

## FEDERAL STUDENT AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

Revised 5/10/2018

Federal regulations (Sections 668.16, 668.32, and 668.34) require that all graduate (master's and doctoral) and professional students who receive Federal student aid (includes loans, work-study, and grants) make satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward completion of their degree in order to continue receiving Title IV Federal student aid.

This policy is subject to change without notice. Students will be notified of changes via their UChicago email address. The most current policy will always be posted at [financialaid.uchicago.edu](http://financialaid.uchicago.edu).

### Summary of Guidelines

Graduate and professional students who fail to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (or the minimum required by your division/school for graduation, whichever is higher) and/or do not complete at least 66% of all attempted units (whether they count towards degree or not) and/or do not complete their degree within the allotted completion timeframe, as outlined by their division or school, are at risk of losing eligibility for Title IV Federal student aid.

### Graduate and Professional Programs That Fall Within These Guidelines

This policy applies to all graduate and professional degree-seeking students except those in the Pritzker School of Medicine and the Booth School of Business, with the exception of some dual degree students<sup>1</sup>, including:

Biological Sciences <sup>2</sup>	Law
Divinity	Physical Sciences
Graham School (see specific programs) <sup>3</sup>	Public Policy
Humanities	Social Sciences
Institute for Molecular Engineering	Social Service Administration

<sup>1</sup>This policy applies to dual degree students who are jointly enrolled in one of the graduate or professional departments/divisions listed above.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes students enrolled in the Pritzker School of Medicine.

<sup>3</sup>Graham School degree-seeking programs include Masters of Liberal Arts; Masters in Threat & Response Management; Master of Science in Analytics; Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics; and Masters of Art in Teaching (UTEP). This policy also applies to students enrolled in Graham Pre-MED Preparatory Coursework.

**Title IV Federal Aid That Falls Within These Guidelines**

Federal Work-Study	Federal Direct PLUS (GradPLUS) Loan
Federal Perkins Loan	Federal TEACH Grant
Federal Direct Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized)	

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy Guidelines**

These requirements apply to each quarter of enrollment including those quarters in which no Title IV Federal student aid was awarded.

There are three components to maintaining satisfactory academic progress. A student must continuously meet all three requirements.

- 1) **Acceptable GPA:** A student must maintain an acceptable, cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 **or the minimum required by the division/school for graduation**, whichever is higher; and,
- 2) **Coursework Completion Rate:** A student must complete a minimum of at least 66% of all attempted cumulative units (whether units count towards degree or not); and,
- 3) **Timeframe/Pace:** A student must successfully complete degree-required coursework within 150% of the normal timeframe allotted by their division/school.

Note: Please also review the section under 'Withdrawals' that speaks specifically to **Students Who Fail To Earn At Least One Grade In A Given Quarter** on page 3.

Progress is monitored annually, at the end of Spring quarter, for **multi-year students** (those enrolled in a program with a duration of more than one year). The evaluation period for **single-year students** (those enrolled in a one-year master's program) is at the end of each quarter.

**Acceptable Cumulative GPA**

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average as defined by their division/school for graduation or a minimum of at least 2.0, whichever is higher.

**Coursework Completion Rate Of At Least 66% Of Attempted Cumulative Units**

Students must complete at least 66% of all attempted units, whether units count towards degree or not.

*Completion Rate Computation:* All courses for which a student enrolls count when calculating units attempted, with the exceptions detailed in the *Withdrawals, Incompletes, Course Repetition, and Transfer Units* section below. Preparatory coursework that will not count towards the degree program is not counted towards units attempted.

*Completion Rate Formula:*

Cumulative Units Successfully Completed divided by Units Attempted = Completion Rate

### Timeframe/Pace For Completion Of Degree-Required Coursework Within 150% of Time Allotted

Students must complete the requirements for their degree within the maximum timeframe for completing their program coursework (as defined by their academic department/division). Federal regulations specify that students are able to receive aid for 150% of the timeframe normally required to complete their academic degree program. All periods of enrollment count toward the duration of eligibility, whether Title IV Federal aid is received or not.

### Master's Programs

To calculate the maximum amount of time in which you must complete your degree, take the minimum number of units required towards your graduate degree and multiply it times 1.5.

