytown, PA 16214

Clarion ID: 1234-5678

## Sample Appeal Letter (Failure to Earn a 2.0 Cumulative GPA)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Financial Services Office  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
840 Wood Street  
Clarion, PA 16214

Dear SAP Appeals Committee:

I have been informed that I do not currently qualify for federal student aid because I do not have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher. Please consider this document as my letter of appeal.

I was last enrolled at Clarion University during the \_\_\_\_\_ semester. I did not make satisfactory academic progress (earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher) for financial aid eligibility purposes due to these extenuating circumstances:

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I cannot return to Clarion without the benefit of federal student grants and loans. I have attached a signed copy of my Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) for the \_\_\_\_\_ semester and the signed Federal Academic Progress Appeal Rights and Responsibilities Form to this letter, in the hope that your committee will grant my appeal and reinstate my eligibility for federal aid. I believe that following my AIP will enable me to raise my cumulative GPA to the required 2.0.

Please let me know if you require any additional documentation to grant my appeal.

Sincerely,

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Clarion ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample SAP Appeal Letter (Exceeded Maximum Credits)

Date

Student Financial Services Office  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
840 Wood Street  
Clarion, PA 16214

Dear Student Financial Services Appeal Committee:

I have been notified that I am ineligible for federal financial aid because I have exceeded the maximum number of credits.

I began my academic career at Clarion University in 1995 when I enrolled as an education major. I remained at Clarion for three semesters, and then I left college to get married and raise a family. My husband was in the military, and we moved frequently. Whenever we moved, I would earn college credits at the local college, but never enough to finish a degree. My family and I returned to Clarion in 2010.

When I was re-admitted to Clarion University, I enrolled in the BSBA program. However, with the previous credits I earned and the credits I transferred to Clarion, I am past the number of credits I am allowed to attempt. This is, in part, due to the fact that few of my education degree credits and few of my transfer credits apply to the bachelor's degree program I am now enrolled in. I have one more semester to complete before I can graduate (I plan to graduate in December 2013).

Attached please find an academic plan signed by my advisor and me that lists the courses I need to take to complete my degree in December 2013.

Sincerely,

Mary Smith  
1234 Shady Lane  
Suburbia, PA 16890

Clarion ID: 1000-8765

**Federal Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal: Academic Plan  
(Do not complete this unless you are directed to do so.)**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Academic Degree Program, Including Any Minors: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Anticipated Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As per federal regulations, the student must do the following to regain SAP: (this section will be completed by Student Financial Services staff)

\_\_\_\_\_

The student and advisor agree that the student will take the following courses in the following semesters in order to regain SAP. The student and the advisor agree that these courses are required for graduation from the program of study listed on this form.

Semester and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Anticipated Grade	Anticipated Cumulative GPA at Semester End

Semester and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Anticipated Grade	Anticipated Cumulative GPA at Semester End

Semester and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Anticipated Grade	Anticipated Cumulative GPA at Semester End


Semester and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Anticipated Grade	Anticipated Cumulative GPA at Semester End

Semester and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Anticipated Grade	Anticipated Cumulative GPA at Semester End

In addition, the advisor or the Office of Student Financial Services also requires the student to:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- The student may enroll only for courses necessary to complete the degree program listed.
- The student may not change majors and or add majors or minors.
- The student must successfully complete each course (and any other requirements) agreed to in this plan, or lose eligibility for federal financial aid. The student may not withdraw from courses after drop/add.
- If, for reasons beyond the student’s control, s/he cannot complete the plan as agreed, the student must immediately contact the Office of Student Financial Services.

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_