TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Register for 15 credits of required coursework each semester. Note: Although 12 credits is considered full-time for billing purposes, you must take 15 credits per semester to graduate in 4 years. (15credits X 8 semesters = 120 credits completed in 4 years)

- Do not withdraw from too many courses.

- Declare a major prior to earning 60 credits.

- Use electives and GE courses to complete double majors and minors.

- Remember that academic decisions may have financial consequences and you should consult the appropriate department before changing your academic plan or when questions arise. Understand that Academic Advisors are not financial aid experts and Financial Aid Advisors are not academic experts. **Responsibility for making appropriate course selections that maintain financial eligibility remains with the student.**

- Use the degree audit function on Degree Works to help with course planning.

- Understand that each financial aid program has its own rules regarding eligibility.

- Understand that you cannot get financial aid once your degree requirements have been satisfied.

- Increase your financial literacy by using the free online interactive SUNY Smart Track software at **https://fa.financialavenue.org/?theme=suny**

New Paltz
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PLANNING FOR GRADUATION

HOW TO MAINTAIN FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY AND GRADUATE ON TIME

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HOW TO MAINTAIN FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY AND GRADUATE ON TIME

The rules regarding financial aid eligibility are many and complex. Issues to keep in mind when making academic decisions include required coursework, full-time status, and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

To be eligible for Federal/State financial aid, a student must be enrolled in a program of study approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). A program of study is a degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science) with a declared primary major. Financial aid eligibility can only be calculated based on coursework required for this degree and primary major.

WHAT IS REQUIRED COURSEWORK?

A course is required if the course satisfies a student's GE requirements, major requirements, or other elective requirements to reach the specified credit total (120 credits in most cases) for the BA/BS degree.

HOW IS FULL-TIME DEFINED?

Full-time status for billing: Students enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester are considered full-time for billing purposes.

Full-time status for financial aid: Students must be enrolled in at least 12 credits of required, non-repeat coursework per semester to be considered full-time.

Notes:
- Any courses beyond 12 credits would have no restrictions on them and could also be used for second majors, minors, and repeat coursework.

- While students must be full-time to remain eligible for most NYS aid programs, students may receive pro-rated federal financial while enrolled part-time.

- Students in their final semester of study who need less than 12 credits of required coursework are free to take any additional courses and have them count toward full-time status for NYS aid programs.

WHAT ABOUT REPEAT COURSEWORK?

NYS and federal rules differ on repeat coursework. A repeat course counts toward full-time status for NYS aid programs if the course is required and the initial grade was not acceptable for graduation as defined in the college catalog.

A repeat course counts toward full-time status for federal aid programs if the course has not been attempted more than once after achieving a passing grade in the course.

If you plan to repeat a course, enroll in 12 credits of non-repeat coursework and then add the repeat course so it does not affect your full-time status.

WHAT ABOUT DOUBLE MAJORS?

Students are allowed to declare more than one major. However, only courses that apply to the primary major are considered required for NYS aid programs. Courses that apply **only** towards the second major are not considered required and do not count towards full-time status. In addition, federal grant eligibility expires with the completion of the primary major. In some cases federal student loans may be available for a second program of study. If you plan carefully, you may be able to use your elective spaces to complete a second major or minor.

WHAT ABOUT MINORS?

Coursework that applies only to a declared minor is not considered required for NYS or federal aid purposes. The only exception is when a minor is included in an approved NYSED major.

WHAT ABOUT STUDY ABROAD AND INTERNSHIPS?

There are no specific exceptions for these experiential learning opportunities. Students planning to use NYS or federal aid should ensure that the coursework is considered required.

WHAT IS SAP?

SAP stands for Satisfactory Academic Progress. Although specific regulations vary, both federal and NYS aid programs require that students make adequate progress towards their degree to remain eligible for financial aid. Evaluating academic progress involves both qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (total credits) measurements. These measurements and the process of evaluating progress towards degree are complex and should be reviewed online at:

Federal SAP:
http://www.newpaltz.edu/financialaid/ugsap.pdf

NYS SAP:
http://www.newpaltz.edu/student_accounts/progress.html

WHAT IF I AM UNDECLARED?

Students must declare a major prior to completing 60 credits. During the time a student is undeclared, coursework must apply either to GE requirements or electives.