SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS – ADULT AND GRADUATE STUDIES (AGS)

Federal and state regulations require institutions to establish standards of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) for recipients of financial aid. The purpose of SAP is to measure a student’s progress toward completion of the specific educational program in which he or she is enrolled. The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for ensuring that all financial aid recipients are meeting these standards. This requirement is accomplished through an evaluation that occurs at the end of each payment period.

A Satisfactory Academic Progress policy consists of two standards – qualitative and quantitative. Below is a description of both of these standards.

QUALITATIVE STANDARD

This standard assesses quality of academic work as measured by grade point average (GPA).

Undergraduate Students. An undergraduate student must be in “good standing” with Brenau University, as evidenced by a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. This GPA is calculated on all courses taken for academic credit at Brenau University (including remedial courses that carry academic credit) as well as those accepted for transfer from other eligible postsecondary institutions. In addition, a student must earn a minimum GPA of 2.0 in the coursework attempted in each payment period. Note that the minimum GPA requirements referred to above do not apply to the renewal of HOPE Scholarship or Zell Miller Scholarship as those state scholarship programs require a higher GPA for renewal or continuation.

Graduate Students. A graduate student must be in “good standing” with Brenau University, as evidenced by a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. This GPA is calculated on all courses taken for academic credit at Brenau University as well as those accepted for transfer from other eligible postsecondary institutions. In addition to the cumulative GPA requirement of 3.0, a graduate student must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 in each payment period.

QUANTITATIVE STANDARD

Rate of Progress. A student receiving financial aid must demonstrate measurable progress toward the completion of his/her degree program by maintaining an overall rate of progress of 67 percent. The rate of progress is calculated using the following formula: Hours successfully completed, or earned, divided by hours attempted. Attempted hours are those credit hours for which a student receives any grade, including a grade of W (withdrawal). Earned hours are successfully completed courses in which acceptable passing grades are awarded and academic credit is earned. Withdrawals (W), incompletes (I), and failed courses (F) are considered attempted hours by not earned hours. The following points should be noted with regard to rate of progress calculations:

1. Withdrawals, incompletes, and failed courses are considered attempted hours but not earned hours. If an incomplete course impacts a student’s satisfactory academic progress standing, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Counselor for Adult and Graduate Studies when a final grade has been earned.
2. Audited courses are considered neither attempted nor earned hours.
3. Credits transferred to Brenau University and accepted toward the student’s academic program, including those taken as a transient student while enrolled at Brenau, are included in attempted hours and earned hours, and are subject to maximum time frame standards below.
4. Repeated courses, for which a passing grade was previously received, are included in attempted hours and GPA calculation, but are not included in earned, or completed, hours.

Undergraduate Students. In a non-term program, an undergraduate student (associate’s or bachelors’) must successfully complete a minimum of 12 semester hours in each payment period, and will always be considered a full-time student for financial aid eligibility purposes.

Graduate Students. In a non-term program, a graduate student must successfully complete a minimum of 9 semester hours in each payment period, and will always be considered a full-time student for financial aid eligibility purposes.

Maximum Time Frame. Regulations that govern federal student aid programs limit a student’s ability to receive financial aid to not more than 150% of the credit hours required to complete his or her specific educational program. Frequent course drops or
withdrawal from school, changes of major, and failed or repeated courses could jeopardize financial aid eligibility. All hours attempted at Brenau University, as well as those credits accepted on transfer from previous institutions toward the student’s degree program will count toward the maximum time frame. If it determined that it is impossible for a student to complete his/her academic program without exceeding 150% of the program length, the student becomes ineligible for federal student aid at that time. A student who has completed sufficient hours and required courses to complete his or her degree program is no longer eligible to receive financial aid even if there is some other obstacle, such as a required minimum GPA, that is preventing graduation.

**Undergraduate Time Frame.** Most Brenau University bachelor’s degree programs require 120 semester hours for completion; therefore a financial aid recipient may attempt up to a maximum of 180 semester hours. Students enrolled in Brenau bachelor’s degree programs that require more than 120 hours will have a proportionally longer time frame.

**Undergraduate Example.** A student must successfully complete 120 semester hours to earn a bachelor’s degree in her chosen program. The maximum time frame for completion is 150% of 120 semester hours, or 180 semester hours. The student has already attempted 90 semester hours toward that program, but due to withdrawals and failed courses, she still needs to successfully complete 95 more semester hours. The total of 90 previously attempted hours and 95 needed hours is 185 semester hours; therefore, the student cannot complete her program within the 150% maximum time frame. She becomes ineligible for federal student aid at the time of this determination.

