

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy 2015-16

In order to be eligible for U.S. Department of Education Student Loans, United States students must meet the following Southampton Solent University (hereafter referred to as SSU) policies, which conform to U.S. Department of Education regulations.

Undergraduate and Post Graduate for the purpose of US Federal Aid calculation is divided into incremental academic years. For example, a standard undergraduate course is divided into three academic years.

Undergraduate academic courses at SSU are comprised of “units” and most commonly are year-long in duration, each carrying an average of 20 CATS. The required full-time study programme is enough units to comprise (120 CATs) per academic year.

Students must successfully complete at least 80 CATS at each level of their degree programme in order to progress to the next year level with no more than 40 CATs being carried forward into the next academic year as trailing unit(s).

All assignments with their grade weightings for individual assessments will be provided to students on each unit at the beginning of the academic year. The SSU pass mark is 40% out of 100% for all assignments using the published SSU mark scales.

Completion Timeframes

The maximum timeframe for completion of an undergraduate certificate or degree program, for students taking US Federal Loans, may not exceed 150% of the published length of the program, in accordance with U.S. Federal Loan regulations. In exceptional circumstances a student may appeal to extend their timeframe. Postgraduate (graduate) programs may have a maximum timeframe which exceeds 150% of the published length of the program under special conditions of Interruption of Study (see below). Periods of approved “Interruption of Study” (see below for details) will still be counted towards the completion of study timeframes for both undergraduates and postgraduates.

Any period of study in which a student does not receive Federal Loan aid will also still count towards the maximum timeframe for their academic program.

Academic Probation

Academic Probation does not exist at SSU. Students are either in academic good standing, approved interruption of study or termination of studies.

Transfer Credits

Transfer Credits from another institution of higher education are approved on an individual basis by the Faculty accepting the student's onto the academic program and count toward the maximum timeframe for completion of that program.

Transfer of Course

Transfers in course can in some instances be completed within the original program timeframe; however a student can only change one of their major subjects at the end of their first year, in which case they would have to take an extra year, in a part-time mode of study, to complete 60 credits of the new subject.

Change of Degrees

If a student transfers onto a completely new course any previous credits earned will not count and the student is deemed to be starting again with a new timeframe.

Pursuit of Second Degrees

SSU permits students to pursue a second academic degree, either undergraduate or postgraduate, if they meet the relevant entry requirements for the new degree program.

Summer Schools

There are no summer semesters or "summer school" courses offered within SSU's undergraduate or graduate degree programs at present.

Incompletes

There are no "incomplete" grades at SSU. Instead there is a "fail - non-submission" of work grade for a Unit. In this case the student will have one resubmission opportunity, currently during the July/August following the fail in May-June. Resubmission results are published during the following September in time for a student to progress to the next level of study if they achieve a pass and the required 120 credits for their current level of study.

Grade Change Policy

All SSU grades are technically "provisional" until they are formally approved by each Degree Program's Board of Examiners at the end of each academic year in June (and early September for resubmissions). Normally provisional grades are approved unchanged, the only exceptions being

1. The discovery of plagiarism in an assignment after the initial grade is awarded. All discovered plagiarized assignments will receive a fail grade as their final approved mark. But it is still possible to pass on aggregate marks.
2. A student's Academic Appeal is upheld by the University's Academic Appeal Procedure. A student can only appeal against a grade result on the grounds that they were unfairly treated in relation to other students and/or that published assessment procedures were not followed, but not on the grounds that they disagree with the grade awarded.
3. The discovery by the Board of Examiners at the end of the academic year that an individual or a group of students was marked unfairly given the published mark scales and assessment criteria for a module.

In such cases as (2) and (3) above students' work will be remarked following the correct assessment procedures and criteria in time for the student(s) to progress, if their work is deemed of a pass standard or higher.

Repeated Courses

Students are allowed to repeat (retake) any failed module once only. Any retaken course will receive the full credit value but only a pass mark indicating no more than a bare pass at 40%). This to prevent students wilfully failing modules poorly engaged with in order to retake them to attempt a higher grade. All time periods used to pass retakes will count towards a student's program timeframe. If a retake is failed, the student's studies will be terminated, unless Medical documentation is supplied showing the fail was outside the student's control, in which case a further assessment opportunity or retake will be allowed depending on the circumstances. Once a module is passed, a student cannot retake it in order to achieve a higher grade.

