

# Policy: US Federal Student aid (direct loan program) satisfactory academic progress

## Purpose

To set out the satisfactory academic progress requirements for students receiving US Federal Aid (Federal Aid) to continue to receive Federal Aid.

## Overview

This policy outlines:

- \* Progress Requirements for Coursework and Graduate Research Students to continue eligibility for Federal Aid;
- \* Federal Aid Warning, Probation and Suspension for Unsatisfactory Progress; and
- \* Re-establishing Academic Good Standing for Federal Aid after an unsuccessful appeal.

## Scope

This policy applies only to students receiving Federal Aid.

## Policy statement

1. The University complies with US Federal Law (34CFR 668.16, 34CFR 668.32 and 34CFR 668.34) requiring it to define and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving Federal Aid.
2. This policy is read in conjunction with the [ANU Academic Progress Rule](#), [Coursework Awards Rule](#), and [Research Award Rule](#).
3. This policy is stricter than the University's Academic Progress Rule.
4. Students on US Financial Aid are required to be enrolled at least half-time, constituting 12 units of enrolment or more in a study period, to maintain US Financial Aid eligibility.

5. To remain eligible to receive Federal Aid, eligible students, including students who are not currently receiving direct loans, meet the US Federal Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements (SAP).
6. Students receiving Federal Aid have their SAP evaluated at the end of each study period. This evaluation process considers the student's progress under both academic standing (grade point average) and completion within the maximum timeframe (pace).
7. In order to receive US Federal funds, students meet minimum standards for both components of SAP, whilst simultaneously adhering to the University's Academic Progress Rule, in the case of international students, the ESOS Act 2000, National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code), and the Migration Regulations 1994. Where there is difference between requirements across legislation, the stricter requirement takes priority.
8. This means that where this policy may allow students to continue to be eligible to receive Federal Aid, the University Academic Progress Rule and Australian student visa restrictions may impact on the students' ability to continue with the program.
9. This also means that where students are not eligible to continue with Federal Aid, this does not, in and of itself, prevent them from continuing in their program.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements for Undergraduate and Graduate Coursework Students to continue eligibility for Federal Aid**

### *Academic Standing (GPA)*

10. Students receiving Federal Aid maintain at least a cumulative Pass in each study period (an average GPA of 4.0 or greater on a 7-point scale across all courses attempted in each study period) throughout their program.
11. Grades that are included in this calculation are:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>	<b>Australian 7 Point Scale</b>
HD & H1	80-100%	7.0
D & H2A	70-79%	6.0

C & H2B	60-69%	5.0
P & H3	50-59%	4.0
PS	50%	4.0
N/ NCN (0-49%)	0-49%	0.0

*Maximum Timeframe (Pace)*

12. Students complete their program within 150% of the published program duration. To achieve this, students pass at least two-thirds of the standard full-time load for the session/semester they have studied. A standard full-time load is 24 units in each study period (January-June and July-December). This means passing at least 18 units of a 24 unit load in a study period.
13. For example: a 3-year Undergraduate Degree consisting of 144 units must be completed without attempting any more than 216 units or exceeding 4.5 years duration.
14. All studies are included in this calculation, including withdrawals and incomplete grades.
15. Periods of enrolment during which a student does not receive Federal Aid are counted toward the maximum timeframe for completion.
16. Pursuit of a second degree resets the maximum timeframe for completion to the length of the new degree, taking into account any credit as per below.

*Credit from Previous Studies*

17. Where a student has been awarded credit that will shorten the duration of their studies, US Federal Law (34 CFR 668.34) requires the student to complete the program within 150% of the revised course duration. This is the revised maximum timeframe for completion.

### *Withdrawal / Course Drop*

18. Under Australian Government legislation Student Visa holders are expected to complete their program within the timeframe given on their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).
19. Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for Federal Aid if it means that they will not complete their program within the maximum timeframe for completion.
20. Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for Federal Aid if it means that they are not enrolled in at least 50% load for that study period.
21. Students approved to reduce their study load in one or more semesters are required to complete their program requirements within 150% of the published duration of their program to remain eligible to receive Federal Aid.

### *Incomplete Grades*

22. Incomplete grades (DA, PX, RP, KU, WF, WA) are included in the calculation of the maximum timeframe, however they are not included in the calculation of academic standing until such time as a grade is awarded. Any outstanding grades are finalised within six months of the incomplete grade being awarded.