Ex. Your degree program requires 900 units of required coursework. **The maximum timeframe in which you can receive Title IV Federal student aid is 900 units x 1.5 = 1350 maximum units.** Please contact your Dean of Students for assistance with required coursework and units assigned to each course.

### PH.d Program

To calculate the maximum amount of time in which you must complete your degree, take the amount of academic years you have been active in the program; the total cannot exceed 12 academic years (**8 years x 1.5= 12 years**). The timeframe starts in the initial quarter of enrollment.

Ex. 1. Your PHD degree program begins winter 2010. If you are active in your program every year beginning winter 2010; your last quarter of eligibility will be autumn 2021.

Ex. 2. Your PHD degree program begins autumn 2010. You are active in your program for 9 academic years with your last quarter being spring 2019. You re-enroll in the same program in autumn 2022 and have three more academic years of title IV eligibility remaining (for SAP purposes). If you enroll in 3 consecutive academic years beginning in autumn 2022, your last quarter of title IV eligibility will be spring 2025.

### Program Reset

SAP eligibility will be determined per current program of enrollment. Students who have enrolled in and completed a previous program at UC will not have units attempted/earned used in the completion rate or timeframe/pace calculation. Grades earned in courses from previous programs enrolled by the student will not count in the GPA calculation for current SAP eligibility determination.

### Withdrawals, Incompletes, Course Repetition, and Transfer Units

Courses for which a student officially withdraws after the third week of the quarter will count when calculating the units attempted. All incomplete courses are counted in the calculation of units

attempted. When calculating the completion rate the units attempted are counted for the initial course and each time it is repeated.

The higher of the two grades received for the repeated course(s) will count towards the GPA. Transfer units accepted toward completion of the student's degree requirements, if any, are counted as both units attempted and units completed. However, if a student changes his/her degree program before a degree is conferred, credits attempted and grades earned towards that degree that do not count toward the new degree and will not be included.

**Incomplete Courses:** The maximum timeframe to change an incomplete grade to a grade is one academic year or four quarters OR the time frame established by your division/school, **whichever is less.**

**Preparatory Courses:** These courses do not count as units attempted nor are they factored into the GPA because they do not count towards the graduate degree.

**Students Who Fail To Earn At Least One Grade In A Given Quarter:** Any student who receives Title IV Federal aid and fails to earn at least one grade in at least one enrolled course per quarter is considered unofficially withdrawn for Title IV Federal aid purposes. Student Loan Administration must cancel and return a portion of the Title IV Federal loans and/or TEACH grant funds the student received to the government. If the return results in a balance due on the student's tuition bill, the student must pay such outstanding tuition and fee charges immediately.

**Please note: Grades must be posted within 30 days of the last day of the quarter in order to be counted.**

### **Monitoring Academic Progress**

Student Loan Administration will monitor academic progress each evaluation period. All quarters of attendance are reviewed, including quarters in which no Federal student aid was received. In the event that a grade has not been posted within 30 days of the last day of the quarter in which the student is being monitored for SAP, an incomplete grade will be assumed and used in the calculation to determine progress.

### **Federal Student Aid SAP Warning for Single-Year Students:**

Single-year students who are not making satisfactory academic progress by the end of their first quarter of enrollment will receive a Federal Student Aid Warning and will remain in warning status for their next quarter of attendance. Students will be notified of the warning status once final grades have

been posted for the preceding quarter. Students will continue to receive Federal student aid during the warning quarter (for one quarter after failing to meet SAP). If, at the end of the warning quarter, the student fails to make satisfactory academic progress, Federal student aid will be suspended. Please refer to the **Suspension Of Federal Student Aid** and **Student Aid SAP Probation** sections. ***A SAP Warning is not available to students whose program is officially defined as more than one-year in length.***

**Suspension Of Federal Title IV Student Aid:**

Federal student aid will be suspended until such time as the student meets the satisfactory academic standards. Please refer to the **Regain Title IV Federal Student Aid Eligibility** section. Students will be notified of such suspension as indicated below. Upon suspension of Federal student aid, all Title IV Federal student loan and grant disbursements will be canceled and work-study funding will immediately cease.

