

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy and procedure for Title IV Federal Student Aid

The University's policy and procedure for assessing whether US students are meeting the satisfactory academic requirements to continue receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid.

Active from September 2020

POLICY

Overview

This policy applies to all Title IV eligible programs run by the University.

This policy applies to all students in receipt of Title IV funding in addition to any individual academic progress requirements specific to the program.

Note to academic tutors:

We require regular reports on a students' progress (for taught students, this is at the end of each academic year; for research students this is every six months).

It is important that we receive this information in a timely manner in order to determine that a student is remaining eligible to receive their funding; delays in getting this information can result in significant delays to, or even cancellation of, that funding.

Funding Term

Students at the University of Southampton have a single funding term of one academic year's duration in each academic year.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Evaluation Point

Undergraduate students have a Satisfactory Academic Progress evaluation point at the end of each funding term.

Students on postgraduate programs have a Satisfactory Academic Progress evaluation point twice in a funding term (six-monthly).

Satisfactory Academic Progress Evaluation

At an evaluation point we assess:

- **The smallest time frame required for the student to be able to complete their program of study.**
 - For students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programs, this is the smallest overall time that needs to be taken to be able to successfully complete the program of study, as a proportion of the published length of the program as measured in credits.
 - For students on postgraduate research programs, this is the total cumulative time that needs to be taken to be able to successfully complete the program of study, as a proportion of the published length of the program as measured in weeks.
 - If, at the time of evaluation, a student is unable to complete their program of study in 150% or less of the published program length, they immediately cease to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.
- **The pace of progression on the course that a student is making.**
 - For students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programs, this is the rate at which they are progressing, as a ratio of total credits completed to total credits attempted.
 - For students on postgraduate research programs, this is the rate at which they are progressing, as a ratio of published program length to the total time that needs to be taken to be able to successfully complete the program of study as measured in weeks.
 - If, at the time of evaluation, a student's pace of progression is less than 67%, they immediately cease to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.
- **The qualitative measure of the student's academic achievement.**
 - For undergraduate students:
 - Undergraduate programs are divided into modules. Each module has a number of credits attached to it. Success in each module is measured in end-of-academic-year exams. In order to pass an academic year's study, a student must pass all of the modules.
 - In order to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress in each module, students must achieve all three of:
 - minimum standards as required by the academic department and supervisor/tutor, AND
 - a standard equivalent to at least a 40% pass rate, AND
 - an academic standing consistent with graduation requirements.
 - If a student fails any of the modules, they can retake the examinations in late summer, before the start of the following academic year.

- Students that fail the late-summer examinations can have a single attempt at retaking the entire academic year, or else resitting the examinations once more at the end of the following academic year. If they fail the end-of-academic-year examinations again, they have failed the course of study, their enrolment is terminated, and they cease to be eligible for Federal Student Aid.
 - **Note:** students that choose to retake the either first or second academic years of study will automatically cease to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid as they will have dropped behind the required pace of progression. They can re-achieve eligibility later on if their pace of progress subsequently reaches 67%, but any such re-eligibility will not be backdated.
- For postgraduate taught students:
 - Postgraduate taught programs are divided into modules for two semesters, followed by a period of thesis writing over the summer period. During the two semesters, each module has a number of credits attached to it. Success in each module is measured in end-of-academic-year exams. In order to pass an academic year's study, a student must pass all of the modules.
 - In order to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress in each module, students must achieve minimum standards as required by the academic department and supervisor/tutor, equivalent to at least a 40% pass rate, and an academic standing consistent with graduation requirements.
 - If a student fails any of the modules, they can retake the examinations in late summer, before the start of the following academic year. .
 - If a student's thesis fails to meet the academic standards required for a pass rate, or if the student fails the retaken examinations, they fail the year of study.
 - Students that have failed a year of study can have a single attempt at retaking the entire academic year, or else resitting the examinations once more at the end of the following academic year. If they fail the end-of-academic-year examinations again, they have failed the course of study, their enrolment is terminated, and they cease to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.
- For postgraduate research students:
 - Postgraduate research takes place continuously. Satisfactory Academic Progress is determined by the supervising tutor to ensure that the research is carried out to at least the minimum required academic standard.
 - At each evaluation point, the supervising tutor is required to confirm that the student is making satisfactory academic progress. Any student that is not making satisfactory academic progress will cease to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.

If, as a result of SAP evaluation, a student is found to be ineligible to receive further Federal Student Aid, they will be informed of this within five working days, along with an explanation of the finding, and clearly stating if/when a student might be able to become eligible to receive Federal Student Aid in the future.

