

FINANCIAL AID AND ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

The Office of Student Financial Assistance makes every effort to insure that all awards and materials submitted remain confidential in accordance with the Buckley Family Right to Privacy Act of 1975. **In order to initiate the process of review for financial aid awards, students must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and should do the following:**

1. **Secure admission to Texas Southern University through the Office of Admissions** via the process described in the next chapter of this document.
2. **Secure the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** from any high school counselor or any college/university financial aid office and complete and return it to the address indicated or, **preferably, apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov**. (This step will eventually produce a Student Aid Report (SAR) that will be mailed directly to the student at his/her home address in approximately **eight to ten weeks**; for online submissions, this turnaround is **seven to ten business days**, and corrections can be made instantly.)
3. **Submit any supporting documentation that may be required to the Office of Student Financial Assistance, Texas Southern University, 3100 Cleburne; Houston, Texas 77004-9987 or 713-313-7071.**
4. **Make inquiries about scholarships available and submit applications, when qualifications are met**, after reading the preceding section on **scholarships** in this chapter of this bulletin. Additional information may be obtained electronically at www.tsu.edu.

Once all documents referenced have been received by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (or other designated office), the applicant will be considered for a possible financial aid award, financial assistance, or scholarship. A student who applies for financial aid or assistance and is not awarded at the time of registration **must be prepared to pay for tuition, fees, books, and housing** from personal funds as part of the registration process.

Financial Aid Eligibility Requirements

In order to maintain eligibility for consideration for financial aid, students must meet the standards set forth in Texas Southern University's policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). These standards are referenced in the next chapter of this document as academic regulations. In addition to these standards, a time frame requirement must also be met in conjunction with the SAP standards for eligibility. **Thus, in reality, three facets of the individual student record determine financial aid eligibility: credit hours (from SAP standards), grades (from SAP standards), and time frame.** The requirements in each facet vary in accordance with academic status (undergraduate, graduate, or professional student), the college or school of enrollment, and enrollment status (full-time, half-time, or less than half-time). When time frame is combined with the University's SAP standards, reference is made in the document, generally, to financial aid SAP. When time frame is not a factor, reference is simply made to SAP at the University.

With regard to the **credit hours needed** to maintain eligibility, students receiving aid have their overall enrollments at the University reviewed once each year at the end of the spring semester to verify that they have earned a minimum number of credit hours for their academic classification (freshman, sophomore, etc.). With regard to the grades needed to maintain eligibility, students receiving aid must satisfy a cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirement each year. Their GPA must meet the minimum standards of their individual academic classifications.

With regard to the **time frame needed** to maintain eligibility, students will be considered for financial aid for a limited time only. Their enrollment in all postsecondary institutions, regardless of financial aid support, is considered when determining the total number of credit hours that they are allowed to enroll for with the benefit of financial aid. **The Office of Student Financial Assistance should be contacted directly regarding the specifics of time frame limitations.** Students are notified when they are approaching enrollment in the maximum number of credit hours permitted. If students exceed this number before finishing their individual programs of study, then they will no longer be eligible to receive federal student assistance.

Financial Aid Probation

Students are placed on probation with regard to the receipt of financial aid for their next semester of attendance if they fail to earn the minimum number of semester credit hours and/or achieve the minimum GPA required for their attendance status. To be removed from this probation, students must complete the requisite number of semester credit hours with the corresponding GPA to regain unconditional eligibility under the Satisfactory Academic Progress (or SAP) policy. If these conditions are met, the probationary status will automatically be removed at the end of the semester for which probation has been imposed.

Financial Aid Suspension

Students who fail to earn the required semester credit hours and achieve the required GPA while on financial aid probation will be placed on financial aid suspension. Thus, they will no longer be eligible to receive federal student assistance. In order to return to financial aid probationary status, students must complete, at their own expense, a regular semester of work at the University as a student in the full-time, half-time, or less than half-time status in which they were originally suspended and attain the minimum number of semester credit hours and achieve the cumulative GPA required.