**Single-year students** who are not successfully making satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of their degree after the warning quarter will have their Title IV Federal student aid suspended beginning the next enrolled quarter.

**Multi-year students** who are not successfully making satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of their degree by the end of their annual evaluation period (end of Spring quarter) will have their Title IV Federal student aid suspended beginning in Summer quarter. Multi-year students do not receive a warning prior to the suspension of student aid.

**Regain Title IV Federal Student Aid Eligibility:**

There are four ways in which a student whose Federal aid was suspended, may regain eligibility.

- 1) A student must enroll in and successfully complete enough units to meet the acceptable GPA requirement, if eligibility was suspended as a result of not meeting this requirement, and/or;
- 2) A student must enroll in and successfully complete enough units to meet the degree coursework completion requirements, if eligibility was suspended as a result of not meeting this requirement, and/or;
- 3) A student may regain eligibility after successfully completing the current degree program, should they desire to enroll in a subsequent degree program, or
- 4) A student may regain eligibility by successfully appealing the eligibility suspension. A student whose eligibility is reinstated due to a successful appeal is placed on **student aid probation** until the next evaluation period when the student must demonstrate that s/he is meeting SAP requirements.

**Student Aid SAP Probation:**

Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress **and who have successfully appealed** will have their Title IV Federal student aid reinstated and will be placed on student aid probation until the end of the payment period at which point the student must demonstrate that s/he is meeting SAP requirements. In order to continue receiving title IV aid the student must 1) meet the minimum SAP requirements, or 2) complete the current degree – if enrolling in a subsequent degree program, or 3) Request and be approved for a subsequent appeal (for multi-year students only). See subsequent appeals.

**Notification of SAP Warning, Suspension, and/or Probation:**

Students will be notified by email to their UChicago email address.

**SAP Appeal Guidelines**

Students whose Title IV Federal student aid is suspended because of failure to meet the academic progress standards and, who believe that they have extenuating circumstances may appeal to have their Federal student aid reinstated. Appeals must be received by the deadline dates listed below. We recommend that students submit their appeal as soon as they receive their suspension notification so that Student Loan Administration staff have ample time to evaluate the appeal. Students should allow four to six weeks for review of their appeal.

**Maximum Number of Appeals:** The maximum number of times a **single-year student** may be reinstated due to extenuating circumstances is once during their academic career. The maximum number of times a **multi-year student**, in a program of two years or less, may be reinstated due to extenuating circumstances is two times during their academic career. The maximum number of times a **multi-year student**, in a program of more than two years, may be reinstated due to extenuating circumstances is three times during their academic career.

**IMPORTANT: All appeals must be received prior to the deadlines listed below, in order to receive a decision during that same quarter. Appeals received after the deadline will be considered for the next quarter.** Appeals are reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. Students should allow four to six weeks for their appeal to be reviewed and a decision rendered. A non-favorable decision is final and cannot be appealed for the same set of circumstances.

**Deadline Dates to Appeal and receive Federal aid for the listed quarters:**

Summer quarter 2017, July 21, 2017

Autumn quarter 2017, November 3, 2017

Winter quarter 2018, February 9, 2018

Spring quarter 2018, April 20, 2018

If a student receives notification of suspension after the deadline date, the student will have five business days from the date of the notification in which to appeal.

**All appeals must be submitted, in writing, directly to Student Loan Administration. The initial appeal must include the following:**

- 1) A completed Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal form.
- 2) Student's typed, signed letter of explanation and documentation to support her/his appeal. The student's explanation should include the following: a) why student failed to meet the academic requirements; b) how the student's change in circumstances now position her/him for academic success; and c) what steps the student will take to ensure that s/he meets SAP during the next quarter. When applicable, documentation, on official letterhead, should support the student's circumstances (i.e., copy of incident, police, or accident report, birth certificate, documentation of major hospitalization or obituary of an immediate family member, or physician's letter). The physician's letter should support the fact that the student's health is such that the student can resume normal studies.

#### **A Subsequent SAP Appeal**

Only multi-year students may make a subsequent appeal, after the initial appeal. Please note that the reason for failure to meet SAP must be different from that outlined in the initial appeal. Please review Appeal Guidelines above.