### *Repeating*

23. A Federal Aid student may repeat a course as per the ANU Academic Progress Rule so long as they are not in breach of this policy. The repeated course is counted in the maximum timeframe calculations.

### **Progress Requirements for Postgraduate Research Students to continue eligibility for Federal Aid**

24. The University's Financial Aid Administrator (FAA) monitors milestones for research students to ensure they are on track to complete within 150% of the standard program duration.
25. If the student's milestones are not complete the College informs the FAA of whether the student is progressing satisfactorily.

### **Financial Aid Warning, Probation and Suspension for Unsatisfactory Progress**

### *Financial Aid Warning*

26. Students identified as at risk of not meeting SAP are notified in writing that they have been placed on Financial Aid Warning for the following payment period (one study period).
27. During the financial aid warning period, students continue to be eligible for Federal Aid.
28. If Satisfactory Academic Progress is maintained during the Financial Aid Warning period, students remain eligible for aid and the Financial Aid Warning is removed at the end of the Financial Aid Warning period.
29. If Satisfactory Academic Progress is not maintained during the Financial Aid Warning period, students are informed in writing that their next scheduled disbursement has been/will be suspended and that they are not eligible for Federal Aid until the required progress is achieved (see Re-establishing Federal Aid Eligibility below).

### *Appeals*

30. Students deemed ineligible for Federal Aid under this policy may appeal the decision. Federal Aid Regulation (34 CFR 668.34) permits appeals when the failure to make satisfactory academic program is caused by:
  - a. death of a relative
  - b. illness or injury to the student
  - c. other special circumstances.
31. The University defines death of a relative as death of an immediate family member that is a parent, sibling, guardian, grandparent, dependent child, spouse, aunt or uncle.
32. In the context of this policy, the University defines 'other special circumstances' as circumstances that are beyond the control of the student that significantly and negatively impacted the student's ability to progress academically.
33. In the context of this policy, the University defines illness or injury to the student as illness or injury that significantly impacted upon the student's ability to progress academically and lasted for a duration of greater than 10 working days and where special examination arrangements were not applied to a student's enrolment.
34. The University defines special examination arrangements in this context as including an Educational Access Plan developed by the Access and Inclusion

Office, special assessment consideration, deferred examinations, and special exams.

35. Appeals are submitted in writing within 20 working days of the notification of suspension being issued, and include a statement of the circumstances and supporting documentation.
36. Appeals contain a statement from the student with the following information as per the US Federal Regulations (34 CFR 668.34):
  - a. Why they have failed to meet the SAP requirements?
  - b. What has now changed to allow them to meet the SAP requirements at the next evaluation?
37. The appeal contains documentary evidence of any claims made in the statement.
38. Appeals are submitted to [policy.reqs@anu.edu.au](mailto:policy.reqs@anu.edu.au) or to:
  - US Financial Aid Director
  - Academic Standards & Quality Office
  - Division of Student Administration and Academic Services
  - Di Riddell Student Centre
  - Building 154 University Avenue
  - The Australian National University
  - Canberra ACT 2601
39. The appeal outcome is communicated to the student in writing.
40. The decision of the Financial Aid Director is final.

### *Financial Aid Probation*

41. A student who successfully appeals the SAP outcome, is placed on Financial Aid Probation for one payment period (one semester).
42. Probation will not be automatically awarded to a student and is only available if a student appeals and the appeal is successful.
43. As part of Financial Aid Probation, the University may place the student on an academic plan. Academic plans involve strategies to assist the student to successfully complete their degree, which may include but not be limited to the following:
  - a. Meeting with Academic Skills and Learning Centre
  - b. Meeting with Academic Advisor

- c. Development of a study plan and/or timetable
- d. Reduction of study load for one semester

44. At the end of the probation period the student must meet the SAP, and/or Academic Plan requirements if the student is subject to an Academic Plan, to maintain eligibility for Federal Aid.

45. If the student has not met the requirements they are ineligible for Federal Aid.

*Re-establishing Academic Good Standing for Federal Aid after an unsuccessful appeal*

46. Students deemed ineligible for Federal Aid due to failing to meet SAP are able to re-establish eligibility for Federal Aid. This will be established by:

- a. Successfully completing one year at 100% load with a pass in each subject; and
- b. Obtaining an overall GPA of 4.0 or higher across all studies in the program; and
- c. Being on track for completion of program within the maximum time frame of 150% of the standard duration of the program as set out in clauses 12 - 23.

## Document information

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