Notes

- Two-yearly qualitative measure of academic achievement.
 - The US Department of Education requires foreign schools to ensure that a qualitative measure of academic achievement is taken after two years on any programs of more than two years in duration. The University's policy of carrying out a qualitative measure at the end of each academic year of study for all students ensures that this requirement is met.
- Cumulative measures of credit hours.
 - In the calculation of timeframe and pace, all credit hour measurements are cumulative from the start of the program of study.
- Cumulative qualitative measures of academic achievement.
 - In evaluating academic achievement, all evaluations are cumulative from the start of the program of study.
- Prior study of students that transfer in to the University of Southampton from another school.
 - If a student transfers onto a program of study from another school, using the credits earned at that school to count towards their qualification, then their study at that school will be taken into account by the University when calculating the pace and timeframe in consideration of Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- Impact of withdrawal from a program of study.
 - If a student withdraws from their program of study at the University they will not receive a degree award.
 - If they continue their program of study at another school using the credits earned at the University to count towards their qualification, then their current pace and time frame calculations will stand.
- Financial Aid Warnings, Financial Aid Probation, and Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals
 - At the University of Southampton we do not issue/conduct Financial Aid Warnings, Financial Aid Probationary periods, or Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals.
 - If a student that has been told they are failing to make Satisfactory Academic Progress believes they have been mis-graded, they have access to the University's Academic Appeals Process.

Examples of eligibility for Title IV Federal Student Aid based on pace and timeframe

<i>Year of study</i>	<i>first year of study</i>	<i>second year of study</i>	<i>third year of study</i>	<i>fourth year of study</i>	<i>fifth year of study</i>
<u>Undergraduates no retakes</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE		
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year two	Year three		
<i>Pass/fail</i>	PASS	PASS	PASS		
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	100%	100%	100%		
<i>Pace</i>	100%	100%	100%		
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	Study Complete		
<u>Undergraduates retake year one</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year one (r)	Year two	Year three	
<i>Pass/fail</i>	fail	PASS	PASS	PASS	
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	133%	133%	133%	133%	
<i>Pace</i>	0%	50%	67%	75%	
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	NOT ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	Study Complete	
<u>Undergraduates retake year two</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year two	Year two (r)	Year three	
<i>Pass/fail</i>	PASS	fail	PASS	PASS	
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	100%	133%	133%	133%	
<i>Pace</i>	100%	50%	67%	75%	
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	Study Complete	
<u>Undergraduates retake year three</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year two	Year three	Year three (r)	
<i>Pass/fail</i>	PASS	PASS	fail	PASS	
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	100%	100%	133%	133%	
<i>Pace</i>	100%	100%	67%	75%	
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	Study Complete	
<u>Undergraduates retake years one and three</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year one (r)	Year two	Year three	Year three (r)
<i>Pass/fail</i>	fail	PASS	PASS	fail	PASS
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	133%	133%	133%	167%	167%
<i>Pace</i>	0%	50%	67%	50%	60%
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	NOT ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	Study Complete
<u>Postgraduate (1yr taught) retake</u>					
<i>Eligibility during year</i>	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE			
<i>Year of course</i>	Year one	Year one (r)			
<i>Pass/fail</i>	fail	PASS			
<i>Smallest timeframe required</i>	150%	150%			
<i>Pace</i>	0%	50%			
<i>Eligibility to carry forward</i>	NOT ELIGIBLE	Study Complete			

PROCEDURE

Procedure for assessing Satisfactory Academic Progress of US Federal Student Aid recipients

Academic Progress Review

The academic progress of students will be assessed at each evaluation point, to determine continued eligibility.

For undergraduate students:

- A record is made of the number of credits that the student has attempted to date, and a calculation is made of pace, and the minimum timeframe required for the student to be able to complete their course.
- Confirmation of the academic standard that the student has achieved is taken from their recorded examination results, and from the successful progression from the academic year.
- A UG-SAP evaluation form is completed by the Financial Support Team and a copy placed in the student's FSA file.

For postgraduate taught students:

- A record is made of the number of credits that the student has attempted to date, and a calculation is made of pace, and the minimum timeframe required for the student to be able to complete their course.
- Confirmation of the academic standard that the student has achieved is taken from their recorded examination results, and from the successful progression from the academic year.
- A PGT-SAP evaluation form is completed by the Financial Support Team and a copy placed in the student's FSA file.

For postgraduate research students:

- A record is made of the number of weeks that the student has studied, and a calculation is made of pace, and the minimum timeframe required for the student to be able to complete their course.
- Confirmation of the academic standard that the student has achieved is confirmed from a completed Satisfactory Academic Progress form from their course tutor, supervisor or Director of Studies.
 - The Satisfactory Academic Progress form for postgraduate research students is below in this document. A pdf copy can be downloaded from:

https://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentservices/money-matters/student-funding/usfederalloans.page#useful_links_and_downloads
- A PGR-SAP evaluation form is completed by the Financial Support Team and a copy placed in the student's FSA file.

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