**All subsequent appeals must be submitted, in writing, directly to Student Loan Administration and must include the following:**

- 1) A completed Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal form.
- 2) Student's typed, signed letter of explanation and documentation to support her/his appeal. The student's explanation should include the following: a) why student failed to meet the academic requirements; b) how the student's change in circumstances now position her/him for academic success; and c) what steps the student will take to ensure that s/he meets SAP during the next quarter. When applicable, documentation, on official letterhead, should support the student's circumstances (i.e., copy of incident, police, or accident report, birth certificate, documentation of major hospitalization or obituary of an immediate family member, or physician's letter). The physician's letter should support the fact that the student's health is such that the student can resume normal studies.
- 3) Supporting academic degree completion plan, on departmental letterhead, completed and signed by an academic advisor or administrative dean. The plan should outline the action(s) that the student must take ***each quarter*** in order to successfully meet the academic progress standards. The plan should list

the courses or benchmarks that the student must take or finish (i.e., change an incomplete status to a course grade) in order to complete the degree requirements, along with the anticipated degree completion date. SLA will review the academic plan at the end of each payment period to ensure the student is meeting the benchmarks set in the plan.

**Important:** All supporting documentation must accompany the student's appeal. Suggesting that Student Loan Administration contact physicians, professors or other persons to obtain additional information is not acceptable and your appeal may be deemed incomplete and subsequently denied.

While students whose Title IV Federal student aid has been suspended may continue to enroll in classes if permitted by their division/school; the student is responsible for all charges incurred, even if their appeal is denied. **Title IV Federal student aid cannot retroactively be reinstated after a quarter has ended; therefore, be sure to get confirmation from our office that we received your appeal by the required deadline.**

### Glossary of Terms

**Academic Year** -Our academic year spans 12-months and begins with the Summer quarter and ends with the following Spring quarter.

**Evaluation Period** – Period of time in which academic progress is monitored to determine if it is satisfactory. The evaluation period differs for multi-year and single-year students.

The evaluation period for **multi-year students** is equivalent to up to four quarters and spans Summer quarter of the current calendar year through Spring quarter of the following calendar year. Students placed on student aid probation will be evaluated at the end of each quarter until such time as their probationary period ends.

The evaluation period for **single-year students** is one quarter.

**Federal Student Aid SAP Warning** - Single-year students who are not meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards towards the completion of their degree by the end of the evaluation period will receive a Federal student aid warning. Students who receive a warning may continue to receive Title IV assistance until the next quarter.

**Federal Student Aid SAP Probation** –Students who are not meeting the satisfactory academic progress



standards towards the completion of their degree by the end of their evaluation period (or after the warning period for single-year students) and successfully appeal a Federal student aid suspension are placed on probation until the next quarter.

**Federal Student Aid SAP Suspension** –Students who are not meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards towards the completion of their degree by the end their evaluation period (or after the warning period for single-year students) will have their Federal student aid is suspended.

**Multi-year students** – Those enrolled in enrolled in a master’s program of greater than one year or twelve months.

**Preparatory Coursework** - Coursework that is required in order to be admitted (or as a condition of admission) but will not count towards the graduate degree. The course(s) may be necessary for students who are deficient in some areas of study or who may need a ‘refresher’ prior to beginning their graduate studies.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – Academic standards for which each student must comply in order to maintain eligibility to receive Title IV Federal student aid.

**Single-Year students** -Those enrolled in a one-year master’s program (twelve months or less).

**Units Attempted (Cumulative Units Attempted)** -All classes for which a student is registered whether s/he receives a grade or not, including audited courses, ‘no credit’ courses, and pass/fail courses, and those with an incomplete (or no grade), or where the student has withdrawn or takes a leave of absence are counted towards units attempted. Courses dropped or for which a student withdraws within the drop/add period will not count towards units attempted.

**Units Not Successfully Completed** -All classes for which a student receives a UW, W, NGR, I\* or No credit.

**Incomplete grades** –Student receiving an incomplete grade for a given quarter must converted the incomplete grade to a quality grade within the timeline set by the department in order to retain federal aid eligibility for a particular quarter.