

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Students in Receipt of US Federal Financial Aid (Title IV Aid)

To remain eligible for US federal student loans, students must make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). This policy applies to all full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students in receipt of funding via the Federal Direct Loan Program (also known as ‘financial aid’ and ‘Title IV aid’) at the University of Aberdeen. The University of Aberdeen is required by US Federal Law to monitor that any student in receipt of US Federal Student Aid is making Satisfactory Academic Progress towards completion of their academic program. The University of Aberdeen cannot waive the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement for any student.

Our definition of SAP may be different to other University of Aberdeen policies and is not intended to contradict anything in the University academic regulations; this policy may impose a more stringent definition of SAP than other University regulations.

QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA – PROGRESSION TIMEFRAME

1. Students are required to complete their programme within a timeframe no longer than 150% of the published length of the programme.
2. If a student withdraws temporarily from a programme for circumstances beyond their control (e.g. illness) or, owing to special circumstances, and has been offered the opportunity to repeat all or part of a year, this will result in failure to meet the requirements for minimum satisfactory academic progress and a will receive a Financial Aid Warning. However, once the student returns to the degree programme or the repeat year is completed, the student will be eligible to reapply for funding for the remainder of their programme, provided this does not extend the programme beyond 150% of the published length of the programme.
3. Students who exceed the 150% timeframe for any reason will be placed on Student Loan Denied status. Under no circumstances may a student who exceeds 150% of the time normally required to complete a programme be eligible to receive US Federal funds.
4. If it is evident that at any point the student will never complete the programme within the Maximum Time Frame they may no longer be in Satisfactory Academic Progress.
5. Example of standard/federal timeframes:

Standard published programme length	Programme length in credit hours	Maximum Federal timeframe for completion (in years)
3 year Undergraduate degree (full-time)	360	4.5 years
4 year Undergraduate degree (full-time)	480	6 years
12 month Postgraduate taught degree (full-time)	180	18 months

QUALITATIVE CRITERIA – ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The University of Aberdeen has General and Supplementary Regulations for [Undergraduate](#) (UG), [Postgraduate Taught](#) (PGT) and [Postgraduate Research](#) (PGR) degree programmes which clearly set out the academic requirements for progression through and completion of the degree programmes provided. These are applicable to all students studying at the University of Aberdeen. These regulations are published on the University's website and are accessible to all students.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT REGULATIONS

6. Students must have a satisfactory attendance record.
7. Students receiving financial aid will be evaluated at the end of each semester by a Registry Officer or equivalent, prior to their subsequent disbursement of federal aid to assess whether they are making satisfactory academic progress.
8. Undergraduate students must meet the requirements for progression to the following year of study.
9. Final year undergraduate students must meet the minimum requirements for a degree. This is determined by the end of year examination board.
10. To pass a course, students must achieve a pass grade as defined in the assessment criteria given in the relevant course handbook.
11. Students must achieve a C3 (12) or above GPA each year to be eligible for Federal funding in the following academic year.
12. Exceptionally, if a student has personal circumstances which affected their performance in assessment, this will be considered on an individual basis.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS REGULATIONS

13. Students receiving financial aid will be evaluated at the end of each semester by a Registry Officer or equivalent, prior to their subsequent disbursement of federal aid to assess whether they are making satisfactory academic progress.
14. The end of year examination board determines the completion of the programme and the award or the progression onto the following year of study for part-time programmes.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS REGULATIONS

15. In March and September, students receiving financial aid will be evaluated by a Registry Officer or equivalent, prior to their subsequent disbursement of federal aid to assess whether they are making satisfactory academic progress.
16. Postgraduate students must achieve their postgraduate award within the regulatory time frame.

FINANCIAL AID WARNING & STUDENT LOAN PROBATION STATUS

17. Students who fail to meet the requirements for minimum satisfactory academic performance at the end of the year may be required to withdraw from their degree programme. However, if there are personal circumstances and the student is permitted to continue, they will be issued with a Financial Aid Warning and placed on Finance Aid Probation for the subsequent term of enrolment until the next evaluation of SAP.
18. The student will be notified of this in writing and advised of the conditions they need to meet in order to re-establish eligibility.
19. A student who receives a Financial Aid Warning will be eligible to receive Title IV aid for one further payment period. At the end of this payment period, a student must have a satisfactory academic progress report in order to re-establish eligibility.
20. If the conditions are not met and academic progress is not deemed satisfactory, the student will be issued with a Notice of Suspension of Aid and will be advised of the Appeal Process if they wish to appeal the decision that has been made.

APPEALS

21. Students who lose eligibility for Title IV aid because they have failed to achieve SAP may appeal if one or more of the following extenuating circumstances exist:
 - Sudden and unforeseen physical or mental illness that results in absence from academic activities;
 - Bereavement of a close relative or significant other
 - Other extenuating circumstances as determined by the Student Progress Committee.
22. The University of Aberdeen appeals procedure can be found on the [University's website](#).

OUTCOME OF APPEALS

23. **Financial Aid Probation**
 - 23.1 If the appeal is upheld and the student is deemed capable of meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements by the end of the subsequent payment period, the student is placed on Financial Aid Probation for one payment period only. The student's progress will be reviewed again at the end of the payment period.
 - 23.2 If the appeal is upheld but the student is determined to require more than one payment period to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and an academic plan (learning agreement) will be developed. The student's progress will be reviewed at the end of the payment period to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan (learning agreement). If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan (learning agreement), or the universally applicable Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, the student is eligible to receive Title IV aid as long as the student continues to meet those requirements.

24. **Financial Aid Suspension**

- 24.1 In the event that a student on Financial Aid probation fails to meet SAP requirements by the end of the following payment period, eligibility to receive further Title IV aid will be suspended until such time as they achieve the required standards.
- 24.2 If the appeal is not upheld, is unsuccessful or the student does not appeal, the student loses eligibility and has financial aid suspended.
- 24.3 Students will receive notification of financial aid suspension in writing.
- 24.4 A student who has had their financial aid suspended but continues on their on their programme, under their own means, and who subsequently meets satisfactory academic progress standards will be entitled to apply for or receive financial aid.