Brenau University associate’s degree programs require 61 semester hours for completion; therefore a financial aid recipient pursuing an associate’s degree may attempt up to a maximum of 92 semester hours. If a student who is seeking an associate’s degree opts to forego that degree and progress into a bachelor’s degree program, the applicable bachelor’s degree time frame will apply from that point forward.

**Graduate Time Frame.** A Brenau graduate program can require from 34 to 45 semester hours for completion. A student may attempt up to a maximum of 150% of the semester hours for his program.

**Graduate Example.** A student’s graduate program requires 36 semester hours for completion. The maximum time frame for completion of his program is 150% of 36 semester hours, or 54 semester hours. The student has already attempted 27 semester hours toward that program, but due to withdrawals, he still needs to successfully complete 27 more semester hours. The total of 27 previously attempted hours and 27 needed hours is 54 hours; therefore, it is possible for the student to complete his program within the maximum time frame.

**Important note:** A recipient of federal student aid may not enroll in courses generally not required for his or her specific educational program. This includes enrolling in unneeded courses for the sole purpose of attaining a higher cumulative GPA. Since students enrolled in non-term programs are always considered full-time, if a student fails to successfully complete any course in his/her payment period, the student’s payment period will be extended until such time as he/she has successfully completed the minimum number of credit hours required in the payment period (as noted above under Rate of Progress). Since financial aid will already have been disbursed for the student’s initial credit hours, no additional aid will be disbursed in the event a student must add a course and extend his/her payment period.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Evaluation Process**

Academic records of financial aid recipients will be reviewed at the end of each payment period to determine if students are maintaining the standards established in Brenau University’s SAP policy. A student who fails to meet the SAP standards, qualitative and/or quantitative, will be assigned one of the following SAP statuses, and will be notified in writing:

- **Financial Aid Warning** is the status assigned to a student who has not achieved the required GPA and/or has not met the rate of progress standards of the SAP policy. A student on financial aid warning is eligible for financial aid for one additional payment period.

- **Financial Aid Suspension** is the status assigned to a student who, after one payment period on financial aid warning, still has a deficient GPA and/or has not met the rate of progress standards. This status also applies to a student who has exceeded the 150% time frame for completing his/her degree program. A student on financial aid suspension will be notified of his/her ineligibility for future financial aid, as well as how to submit an appeal (outlined below).

- **Financial Aid Probation** is the status assigned to a student who failed to make satisfactory academic progress, but submitted a qualifying appeal, and had eligibility for financial aid reinstated. A student placed on financial aid probation is eligible for financial aid for one payment period in which he/she must fully meet the requirements of Brenau’s satisfactory academic progress policy. Or he/she may be placed an academic plan designed to ensure compliance with SAP by a specific point in time.
**APPEAL PROCEDURES**

A financial aid recipient who has lost eligibility after failure to make SAP during a payment period in which he/she was on Financial Aid Warning may appeal to the Financial Aid Committee to request another period of enrollment/payment period of Financial Aid Probation. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Financial Aid Counselor for Adult and Graduate Studies.

A financial aid appeal must include these two components:

1. **The extenuating circumstances that caused the student to fail to make SAP.** Circumstances that may be considered are those events/situations that are out of the student’s control, such as serious injury, illness (physical or mental) of the student or an immediate family member, death of an immediate family member, or other mitigating circumstances. Appeals should include a description of the applicable circumstances, including documentation (from a physician or other health care provider, law enforcement agency, social services, agency, etc.) that supports those circumstances.

2. **What has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.** The student must include information regarding extenuating circumstances that will no longer exist, as well as any additional measures that will be taken to ensure he or she will make SAP during the probation period of enrollment/payment period, if granted.

The Financial Aid Committee will review each written appeal, along with relevant academic history. The Director of Financial Aid or the Financial Aid Counselor for Adult and Graduate Studies will notify the student of the committee’s decision in writing either by mail or via the student’s Brenau email account. A student whose appeal is approved may receive financial aid for one probationary period of enrollment/payment period, after which another SAP review will be conducted.

**RESTORING FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY**

A student whose appeal is not granted, or a student who does not have extenuating circumstances can only regain eligibility by meeting the requirements of Brenau’s SAP policy as stated above. Taking courses at the student’s expense (without financial aid), dropping out of his/her cohort program and re-entering another later cohort, or taking courses at another institution does not automatically restore financial aid eligibility. When a student has resolved the academic deficiencies that resulted in termination of eligibility, he or she should contact the Financial Aid Counselor for Adult and Graduate Studies and request a new SAP evaluation.