

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Students Receiving U.S. Department of Education Title IV Financial Aid

1. Overview

This policy relates to the principles and procedures for monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for US students receiving US **Title IV Financial Aid** (hereon referred to Financial Aid). It sets out the minimum conditions required for students to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress. It details the University's procedures for monitoring academic progression for students (undertaking Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research study).

The policy covers students who are in receipt of Direct Subsidised or Direct Unsubsidised loans or Direct PLUS Graduate loans or whose parents have Direct Parent PLUS loans.

US Department of Education regulations require a student to be enrolled on an eligible course and making satisfactory academic progress in order to be eligible to receive any Financial Aid funds.

2. Academic Standing

- In order to be eligible to continue to receive Financial Aid, a student must have achieved an “pass mark” as laid out below or have academic standing consistent with the University's requirements for graduation:
 - For undergraduate programmes, the pass mark is 40% (equivalent to a GPA of D).
 - For postgraduate programmes, the pass level is 50% (equivalent to a GPA of C).
 - Both are measured cumulatively
- Assessment of satisfactory academic progress will be taken from the outcome of the University's formal Assessment Boards.

a) Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

- Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progression through their programme of study.
- If a student's mark falls below the required level they will be given a Financial Aid Warning until the next disbursement by which time their satisfactory academic progress will be expected to be at the required level.
- If the student achieves the required standard they will be placed in good standing for financial aid.
- If the marks do not meet the required standard at the next attempt the student will be suspended for the purpose of financial aid.
- If the student fails at the next attempt and does not proceed on their programme of study then Financial Aid will be suspended.
- If the student meets the requirements for progression on the programme of study they will be placed in good standing for financial aid.
- Providing the student has not exceeded 150% of the normal duration, an Assessment Board outcome of 'Proceed' is sufficient for disbursements made after results have been published and for the first disbursement of the following academic year.
- No progress confirmation is required for the first disbursement for a student's programme of study.

- Detailed information about academic assessment and progress for undergraduate and postgraduate students, is set out in the appropriate '[Handbook and Regulations](#)'. These regulations are standard across all students whether funded via Financial Aid or not.
- Where a student disagrees with an academic outcome they are entitled to appeal, via the [University's Appeal Process](#). Please note this is a separate process to appealing the loss of Financial Aid eligibility (please see below).

b) Postgraduate Research Students

- Students are required to submit monthly reports and achieve the appropriate milestones as laid out by the Doctoral College.
- If the student meets the requirements for progression on their programme of study they will be placed in good standing for Financial Aid.
- If the student is not progressing, then the student will be given a 'Financial Aid Warning'. At the time of the next request if the student is not progressing then the student's Financial Aid will be suspended.

3. Maximum Timeframe

- Students may not receive aid once they have exceeded 150% of the published time frame for the programme as measured in credit hours to complete their studies. This applies to Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students.
- For Postgraduate Research students the published timeframe for the course will, for these purposes, include a writing up year.
- Periods of leaves of absence will not count towards this calculation; however, they are included in the University's 'Period of Registration' regulations.
- If a student has attended part of the course below full-time, then this calculation will be based on the full-time equivalent of their studies (e.g. 2 years at 50% will equal 1-year full-time study).

4. Pace of Completion

- The pace of a student's progress is measured cumulatively by the number of credits required to complete the programme and achieve the intended qualification, divided by the length of the programme .
- A minimum pace of completion is 67% if completing within the 150% maximum time frame. For example:
 - 3 yr Undergraduate degree =
 - $3 \times 120 \text{ credits} = 360 \text{ credits}$
 - $360 \text{ credits} \times 150\% = 540 \text{ credits}$
 - $360 \text{ credits} / 540 \text{ credits} = 67\%$
 - 1 yr postgraduate Masters =
 - $1 \times 180 \text{ credits} = 180 \text{ credits}$
 - $180 \text{ credits} \times 150\% = 270 \text{ credits}$
 - $180 \text{ credits} / 270 \text{ credits} = 67\%$
- Where a change in students study pattern indicates pace of completion will be impacted, students will be reminded of requirements to remain eligible.
- At the stage at which it becomes clear that the student will not complete within the required timescale, they will become ineligible and funding will cease.

- If a student **transfers** from another institution, then credits or courses that will count towards the student's final degree will be used to calculate a student's 'Pace of Completion' (see above).
- Students **repeating a year** or credits need to pass at the next available opportunity in order to regain eligibility for Financial Aid. This will impact on both the student's pace and grade assessment.
- Where a student **withdraws** from a form of study (i.e. a module) they cannot be considered as part of the satisfactory academic progress assessment. New modules/replacement modules will be considered and used in all future satisfactory academic progress assessments. This will impact on both the student's pace and grade assessment, if a student does not pick up a replacement unit immediately.
- If a student **does not complete** modules as required, resulting in failure of the module, this may result in the student not being deemed to have made satisfactory academic progress. This will impact on both the student's pace and grade assessment.
- Students will be informed by email if they are given a 'Warning' or if Financial Aid is suspended.
- Students may appeal for extenuating or unforeseen circumstances. Verification of the circumstances will be required.

