

**Student - Policy on Satisfactory  
Academic Progress for Graduate  
Programs (Financial Aid Policy)**

**Policy Number: 301.1007.104**

Policy Revision Date : 2019-4-2

**Policy Category : Academic**

**Policy Owner : Vice Dean for Graduate  
School**

**Policy Audience : Student Council**

**1. Definitions :**

**2. Leadership Council Review :**

**3. Introduction / Purpose :**

Federal law and regulations require that all students receiving federal funding maintain satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the successful completion of degree requirements according to established increments that lead to the successful awarding of the degree within published time limits. The following policy outlines the standards for SAP for the graduate programs and applies to all students, whether or not they are recipients of financial aid.

**4. Governance and Enforcement:**

Vice Dean

**5. Policy :**

**Satisfactory Academic Progress for Graduate Programs (Financial Aid Policy)**

Federal law and regulations require that all students receiving federal funding maintain satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the successful completion of degree requirements according to established increments that lead to the successful awarding of the degree within published time limits. The following policy outlines the standards for SAP for the graduate programs and applies to all students, whether

or not they are recipients of financial aid.

### **Qualitative Measures of SAP**

In order to be considered making satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility, a student in the School of Graduate Studies is required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 at the end of each semester.

### **Quantitative (Pace) Measures of SAP**

Students must complete the appropriate percent of all courses attempted. The completion percentage is calculated by dividing total hours earned by total hours attempted. A student enrolled in a graduate program must successfully complete 70 percent of the credits attempted each semester to maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility. This is in addition to the cumulative grade point average requirement of 2.0.

### **Review and Notification of Lack of SAP**

The Committee on Graduate Academic and Professional Performance (CGAPP) at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM) reviews the academic performance of every student enrolled in a graduate program each semester. Students not meeting either the qualitative or quantitative measure of SAP will be placed on financial aid warning. Financial aid warning lasts for one payment period only, during which the student remains eligible for financial aid. SAP will be reviewed at the end of the warning period and the student must meet SAP requirements in order to remain eligible for financial aid.

Effective July 1, 2016 repeating coursework for all full-time graduate students will be restricted by federal regulations to repeating coursework previously taken to no more than one repetition of a previously passed course for the receipt of Title IV aid.

In the event the student is not meeting SAP requirements, the student will be notified by the Financial Aid Office of the action and the requirements for reinstatement and procedures for appeal.

### **Maximum Time Frame**

The normal time frame for completion of required course work for the graduate degree is one to two academic years depending on the program and/or campus location. Due to academic or personal difficulties or scholarly activities, a student may require additional time. In such situations, an academic plan may be established for the student that departs from the norm and that may require the repetition of all or part of a year of study. Requests for exceptions to the time frame for completion of required course work are submitted for review by the CGAPP. The maximum time frame is defined as the required length of time it will take a student to complete his/her degree. A student will remain eligible for federal aid up to 150% of total attempted credits. Most graduate degrees require 36 credits for graduation but there may be exceptions. Students will be notified via email and writing if they are close to exceeding or have exceeded the maximum time frame allowed. Students will be allowed to submit a letter of appeal to the Director of Financial. If the appeal is approved, the student must have an approved academic plan before federal assistance is granted.

### **Appeals**

Eligibility for continued financial aid will only be re-established if the student subsequently meets SAP requirements, or if the student successfully appeals the decision to the CGAPP. The

appeal must state the reasons for failing to meet SAP requirements, including, if applicable, special circumstances that contributed to the student's failure to meet SAP requirements (e.g. the death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstances), and what may have changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate SAP at the next evaluation.

If the CGAPP determines that the student's appeal should be approved, the student's aid will be reinstated, and the student will be placed on financial aid probation. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student in writing and via email regarding the terms of their appeal. If the terms are not met, the student will not be eligible for an additional appeal within the academic award year.

### **Financial Aid Probation**

Once an appeal has been approved, a student is placed on financial aid probation and is eligible for financial aid. The CGAPP will develop an academic plan for the student that will ensure, if followed, that the student is able to meet GCSOM's SAP standards by a specific point in time. Ordinarily, this time frame is one payment period.

### **Attempted Credits**

Attempted credits include all credits for a course in which the student enrolled but subsequently withdrew or failed, earned an incomplete grade, or repeated the course.

### **Earned Credits**

Earned credits include all credits completed with a grade of 'D' or better, satisfactory and pass grades, and repeated courses.

## **6. Key Stakeholders :**

Graduate Student Council