SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

For the purposes of financial aid eligibility, federal regulations governing Title IV HEA program funds require the University to establish a standard of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) and to monitor students' progress toward completion of a degree or certificate. Information relevant to the University's SAP standard is provided below.

Student academic progress is evaluated at least once annually. For students in programs that are less than one academic year in length, academic progress is evaluated at the end of each enrollment period.

Failure to meet the University's SAP standard requirements may result in financial aid suspension. Financial aid will be reinstated only after eligibility is re-established.

The satisfactory academic progress requirements below apply to all University students and are consistently applied, whether or not a student is receiving financial aid.

Evaluation measures

Satisfactory academic progress is evaluated based on three measures: qualitative, quantitative, and maximum time frame.

Qualitative. The qualitative measure specifies the grade point average (G.P.A.) that must be achieved at each evaluation. If the G.P.A. is not an appropriate qualitative measure, a comparable assessment measured against a norm will be used. Calculation of the G.P.A. does not include incompletes (I), withdrawals (W), or transfer courses; however, courses repeated for additional credit (such as seminars and research) will be included. Courses repeated for a better grade will include only the most recent grade in the G.P.A. calculation.

Quantitative. The quantitative measure specifies the pace at which a student should progress through their educational program in order to successfully complete a sufficient number of units at a rate that ensures program completion within the maximum time frame. The pace at which a student is progressing is calculated by dividing the cumulative number of units the student has successfully completed by the cumulative number of units the student has attempted. Units (credit hours) transferred from another institution that are accepted toward the student's educational program will be counted as both attempted and completed units. This evaluation measure only applies to term-based programs.

Maximum time frame. The maximum time frame for an undergraduate program measured in units cannot exceed a period longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program. The maximum time for completion of a master's degree is five years; the maximum time for completion of a doctoral degree is seven years—except in the case of block programs. Calculation of the time frame begins with the term in which the first LLU course applicable toward a degree or certificate is taken.

Program requirements

Undergraduate programs. Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of at least 2.0. They must also maintain a cumulative completion rate equal to or exceeding two thirds (67 percent) of the units attempted. Maximum time for completion of an undergraduate program is a period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the academic program, as measured in credit hours or in clock hours required and expressed in calendar time.

Graduate programs. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of at least 3.0. They must also maintain a cumulative completion rate equal to or greater than two thirds (67 percent) of the units attempted. This only applies to term-based programs. For programs with a limited or no research component, the number of units per term needed to complete the program on time will be determined by dividing the total number of units required for completion by the length of the program—expressed in academic quarters (e.g., five years for a master's degree equals 20 academic quarters). Research-intensive programs will provide information regarding the number of units that must be completed by the midpoint and three-quarters point of the program.

Maximum time for completion of a master's degree is five years; maximum time for completion of a doctoral degree is seven years—except in the case of block programs.

Professional practice doctorates. All professional practice doctoral degrees (D.P.T., Pharm.D., D.D.S., and M.D.) are block programs requiring students to enroll full time. See specific programs below for SAP policy information.

Doctor of Occupational Therapy (entry-level O.T.D.). Students must maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0—with no grade less than B- (2.7) in any required course—and must demonstrate satisfactory clinical performance. In addition, they must receive a grade of B- or better in AHCJ 510 Human Gross Anatomy (taken during the first quarter of the program). Students are expected to complete the program in three years; however, if a leave of absence becomes necessary, the maximum allowable time to degree completion is seven years.

Doctor of Physical Therapy (entry-level D.P.T.). Students must maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0—with no grade less than C (2.0) in any required course—and must demonstrate satisfactory clinical performance. In addition, they must receive a grade of B or better in AHCJ 510 Human Gross Anatomy (taken during the first quarter of the program). Students are expected to complete the program in three years; however, if a leave of absence becomes necessary, the maximum allowable time to degree completion is seven years.

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.). The G.P.A. required for graduation is 2.30. In addition, students must hold a valid, nonprobationary intern pharmacist license. Six years is the maximum time allowed to degree completion, which is also the maximum time intern pharmacist licensure is granted by the California State Board of Pharmacy.

Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.). Students must maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.0. They must also maintain a cumulative completion rate equal to or exceeding two thirds (67 percent) of the units attempted. Students are expected to complete the program in four years; however, the maximum allowable time to degree completion is six years.

Doctor of Medicine (M.D.). In order to progress to the next academic year, students must not receive a U (Unsatisfactory) grade in any course. Although students are expected to complete the program in four years, they are allowed to complete the first two years (basic sciences) within three years before progressing to the clinical years (third and fourth years of the program). The two clinical years must be completed within three years.

Loss of eligibility for financial aid

On the basis of the SAP evaluation, Title IV HEA program funds may be suspended for any of the following reasons:

- A student fails to achieve the required G.P.A.
- A student is not successfully completing their education program at the required pace.
- A student is unable to complete the program within the allotted time frame.

The student is suspended from federal financial aid eligibility only and may not receive additional financial aid funds. However, they may continue enrollment at this University either without any financial assistance or, if eligible, with the assistance of private loans. The Financial Aid Office can supply the student with additional information regarding these loans.

Withdrawals, leaves of absence, cancellations

Withdrawal or an official leave of absence after the first day of the term counts as a term attended when determining overall term-count eligibility and unit-count eligibility, unless the student does not attend any classes for the given term and receives a 100 percent refund of all fees. For financial aid purposes, a leave of absence is treated the same as a withdrawal from the program. Cancellation of registration on or before the first day of classes does not count as a term attended when determining term-count or unit-count eligibility.

Suspension letter

A student who fails to meet the University's satisfactory academic progress standard will be informed in writing by the Financial Aid Office that financial aid has been suspended until such time as the student is again in compliance with SAP guidelines. The letter will include instructions regarding the appeal process.

Appeal process

Students may appeal loss of eligibility for financial aid. Instructions for submitting a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal are available on the Web for students wishing to have their aid reinstated. The appeal must be filed by the deadline specified in the letter of suspension, even if the student believes an error has been made in their case. The completed appeal must be submitted to the director of financial aid, who will present it to the SAP Appeals Committee. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student in writing within five business days following the decision by the appeals committee.

The student is required to submit their appeal in writing. The appeal must include the following information:

- A full explanation of the circumstances that led to their inability to meet the minimum progress requirements.
- Supporting documentation verifying the circumstances.
- A personalized academic plan. With the assistance of their academic advisor, the student is expected to explore options available to eliminate deficiencies, as well as develop a realistic term-by-term listing of specific courses to be taken toward graduation and non-course requirements to be completed (e.g., advancement to candidacy, qualifying examinations, dissertation defense). This plan is designed to ensure that the student will be able to meet the satisfactory academic progress standard by a specified point in time. The academic plan is signed by the academic advisor, department chair, and school academic dean.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be expected to adhere to the units and courses specified in the academic plan portion of the appeal. The academic plan will be closely monitored by the Financial Aid Office staff. Failure to follow the courses and units outlined may constitute the basis for future denial of financial aid.

The progress of students on an academic plan will be reviewed at the end of one payment period, and then according to the academic plan—but not less frequently than the rest of the institution's population.

Financial aid eligibility reinstatement

A student who has failed to make satisfactory progress but who has appealed financial aid suspension and has had eligibility for aid reinstated is placed on financial aid probation. Clear financial aid eligibility will be regained when they are again in compliance with the SAP standard.