

# Satisfactory Academic Progress for Graduate Students

In order to maintain eligibility for financial aid, each graduate student at the University of Maine must meet the established guidelines for academic progress.

## WHAT IS A SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY?

Federal financial aid regulations require financial aid recipients to make progress toward earning their degree, stay above specific GPA minimums and to complete the degree within a maximum time frame. You can lose eligibility for aid if you are not doing well in your classes and/or frequently withdraw from classes and/or if it is taking you a very long time to earn your degree. If you are not meeting the minimum standards, even if you are allowed by The Graduate School to continue your enrollment, you will have to do so without benefit of financial aid.

## WHAT IF THERE ARE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Every student has the right to appeal if you believe that you have special circumstances which have impacted your academic progress. Submit your appeal using the SAP Appeal Form ([www.umaine.edu/stuaid/sap](http://www.umaine.edu/stuaid/sap)), along with the required supporting documentation, to the attention of the *Graduate Satisfactory Progress Appeal Committee*, Office of Student Financial Aid, 5781 Wingate Hall, Orono, ME, 04469-5781. The Office of Student Financial Aid will cancel aid for any student who does not appeal, or for whom an appeal is denied. If you have questions about this policy, contact the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#).

## WHAT IS EXPECTED?

Your progress is measured once each academic year, normally at the end of the spring semester. If you are not making satisfactory progress, *you will receive communication through your MaineStreet Message Center regarding the loss of your eligibility* for further financial aid effective the following semester or for the semester in which you have applied for aid. You must meet the following expectations:

### 1. Quantitative Standard — Successful Completion of Credit Hours Attempted

As a matriculated student, you are required to successfully complete a minimum specified percentage of the credits/hours that you attempt. The policy uses the following graduated scale:

<u>Attempted Credit Hours</u>	<u>Percentage Earned</u>
1–11	50%
12 and above	75%

### 2. Maximum Time Frame

The Graduate School will monitor this aspect of SAP in accordance with established Graduate School policies.

The maximum time frame allowed for you to complete your degree is defined as:

Master's Degree: All work for the degree must be completed within six years of matriculation.

Certificate of Advanced Study: All work for the degree must be completed within six years of matriculation.

Doctoral Degree: All work for a doctoral degree must be completed within eight years of matriculation.

### 3. Qualitative Standard — Cumulative Grade Point Average

As you progress toward degree completion you are required to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of a 2.67 or a "B minus."

*This measure is in addition to The Graduate School's academic performance requirements that are reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School and your academic advisor (please consult the Graduate Catalog for more information).*

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## ***How often will my progress be reviewed?***

Progress is measured once each academic year, normally at the end of the spring semester. This review includes all attempted coursework, even if you did not receive financial aid for some or all of that coursework.

## ***What can I do if I'm not meeting the SAP standards? Can I appeal this determination?***

Yes, you do have the right to appeal if you believe that you have special circumstances that caused undue hardship. You can complete the SAP Appeal Form; explain the circumstances that contributed to your situation; and provide documentation to support your appeal within two weeks of your SAP status notification. Send your appeal to the Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Committee in the Office of Student Financial Aid. You will receive a response to your appeal via the MaineStreet Message Center within 30 days of receipt of a complete appeal.

## ***How long do I have to submit an appeal?***

All appeals must be received within two weeks of your SAP status notification. No appeals will be accepted after 30 days prior to the end of the semester.

## ***If my appeal is approved, what happens next?***

You will be placed on **SAP probation** for the next enrollment term and are eligible for financial aid during that term. You may be given a plan with specific measures to meet during the probationary period. You will be reviewed again at the end of the probationary period. If you fail to meet SAP or fail to meet the measures prescribed in your plan, you will be suspended from receiving financial aid.

## ***If my financial aid eligibility is suspended, how can I regain eligibility?***

You can continue to enroll without the benefit of financial aid provided that the Graduate School allows your enrollment. If with additional coursework you believe you now meet the SAP policy, contact the Financial Aid Office and request a review of your record.

## ***Do I have any recourse if my appeal is denied?***

The decision of the SAP Appeals Committee is final. If you have additional new documentation concerning a hardship that was not available when your appeal was reviewed, you may contact the Office of Student Financial Aid to request your appeal be reconsidered. It is unlikely that the decision will be reconsidered or overturned without compelling new documentation.

## ***How are courses with incomplete, deferred and/or missing grades counted?***

All of these courses are counted as attempted, but not earned.

## ***What if I receive one of the following grades in a class: D, F, L or I?***

All of these courses are counted as attempted, but not earned.

## ***What happens if I take a class Pass/Fail?\****

These courses are not normally accepted for graduate degree credit, therefore all of these courses are counted as attempted, but not earned, unless the course grading basis allows only Pass/Fail grading. Project/thesis/dissertation credits graded with a P (Pass) count as earned within Graduate School policy.

## ***What if I receive a grade of "C" in a graduate class?\****

The credits will always count as attempted but will only count as earned if The Graduate School approves it as an exception.

## ***I am preparing a thesis as part of my degree requirements. How does an "R" grade count?***

The credit counts as attempted and earned each time.

## ***What happens if I audit a class?\****

Audited classes count as attempted but not earned.

## ***I repeated one of my courses in an effort to bring my GPA up. How is that course counted under this policy?***

When repeating a course, the credits count as attempted each time the course is taken; graduate grades are not evaluated out.

## ***What happens if I completely withdraw from all of my classes part way through the semester? What happens if I withdraw from just one of my courses? How are those courses counted?***

All of the courses for that semester from which you have withdrawn would be counted as attempted, but not earned.

## ***How are transfer credits from my prior school treated by this SAP policy?***

Transfer credits are counted as attempted and earned in the "Quantitative Measure." Updated 05/2016

\*Reference: General Policies and Regulations of the Graduate School, available in the Graduate Catalog