5. **Monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress**

- Satisfactory Academic Progress is decided by University Assessment Boards which will oversee and ratify exams and coursework submissions. These normally take place annually or in line with programme-based timelines. It should be noted that if a student is not successful at the standard annual board and they have resit opportunities and will go to the next available board (normally this would be September for undergraduates and January for postgraduates).
- Where the student fails to make satisfactory progress at the first sitting, a reassessment opportunity will normally be offered unless the student's profile is in such poor standing that withdrawal from the University is appropriate.
- Students are permitted reassessments as outlined in the student Regulations.
- Students ongoing eligibility will be checked as part of the fund eligibility and disbursement processes by the US Financial Aid Administrator. A student's continued registration and eligibility to continue to receive Financial Aid, is checked annually for programmes at least one year or more (or sooner if they have resit opportunities they will be presented at the next board. Where the programme is a year or less (normally Postgraduate Taught only) it will be checked at each assessment board point.
- Where programmes are assessed annually (i.e. UG programmes) a financial aid warning cannot be issued, thus the student can lose eligibility if satisfactory academic progress isn't made. However, they can then be placed on probation following a successful appeal.
- It is noted this policy provides a consistent application of standards to all students in line with their student type and or status, in line with University policies and is as least as strict as the University requirements.

6. **Eligibility for Financial Aid Funds**

- In order to receive continued Financial Aid students must meet the requirements stated above. Therefore, each student will be assessed as –
 - Financial Aid Eligible – where a student has met the satisfactory academic progress requirements and retains their eligibility for Financial Aid.

- Financial Aid Denied – Where satisfactory academic progress is not made (following reassessment opportunities), where the student will have their funded stopped and will be notified by that their Financial Aid funding has ceased.
- Financial Aid Probation - Where a student has not made satisfactory academic progress, but has reassessment opportunities to the situation.

7. Financial Aid Warning

- Students that fail to make satisfactory academic progress will firstly be issued with a 'Financial Aid Warning'.
- The student is warned that failure to rectify the situation will lead to their eligibility for Financial Aid ceasing.
- This warning will last for 1 payment period (i.e. until the next disbursement), during which time a student can still receive Financial Aid.
- Students that fail to regain satisfactory academic progress by the next disbursement will no longer be eligible for Financial Aid, unless they are successful in an appeal (see below).

8. Other Requirements

- Student are required to meet the University's Monitoring Attendance Policy and all UKVI requirements.
- Students that are undertaking any part of their course in the USA or those that drop below 50% FTE registration are not entitled to Financial Aid. This regulation is not covered by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy above and therefore is not subject to a Financial Aid Warning, Probation or Appeal.

9. Appealing Financial Aid Eligibility

- Students who have received a Financial Aid Warning and failed to meet the SAP requirements by the end of the payment period are no longer eligible to receive funding. However, where a student is given notification of the termination of their financial aid due to academic failure; they do have the right of appeal, if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.
- To appeal the financial aid suspension, a student must, within 14 calendar days of notification, submit to the Student Finance and Welfare Manager a signed and dated letter of appeal explaining why he or she shouldn't have Financial Aid suspended.
- A student may appeal due to an emergency condition (e.g., health, family, catastrophe, etc.) and state what has changed in their situation that will allow them to meet Satisfactory Progress at the next evaluation date (Assessment Board). Documentation verifying the situation will be requested.
- The Student Finance and Welfare Manager will consider the appeal and render a decision, which the Financial Aid Administrator will convey in writing to the student within two weeks of the student's appeal. **All decisions made are final.**
- Appeals should be sent by email and hard copy to:

us.funding@dmu.ac.uk

Student Finance and Welfare Manager

Student and Academic Services

De Montfort University

The Gateway

10. Probation

- If a student's appeal against losing eligibility is successful then the student will be placed on probation for the payment period.
- A student's academic progress will be continued to be monitored during the probation period and they will continue to be eligible for Financial Aid during the probation period.
- If they meet the conditions of the probation they can continue to receive financial aid.
- If they do not meet the conditions of the probation they will cease financial aid eligibility.
- A student that has their Financial Aid suspended but continues the course under their own means and subsequently meets Satisfactory Academic Progress standards will be entitled to regain a probationary status and apply for, or receive loans.

11. Important Information

- Students are expected to attend De Montfort University.
- Financial Aid warnings, probation and suspensions related solely to students' eligibility to receive Financial Aid from the US Department of Education and will not affect registration status.
- Students must note if they lose their US loan eligibility they will be required to pay their fees via other methods. Any student not able to pay their fees, will be subject to the [University's Charging and Refunding Policy](#).
- Students that have exceeded the 150% time-limit on their programme cannot receive Financial Aid and cannot be reinstated at any point.
- Students must contact the Financial Aid Administrator to discuss any changes they are considering to their studies to understand the impact of their Financial Aid eligibility.