

## **Staffordshire University Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (For U.S. Federal Loan Borrowers)**

The U.S. Department of Education requires institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress for students receiving Federal Aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) means the student is proceeding in a positive manner toward fulfilling degree requirements. SAP includes two standards: qualitative and quantitative. Students must meet both standards to continue receiving financial aid.

Both the qualitative and quantitative SAP standards are reviewed at each progression point.

The Academic Award Regulations set out the University's procedures for monitoring the academic progression of those students that seek to access US Higher Education Act Title IV aid, and specifically the Federal Direct and PLUS loans. These guidelines apply to all students studying on Staffordshire University taught awards, including those undertaking undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes and those studying on a full-time or part-time basis.

Please note in addition to the following policy, all students will be subject to UK Visas and Immigration legislation and requirements.

The following policy is as strict (or can be stricter) than the standard assessment at the university for student who do not receive Direct Loan Funds.

This policy applies uniformly to students in a particular category equally, such as all undergraduate students.

Progress is measured cumulatively for both the Qualitative and Quantitative as described throughout the policy.

### **Qualitative**

To maintain eligibility for financial aid with the qualitative standard, a student must maintain the academic standing necessary to remain at Staffordshire University. A University Award Board will conduct a review at each progression point, to determine the student's successful progress toward obtaining a degree by comparing the modules passed and credits accumulated for the level of study.

### **Undergraduate**

Students must achieve at least an aggregate module mark of no less than 40% and accumulate 120 credits to complete the level of study. Student profiles are reviewed annually, at the normal progression point, to ensure that they have met the academic requirements to progress to the next level of study. Students may progress to the next level of study outstanding no more than 30 of the 120 credits. The outstanding 30 credits must be retrieved at the next assessment opportunity.

### **Postgraduate**

Students must pass each module and accumulate 180 credits to achieve their award. For full time students it is expected that this is within 1 calendar year and for part time students this is 2 calendar years. Further details are available in the Academic Award Regulations.

## **Other**

All students must maintain a level of academic progression as specified in the University's Academic Award Regulations. Students who fail to maintain sufficient academic progress may be given one opportunity to repeat the year. Failure to do so successfully will lead to the student's withdrawal from the University in line with policies and procedures outlined in the Academic Award Regulations. A student may appeal against the decision of the Award Board with reference to the Procedure for a Student to Appeal an Award Board Decision. If an academic appeal is upheld, the University will re-evaluate their financial aid status. Tier 4 visa students should be aware that visa policies may not be the same as SAP and/or University policies.

## **Quantitative**

### **Maximum Completion Timeframes and Pace of progression**

Eligible undergraduate students are entitled to receive financial aid for up to 150% of the published course length as measured in credits.

Example: Undergraduate degree program = 120 credits

Maximum Timeframe =  $150\% \times 120 \text{ credits} = 180 \text{ credits}$

Required Pace of progression =  $120 \text{ credits} \text{ divided by } 180 \text{ credits} = 0.666 \text{ rounded to } = .67 = 67\%$ .

Therefore, if a student completes 67% of the courses attempted, the degree will be completed prior to reaching the maximum timeframe allowed to receive Federal Aid.

Postgraduate students are required to complete their course of study within 150% of the standard timeframe for that programme. Postgraduate students enrolled in programs of more than two years in length must at the end of two years have achieved academic standing that will allow for completion within the maximum timeframe.

## **In General**

Students attending full time courses are not eligible for student aid if their enrolment is below 50% (less than half time).

## **SAP Evaluation Points**

Evaluation points fall at the end of each academic year. For students on courses of study lasting one year or less, that is typically in January and April of the year of study. For students who are required to re-sit a failed unit, there will be a further evaluation point at the end of the resubmission period and prior to the first disbursement for the new academic year.

Students will only be notified of the outcome if they have not met SAP requirements. In this instance, students will be notified in writing by the International Student Support Manager.

## **Appeals and Financial Aid Probation**

Students may appeal their failure to meet SAP requirements by submitting a written letter of appeal in accordance with the appeals policy and procedure found in the university regulations: <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/policies/award-board-student-appeal.jsp> . The appeal must show, a) that there has been a material error or irregularity, for example that examinations or assessments were not conducted in accordance with the current regulations of the award; or (b) that the student's performance was adversely affected by injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances, to declare in accordance with the provisions of the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure.