Exclusions

The following types of registration or grades can not be used to fulfill conditions for the removal of financial aid` probation or suspension: advanced placement credits, credits earned through the credit by examination process, independent study courses, withdrawal (W), incomplete (I), in progress (R), unsatisfactory (U), and fail (F).

Additional Academic Requirements

If students apply for financial aid, their eligibility will be based on past performance as measured by the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards for financial aid. If a student making application is a transfer student, he or she will be evaluated within the financial aid SAP maximum time frame based upon the number of semester credit hours accepted by Texas Southern University.

Other factors that students need to be cognizant of with regard to the assessment of financial aid status are as follows:

1. Semester credit hours earned from foreign institutions are included in the financial aid SAP evaluation if these credits are accepted by the University and the college/school in which a major is declared.
2. If a course is repeated, the semester credits earned will count toward the determination of enrollment status and maximum time frame.
3. Courses in which grades of "I" (incomplete) are received do not earn credits to meet the academic year minimum, nor do they influence GPA's in the semester in which they are taken; however, the credits are counted in the maximum time frame.
4. Courses in which grades of "W", (withdrawal) are received do not earn credits to meet the academic year minimum, nor do they influence GPA's in the semester in which they are taken; however, the credits are counted in the maximum time frame. Students may retake courses from which they withdraw, and retaken credits will count toward the determination of enrollment status and minimum credits earned.
5. Credits earned from undergraduate developmental/remedial courses that students are required to take count toward the determination of enrollment status, minimum semester credits earned, and maximum time frame.
6. Credits earned from undergraduate courses taken while students are enrolled as graduate students do not count toward the academic year minimum, nor do they influence GPA's, nor do they count toward the determination of enrollment status or minimum credits earned, unless these credits are specifically required as prerequisites.
7. All undergraduate and prerequisite courses are included in the financial aid time frame for financial aid SAP.
8. Summer terms are considered special semesters and are not automatically monitored to determine financial aid SAP. Students who attend summer terms and who want credits earned during these terms counted with fall and/or spring semester credit totals must make a request for such at the end of the summer terms of attendance.

Right to Appeal

Students placed on financial aid suspension may appeal this status by completing a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form in the Office of Student Financial Assistance within 30 days of receipt of notification.

Students who believe that they have been identified as not having met financial aid SAP requirements because of late posting of grades should contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance once grades have been posted. A counselor will then review the situation and determine whether or not SAP requirements have been appropriately met.

Students who are placed on financial aid suspension because of GPA's and minimum semester credit hours earned that violate the financial aid SAP standards should submit a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form and a current Texas Southern University academic transcript to the Office of Student Financial Assistance for review. A counselor will render a decision after reviewing the documentation presented.

Students who fail to achieve financial aid SAP standards because of mitigating circumstances (such as illness, injury, family crisis, or credits earned from incomplete courses) may appeal their financial aid status by submitting a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form, a current Texas Southern University academic transcript, and a letter of explanation to the Office of Student Financial Assistance. The letter of explanation should have supporting documentation attached. A counselor will review the appeal and render a decision based upon documentation provided.

Students who attend either one or both summer terms during a year when they have been placed on either financial aid probation or suspension and succeed in increasing their GPA's and/or semester credit hours completed in order to meet the minimum financial aid SAP standards for the year should appeal their status in writing with supporting documentation to the following:

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Texas Southern University
3100 Cleburne Street
Houston, Texas 77004-9987

Decisions on these appeals will be made within 20 business days after their receipt. Students will be notified in writing of the Appeals Committee's decision.

REFUND DISBURSEMENT

All financial aid funds are disbursed by the Bursar's Office, not the Office of Student Financial Assistance; however, students who are awarded financial aid through the Office of Student Financial Assistance should stay in contact with that office regarding disbursement of funds. Funds will not be disbursed to students indebted to the University. The University refunds students' surplus monies to their designated bank account, or to debit E-cards for students who opted out of the of direct deposit to their bank account.