



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

UNDERGRADUATE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

When students accept financial aid at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), they also accept responsibility for maintaining satisfactory academic progress (SAP). The policy at PLU is required by both federal and Washington State financial aid regulations. It allows students to continue receiving federal, state, and institutional financial aid as long as they are meeting the minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress as defined in this policy.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. Should the policy change, students will be notified.

OVERVIEW AND REGULATIONS

For the purpose of receiving financial aid, satisfactory academic progress is monitored using the following three factors: maximum timeframe, pace of completion, and grade point average (GPA).

- **MAXIMUM TIMEFRAME**

Federal and Institutional Aid Policy

- Undergraduate students at PLU may receive financial aid for no longer than 150% of the published length of the academic program. Since a PLU bachelor's degree requires 128 credits, financial aid cannot be awarded to any student beyond 192 credits.

$$128 \text{ (credits required to graduate)} \times 150\% = 192$$

A student is ineligible for financial aid once it becomes mathematically impossible to complete the program within 150% of its published length. In other words, a student can become ineligible for financial aid prior to earning 192 credits if it is deemed impossible for the student to graduate within the maximum timeframe of 150%.

State Aid Policy

- Washington State limits receipt of state financial aid funding to 125% of a student's academic program length. Since a PLU bachelor's degree requires 128 credits, state aid terminates once 160 credits have been earned.

$$128 \text{ (credits required to graduate)} \times 125\% = 160$$

Even if students change their major or academic program, eligibility for the Washington State Need Grant, College Bound, and State Work Study programs terminate once students have earned 160 cumulative credits from all institutions.

- **PACE OF COMPLETION**

Federal and Institutional Aid Policy

Students receiving financial aid are expected to successfully complete at least 67% of the credits they attempt on a cumulative basis. For example, if a student's cumulative attempted credits are 45, the student must have successfully completed at least 30 of those credits. For the purpose of this measurement, all of the following apply:

- Successful completion is defined as a grade of D- or higher, or a grade of P for courses that are pass/fail. Grades lower than D- are not considered successful completion.
- All other grades – including incomplete grades – are counted in the attempted hours total, but not in the completed hours total. If an incomplete grade is later converted to a grade that is considered to be a successfully complete grade, pace of completion will be recalculated.
- Students who drop courses but remain enrolled at the university will not have those dropped courses counted in the attempted credits total provided the courses are dropped prior to the 10th day of class for the term. Courses dropped after the 10th day of class for the term will be counted in the attempted credits total.
- Repeated courses are counted as attempted credits during all attempts.
NOTE: Financial aid may be used to pay tuition charges for only one retake of a previously passed course. Subsequent attempts are included as attempted credits for the purpose of measuring pace of completion and maximum timeframe, but they cannot be paid for with financial aid. Furthermore, subsequent attempts cannot be used to determine enrollment status for that term. For instance, if 4 of a student's 12 semester credits are being repeated for a second time, this student will be considered a half-time student with 8 credits.
- Modular courses that are dropped prior to their start date do not count as attempted credits.
NOTE: Modular courses are courses that do not span the length of the entire term. For the combined J/Spring term, students enrolled in both the Jterm and the Spring term are considered to be enrolled in modular courses for that period of enrollment. Many summer courses are also considered to be modular.
- All transfer credits accepted by the Office of the Registrar count as both attempted and completed credits.

State Aid Policy

To retain Washington State Need Grant, College Bound, and State Work study eligibility, awardees must earn the required number of hours based on the number of credits for which they registered at the time the State Need Grant is disbursed, as outlined below.

Enrollment	Credits Required	SAP Warning	SAP Denial
Full-time (12+ credits)	12 credits	6-11 credits	< 6 credits
3/4 time (9 -11 credits)	9 credits	7 - 8 credits	< 5 credits
1/2 time (6 - 8 credits)	6 credits	4 -5 credits	< 3 credits
< 1/2 time (1-5 credits)	100% of credits	2 – 4 credits	< 2 credits

Students may receive the State Need Grant and College Bound funds and continue their employment in the State Work Study program during the one semester Warning Status period. Failure to satisfactorily complete 100% of the Credits Required (listed above) during the warning semester will result in denial of further eligibility for State Need Grant and College Bound funds. Furthermore, earnings under the State Work Study program will no longer be eligible for employer reimbursement (which may result in the student's employment being terminated).

Students whose eligibility in the Washington State Need Grant, College Bound, and State Work Study programs has been terminated for failure to meet the progress requirements must satisfactorily complete the Credits Required (listed above) in a subsequent semester of enrollment without state financial aid funding to re-establish eligibility.

- **GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA):** All undergraduate students enrolled at PLU are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0.