Details with regard to the University's Exceptional Circumstances Procedure can be found here: <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/policies/#generalregs>

The appeal must explain what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to achieve SAP at the next evaluation.

If the appeal is successful, the student will then enter Student Loan Probation status.

### **Student Loan Probation Status**

Students who successfully appeal a failure to make SAP are placed on Student Loan Probation for the subsequent payment period at the end of which SAP will be evaluated. If the student has not made SAP, the student will lose eligibility unless they have entered into an acceptable academic plan with the University.

For students who are repeating a unit, student loans can be received during the period of probation for one payment period. Further student loan disbursements will be held until the marks or grades and module completions have been reviewed for the period of the Student Loan Probation. If the student passes the required module(s) they will resume normal financial aid status and will no longer be on Student Loan Probation.

The student and the University may develop an academic plan that will allow the student to meet the SAP standards by a specific point in time. If the student needs more than a single payment period to return to a good SAP standing, the student can continue to receive FSA if he/she follows the academic plan.

A student on an academic plan will have modified SAP requirements for the duration of the plan. If the student fails to meet the terms of the academic plan, the student is not eligible for federal financial aid.

SAP will continue to be checked at the end of each payment period while the student is on an academic plan until the student is again making SAP.

### **Student Loan Denied Status**

Students failing to satisfy the minimum requirement of passing all failed modules and successfully progressing, after a repeat year of study, will be considered as academic failure leading to withdrawal from the course and will not be eligible for Direct Loans.

### **Withdrawals, Transfers, Interruptions, Repeat or Fails within SAP Standards**

Normally, all periods of a student's enrolment count when assessing progress, even when the student did not receive federal student loans. Some examples of changes to enrolment and how these impact the measurement of SAP are outlined below.

## **Withdrawal or Non-completion**

Withdrawal or non-completion of a course does not count towards SAP qualitative measurement in another course but will affect the quantitative evaluation – maximum timeframe allowed and pace of progression. At the end of each academic year the Award Board will consider whether the student has achieved sufficient credit to progress to the next stage of their course or will be offered the opportunity to retrieve any failed credit or repeat the year. The regulations which apply are the <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/policies/Acadregs.jsp>

Students achieve credit by passing a module. For undergraduate modules a module is normally passed if the student achieves an overall score of 40% and for postgraduate modules a student must normally achieve an overall score of 50%.

If the student submits late, an assessment will be given a mark of zero for that assessment opportunity. However, providing the submission is made prior to the release of unratified marks, the assessment will be marked as if for the next assessment opportunity. The submission will be capped at 40% for undergraduate courses and 50% for postgraduate courses. If no reassessment opportunity exists, the student will have failed the assessment.

## **Transfer Students**

Transfer students' transcripts will be evaluated by the Course Leader. Any modules which can be used in advance standing on a new course will be accepted and will be used to measure the quantitative SAP requirement (150% timeframe). Module credit accepted in advanced standing in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy will not contribute towards the degree classification.

## **Internal Transfer of Degree**

Students who decide to change their degree course will be evaluated similarly to transfer students with the exception that the credits previously earned at Staffordshire University will be used to measure the qualitative requirements if the module credit can contribute towards the new course.

## **Reassessment or partial repeat due to academic failure**

Students who achieve a passing grade may not repeat a module. Students who fail a module must submit work for reassessment within the academic year. Failure to successfully complete a re-assessment, within the academic year, will require the student to repeat study. Students have only one opportunity to repeat study and details of reassessment and opportunity for partial or full repeat study are found in the Academic Award Regulations. There are no non-credit remedial courses.

Successfully repeated courses will count toward maximum timeframe and qualitative assessment.

## **Additional Degrees**

Students who have completed a degree and wish to pursue another degree must apply for admission to that course as would any other applicant and meet the admission requirements for the new course. Federal loan eligibility will be limited to the aggregate program maximums under Federal Regulations.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions regarding the Academic Award Regulations, please contact the Registrar at Staffordshire University.