

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

(Masters and Doctoral Programs)

INTRODUCTION

Federal Title IV financial aid regulations require students receiving federal student financial aid to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards in order to maintain eligibility for the aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are also required for some state and institutional financial aid programs. The Financial Aid Office evaluates Satisfactory Academic Progress at the end of each semester, once grades are posted. There are three components of SAP: a qualitative standard (i.e., grade point average), pace of progression (number of credits attempted and earned for each year of study), and a Maximum Time Frame to complete the degree or program. All semesters of enrollment, including summer, must be considered in the determination of satisfactory academic progress. SAP standards, including grade point average, pace, and maximum time frame, begin anew for students seeking a graduate or professional degree after completing an undergraduate degree.

QUALITATIVE OR GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) REQUIREMENTS

The student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) required for continued enrollment consistent with the University's graduation requirements:

Students working on a Masters or Doctoral degree must maintain a 3.0 GPA.

All courses with a grade of "A", "B", "C", and "F" are counted in the calculation of GPA. Satisfactory Academic Progress cannot be determined until all grades of "I" (incomplete) are resolved. Transfer grades that are accepted by the university are not counted in the determination of GPA because they are not part of the Institutional or native GPA (effective fall 2010). However, the credits from all attempts accepted by UTRGV are counted in the calculation of pace and the maximum time frame requirement because transfer credits will be applied to meet pre-requisites and course requirements for a student's UTRGV degree. Repeated courses are included in the calculation of GPA, pace, and the maximum time frame requirements. Audited courses do not count toward the qualitative or quantitative standards. Credit is not granted for audited courses.

PACE (PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS)

The student must be progressing toward graduation requirements by completing the courses for which they enroll each semester. Courses or classes are measured in credit hours:

Students must complete at least 75% of all credits attempted. For example, a Masters student that has attempted 30 credit hours and has satisfactorily completed 24 of those credit hours would have completed 80% of attempted credits.

Credits attempted are all course credit hours for which the student is enrolled as of the semester census date, which is the 12th day of class in a semester, whether they have received a grade yet or not. Once grades are assigned, attempted credits include grades of "A", "B", "C", "P", "S", "F", "U", "W", "WP", "WF", "IP", "CR", "DF", "DP", "DR", "DX", or "I". Grades of "DROPPED" are counted as hours attempted if the student is enrolled in the class and charged for it as of the semester census date (the 12th class day of the semester). Credits satisfactorily completed are classes for which the student receives a grade of "A", "B", "C", "P", "CR" or "S".

MAXIMUM TIME FRAME (MTF) REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete graduate degree requirements in a maximum time period according to federal regulation. Maximum Time Frame will be measured by the number of credit hours attempted:

Students enrolled in a Masters program have a maximum of 63 attempted credit hours in order to complete Master's degree requirements. Students attempting a 2nd Masters degree are allowed 45 attempted credit hours.

Students enrolled in a Doctoral program have a maximum 99 attempted credit hours in order to complete Doctoral degree requirements.

Attempted credit hours, for purposes of calculating Maximum Time Frame, include all courses with grades of "A", "B", "C", "P", "S", "F", "U", "W", "WP", "WF", "IP", "CR", "DF", "DP", "DR", "DX", or "I", or courses for which grades have not yet been assigned. Transfer credits, AP credits, or CLEP credits accepted for the student's academic program or degree are also counted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree or program.

WARNING PERIOD

Students who fail to meet the minimum requirements, other than Maximum Time Frame, will be allowed one warning semester to restore satisfactory standing. Financial aid will be processed for one semester only. At the end of the warning semester, the student must have regained satisfactory SAP status in order to continue receiving financial aid. Students having reached the Maximum Time Frame to complete a program cannot receive a warning semester.

FINANCIAL AID SUSPENSION

Students who fail to earn the minimum requirements during the warning semester will be considered as not making SAP and all financial assistance will be terminated or suspended until the student regains minimum satisfactory academic progress standards. Students may re-establish eligibility for upcoming periods by achieving the satisfactory progress standards. After a student has re-established eligibility, he/she may be considered for aid for upcoming periods but not for periods during which the standard had not been met.

APPEALS FOR FINANCIAL AID PROBATION PERIOD

A student who is denied aid because of a failure to meet satisfactory progress standards after the warning semester may appeal this determination to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals Committee of the Financial Aid Office by completing a Student Appeal Form by published deadlines. An appeal must be based on significant mitigating circumstances, circumstances that seriously affected academic performance. Examples of possible mitigating circumstances are serious illness, severe injury, death of a family member, and other similar situations. The appeal must include an explanation of why the student failed to meet SAP standards, and what has changed that will now allow the student to regain satisfactory SAP status. Appeals can only be approved if it appears that the student can regain satisfactory SAP status after the end of the following semester of enrollment, or if the student can regain satisfactory SAP status by following an academic plan that will lead to timely completion of the degree program.

The Appeals Committee of the Financial Aid Office will review the appeal within ten business days of receiving a completed appeal form and required documentation. Decisions are made after a careful evaluation of the student's unique circumstances, Federal Title IV regulations, and UTRGV guidelines. The student will be notified of the committee's decision via mail. During this time, the student is responsible for any tuition and fees (including late fees) that are charged to their account.

The appeals committee is composed of professional staff from the financial aid office that function in a student advisory or administrative capacity and are knowledgeable of federal, state, and institutional financial aid regulations and policies. Appeal decisions are final.