Withdrawals

Students wishing to withdraw from a course should first discuss the matter with their Course Leader/Programme Manager. In order to officially Withdraw from the University, a student must inform the School in writing, stating clearly their intended date of withdrawal from the University. The student will be liable for all SSU fees in line with the SSU withdrawal policy which can be found in the fees booklet for the academic year concerned. When a student withdraws from the University they will receive a transcript of all course credits and grades achieved, if they request one. However, they are deemed to have left the University and must reapply as a new student if they wish to return. Any previous academic credits and grades will only be accepted if they are deemed applicable to the academic program for which the student is applying.

Unofficial Withdrawals

Any student, who leaves their SSU course without sending the School Registrar written confirmation of their withdrawal and date, will remain a registered SSU student and will be liable for all SSU fees for the academic year in question. It is

the student's responsibility to officially Withdraw, not the University's to eventually discover the student is no longer attending their classes.

Interruption of Studies

(Leave of Absence) Students are allowed to interrupt their studies only after receiving formal approval from the University. Interruption of Study will normally only be granted for medical reasons, family bereavement or other serious non-academic circumstances outside the student's control.

In order to continue to qualify for US Federal Loan aid the interruption period cannot exceed 180 days in any 12 month period or extend beyond the current academic year. Any interrupted SSU student, whether receiving US Federal Loan aid or not, is normally expected to return to their studies in the September following the period of interruption. Only under exceptional circumstances will an interruption be extended longer: US Federal Loan recipients should direct such an appeal to the Students 1st.

An Interrupting student will be charged in line with the withdrawal policy which can be found in the Fees Booklet for the relevant academic year. Resumption back onto the same programme of study will result in tuition fees being calculated on a pro-rata basis. Return to an alternative course (subject to approval) would result in the total tuition fee for that year of study. Students receiving US Federal Loan aid may be liable for the return of a portion of those funds, depending on the effective date of the Interruption. Any student considering Interruption of Study is strongly advised to seek advice from Students 1st before making their decision. Otherwise, during an approved Interruption of Study period the student continues in their SSU registered student status. For US Federal Loan recipients this means "in-school" status

For repayment purposes you will not have to begin repayment of loan funds. However, if you do not return, the Last Day of Attendance for start of repayment calculation will be the date the Interruption of Study was effective, and you may have already used up your allowed grace period.

Unofficial Interruption of Study

Any student who interrupts their studies without University approval will remain registered on all their units and will be liable for all SSU fees.

Non-credit Remedial Courses

SSU does not offer non-credit remedial courses.

Appeals Procedure

Students have the right to appeal against any academic decision, including termination of studies, but it must be on one of the following grounds: (1) of Medical evidence or other serious mitigating circumstances (as bereavement of a close family member or life-threatening illness) not previously submitted or (2) the

student can produce documentary evidence showing that they were treated unfairly in relation to other students on the unit, and/or that published academic procedures were not followed in their case. Academic Appeals should be directed to the Dean of the relevant faculty. The University's full Appeals Procedure is published in the annual Student Handbook available to all students. Appeals will be dealt with in a prompt manner so that, if successful, the student can re-engage with their studies as quickly as possible. There is no probationary period at SSU as part of the appeals process, or in any other context. If the Appeal is successful the Registrar's Office will inform the student of any outstanding work that needs completion and/or of their pass and progress status.

Termination of Studies

SSU only terminates a student's registration on grounds of serious lack of engagement with their units regarding attendance and the submission of assignments, and/or for serious infraction of the University's Code of Behaviour. Any student who fails a retake of a course (the second attempt to pass the unit including the full resit opportunity) will also have their studies terminated.

Termination of Student Aid

When a student formally Interrupts Study, Withdraws from the University, or has their studies Terminated, their student aid will be terminated. Renewal of student aid will only be approved after an Interrupted student has registered for new units (courses). For all other students in the above categories, student aid can only be renewed after they have reapplied and been offered a place on an SSU academic program.