

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), 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 and a 3.25 GPA respectively.

All courses with a grade of A, B, C, D, and F are counted in the calculation of GPA. Satisfactory Academic Progress cannot be determined until all grades of "I" (incomplete) are resolved. Thus, in order to make a SAP determination an F is assumed for grades of I or IP. 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. 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 for regular fall and spring and 4th class day for regular summer sessions (for terms shorter in length please check for census date), whether they have received a grade yet or not. Once grades are assigned, attempted credits include grades of A, B, C, D, F, P, NP, S, U, CR, NC, IP, I, DR, or W. 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. Credits satisfactorily completed are classes for which the student receives a grade of A, B, C, D, 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 Master's program have a maximum of 63 attempted credit hours to complete their degree requirements. Students attempting a second or subsequent Master's degree are allowed 45 attempted credit hours. Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Masters have a maximum of 150 credit hours to complete their degree. Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Masters as a second or subsequent degree have a maximum of 132 credit hours to complete their degree. Students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Masters have a maximum of 107 credit hours to complete their degree. Students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy

Masters as a second or subsequent degree have a maximum of 89 credit hours to complete their degree. Students enrolled in the School of Psychology Masters have a maximum of 104 credit hours to complete their degree. Students enrolled in the School of Psychology Masters as a second or subsequent degree have a maximum of 86 credit hours to complete their degree.

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, D, F, P, NP, S, U, CR, NC, DR, W or I and IP for 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

A student who is denied aid because of a failure to meet satisfactory progress standards after the warning semester may appeal this determination by completing a Financial Aid SAP Appeal 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. Students with approved appeals are placed in probationary status for one semester or placed in an academic plan lasting more than one semester. Students placed in an academic plan must meet all requirements of the academic plan in order to continue receiving financial aid. Probationary or academic plan status ends when the student regains SAP status or does not meet the requirements of the academic plan. Students whose appeals are denied remain in financial aid suspension until satisfactory progress standards are regained.

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 e-mail and the student portal. 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 and may include staff from other departments when deemed that their expertise may be necessary for a decision. Appeal decisions are final.

Note: Students from UTB-TSC who transferred during Fall 2015 thru Summer 2017 had their UTB-TSC SAP status migrated into UTRGV as their initial SAP status. Coursework transferred from the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College for students enrolled at UTRGV prior to Fall 2017 will be included in the calculation of the total GPA. All other Transfer students are considered new students unless their transfer-attempted hours exceed Max Time Frame.