FINANCIAL AID WARNING

With the exception of Jterm, satisfactory academic progress is evaluated at the end of each term once grades post. Students who are not making SAP are notified at their PLU email address regarding their status and any financial aid implications.

If a student fails to achieve the minimum GPA or pace of completion requirement, that student is not making satisfactory academic progress. The term following the first term in which a student does not make SAP is a warning period. The warning period lasts for one term only, and during this time, the student will remain eligible for financial aid. For students placed on warning:

- A notice will be sent to the student explaining the warning period and the requirements for reestablishing satisfactory academic progress.
- Students in a warning status whose cumulative GPA is below 1.0 or whose pace of completion is below 34% will have their PLU gift aid placed on hold until they meet with Academic Advising and sign an Academic Contract. Upon submission of a signed Academic Contract to the Financial Aid Office, PLU gift aid will be released for disbursement. A signed Academic Contract verifies that the student has met with Academic Advising to establish a plan for meeting the standards of satisfactory academic progress.

FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

If a student fails to make SAP for a second consecutive semester while on warning, the student's financial aid will be suspended at that point. A notice will be sent to the student explaining how to restore financial aid eligibility and/or submit an appeal of the suspension.

APPEALS

Students may appeal a financial aid suspension on the basis of extenuating circumstances. Students must submit the SAP Appeal Form along with a letter of appeal and supporting documentation within 10 business days of receiving a suspension notice. The Financial Aid Office will respond to all appeals within 10 business days. Appeal decisions are final and binding and not subject to further appeal. Not all appeals will be approved, and appeals from parties other than the student will not be accepted.

All appeals should include the following:

- The reasons why the standards of the SAP policy were not met.
- What has changed that will allow the student to make satisfactory academic progress in the future.
- An academic plan outlining how the student will achieve the standards of satisfactory academic progress in the future. An academic plan should project a student's schedule and grades for one or more terms and be signed by both the student and the student's academic advisor.
- Documentation of the student's extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control, such as an injury or illness, a death of a family member, or other special circumstances as determined by the Financial Aid Office.

If an appeal is approved, the student will be placed in a probationary period for one or more terms as determined by the Financial Aid Office. Students must meet or exceed the terms and conditions of the probationary period in order to continue receiving financial aid.

If the appeal is not approved, the student will remain ineligible to receive financial aid until the student is once again meeting the minimum standards of this policy. Until then, the student will be

responsible for paying all university costs without the benefit of financial aid. The student will receive notification of this decision by email.

OTHER ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

128 Credit Limit

A bachelor's degree at PLU requires 128 credits. Once students have completed 128 credits **and** have met the graduation requirements for their declared major, all financial aid will be terminated. Termination of aid will occur even if students did not apply for graduation, or wish to continue their enrollment beyond 128 credits in order to earn a second major, add a minor, or earn educational endorsements.

Twelve Semester Limit (or its equivalent)

The following financial aid programs have a limitation of twelve semesters of full time enrollment:

- **Federal Pell Grant:** Includes any grant amounts received under the grant's previous name, the Basic Education Opportunity Grant (BEOG). Additional semesters are available if the grant amount received was for a term of part-time enrollment.
- **Federal Subsidized Direct Loan:** For students borrowing this loan for the first time **after July 1, 2013**, once twelve semesters of the subsidized loan has been received, eligibility is terminated. Students may continue to borrow the Federal Direct Unsubsidized loan if they have not already borrowed the aggregate Direct Loan borrowing limit.

Ten Semester Limit (or its equivalent)

- **Washington State Need Grant:** This program has a limit of ten semesters of full-time enrollment. Additional semesters are available if the grant amount received was for a term of part-time enrollment.

Eight Semester Limit

Students who enter PLU as new first year students (less than 30 earned credits) are eligible to receive up to eight semesters of PLU funded scholarships and grants. If the student cannot graduate after eight semesters, students may receive PLU funded scholarships and grants at 50% of the semester amount for a ninth semester. No PLU funded scholarships and grants are available thereafter. Nine full semesters of PLU funded scholarships and grants are available if student is admitted into the Nursing or Music Education programs. First year students who enter PLU with 30 or more credits due to Running Start or a College in high school program are eligible for eight semesters of PLU gift aid.

Six Semester Limit

Transfer students (those who have earned credits at a community college or four year university AFTER graduating from high school) who enter PLU as a sophomore (30 – 59 earned credits), junior or senior (60+ earned credits) are eligible to receive PLU funded scholarships and grants for a maximum of six semesters. Sophomore transfer students who cannot graduate after six semesters may receive PLU funded scholarships and grants at 50% of the semester amount for a seventh semester.