

# **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Financial Aid**

Federal regulations that went into effect July 1, 2011 require that Duke establish and implement a policy to measure whether students applying for and/or receiving financial aid are making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) towards a degree. This regulation applies to all students applying for aid, whether or not financial aid has been previously received. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the successful completion of degree requirements according to established increments that lead to awarding the degree within published time limits. There are three measurements that are used to determine eligibility: Qualitative (grades), Quantitative or PACE (percentage of completion) and Maximum Timeframe to complete degree. Not meeting these requirements may result in loss of all financial aid. Below is an explanation of these requirements.

## **Monitoring of Academic Progress**

Students' progress will be reviewed after grades are finalized, with the exception of Medicine, which will be at the end of the first year. A determination of eligibility to receive financial aid for subsequent enrollment periods will be made at this time. Although Duke will send a notification to the student, the student is fully responsible for monitoring their own academic progress as it relates to financial aid eligibility. The student should review their grades on an on-going basis and compare it to the standards set forth in this SAP policy to determine if they are meeting (or failing to meet) the established criteria.

Should the student be concerned that they may not have met the requirements, they may contact the Financial Aid Office during normal business hours. Students will be notified via their Duke e-mail account if they have failed the measurement. Students may appeal the decision. The appeal form and directions will be located on our website.

## **Frequency of Evaluation and Communication of Status**

Satisfactory Academic Progress for students enrolled in Allied Health Programs, Doctorate of Physical Therapy, Doctorate of Occupational Therapy, and Doctor of Medicine second, third and forth will be checked when grades become available for each term in which the student is enrolled (including summer). Satisfactory Academic Progress for students enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine first year will be checked at the end of each year. Students not achieving SAP will be notified of their status (Financial Aid Warning or Financial Aid Probation) by receiving an email to their Duke email account.

A student who fails to meet any of the SAP standards will be placed on a Financial Aid Warning for the next semester.

## **Financial Aid Warning and Loss of Federal Financial Aid Eligibility**

A student who fails to meet SAP will be automatically placed on “financial aid warning” for the next enrollment period.

During the “financial aid warning” enrollment period, the student may receive federal financial aid despite the determination that the student is not meeting SAP standards.

The student must meet SAP standards at the end of the financial aid warning period or will be placed on SAP probation, in which the student is ineligible to receive federal aid without an approved appeal (outlined further in this policy).

There are three (3) parts to the SAP measurement:

1. Maximum Time Frame for Eligibility: Reviewed Each Term/Year
  - The normal time frame for completion of required course work is determined by each program. Students are allowed to take 1.5 times the years of the program to complete the degree. Leave of Absences (LOA) are not counted unless the time frame from the date of matriculation reaches 10 years. Students are not allowed to take more than 10 years, including LOAs, to complete degree requirements.
2. Quantitative: Reviewed at the end of each Term/Year
  - Students must successfully complete a minimum of 70% of the total number of hours for which they are enrolled after the first week of the enrollment period and cumulatively. Each program determines progress to be reasonable by dividing the cumulative number of credits the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of credits the student has attempted.
  - Students enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine Program must complete 100% of attempted credits in the first year in order to progress to the second year. All fourth-year students must have satisfied all requirements as specified by the program in order to graduate.
3. Qualitative Requirement: Reviewed at the end of each Term/Year
  - Successful completion of a course for all students, for purposes of SAP calculations, means a student must earn a grade of Credit (Cr), Pass (P), Satisfactory (S) or better. All other grades, including F (Fail), I (Incomplete), or W (Withdrawal) will not be counted as successful completion. Only an incomplete that has been changed to a passing grade can be added to the number of hours completed for the semester of the original registration. It is the students’ responsibility to notify the Office of Financial Aid once an incomplete grade has been changed to a valid grade.

## **SAP Probation and Appeal Process**

Students who lose eligibility for financial aid may appeal the decision by following the procedures outlined below. Those wishing to utilize this process must indicate mitigating circumstances that occurred during the course of the semester or year in question, that

could not have been anticipated prior to that period, and that adversely affected their ability to successfully complete their required coursework. (Events such as the death of an immediate family member, extended illness suffered by the student, or other unforeseeable events that may have caused significant hardship for the student may be considered as examples of mitigating circumstances.) To appeal, a student must:

- Submit a letter of appeal to the Financial Aid Office. The appeal letter should include the following:
  - mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the requirements of academic progress (e.g. death in the family, student illness or injury, other personal circumstances). Mitigating circumstances do not include: withdrawing from classes to avoid failing grades, pursuing a second major or degree, etc.;
  - documentation that supports the student's basis for the appeal;
  - steps the student has taken/will take to ensure future academic success. This plan should outline the student's academic goals for each period (e.g. number of credit hours and/or cumulative GPA) that will enable the student to meet the requirements of academic progress at a specified future point in time; and
  - anticipated graduation date.
- In most cases, the SAP Appeals Committee will render a decision within two weeks of receipt of a fully completed appeal. All decisions of the SAP Appeals Committee are final. Notification of the decision will be sent via the student's Duke email account.
- If applicable, the promotions committee will monitor and review progress of the student. Failure to meet SAP during the probationary period may result in dismissal from the program.
- If the SAP appeal is approved, financial aid will be awarded for the next semester on a probation period as long as an approved Academic Plan is in place. An Academic Plan must be formulated with a student's advisor. Student will be placed on financial aid warning for the approved appealed term.
- Federal aid will be cancelled for a student on SAP Probation. If the SAP appeal is approved, federal financial aid will be re-instated for the term in which the aid was cancelled.

Students who fail to meet the requirements for academic progress after the second financial aid warning period and do not complete the requirements of their academic plan will again be ineligible for financial aid for the following term and will be placed on financial aid probation and subject to the appeal process.

Students who meet the requirements for academic progress for their second warning period will resume good standing and again be evaluated at the conclusion of the following term/year.