

# **U.S. Federal Student Aid**

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY**

### **TITLE:**

U.S. Federal Student Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

### **POLICY:**

Students in receipt of U.S. Federal Student Aid must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their enrolled programme of study to remain eligible for U.S. Federal Aid loans. U.S. Federal regulation (34CFR 668.16) requires Massey University to check that all U.S. Federal Aid loan recipients meet the minimum SAP requirement at regular intervals.

#### **1. Overview:**

Students receiving financial assistance will have their academic status reviewed at the end of each semester. This SAP review process will consider all students progress under the following categories:

- Measurement of Academic Progress / Performance
- Maximum Time Frame allowed for completing the academic programme
- Pace of Completion

In order to receive U.S. Federal Student Aid, students must meet minimum standards for both the above mentioned components, whilst simultaneously adhering to Massey University's academic progress rules and to Immigration New Zealand requirements. Students whose academic progress is unsatisfactory will be subject to the Massey University Unsatisfactory Academic Progress regulations as stated in the University Calendar and may not meet Immigration New Zealand requirements for visa renewal.

The U.S. Federal Student Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy does not replace the Massey Academic Progress Regulations.

#### **2. Measurement of Academic Progress / Performance**

- **New Undergraduate Students:** Academic progress for new students will be measured after the completion of their second semester and prior to the next term's disbursement. To maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, students must achieve a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.0, which is equivalent to a "C" grade for the duration of their studies.
- **Existing Undergraduate Students:** (enrolled in years 2 - 5): Academic progress of existing students will be measured after the completion of each semester and prior to the next term's disbursement. Students must achieve a minimum GPA of at least 2.0 ("C" grade) to maintain SAP.

Students enrolled in academic programmes, which are longer than two years, must

achieve a minimum GPA of at least 2.0 at the end of their second academic year.

- **Postgraduate Research Students:** PhD students are required to meet milestone reports as set by the Graduate Research School. PhD supervisors are required to confirm if PhD students are reaching the set milestone at the end of each semester and prior to the next terms disbursement.

GPA values for Grades are as follows:

Pass/Credit Received	Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	R
	Points	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Fail/No Credit Received	Grade		D	E	F	FT	DNC	DNS		
	Points		0	0	0	0	0	0		

The following table shows how the Massey University GPA is calculated:

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{Sum (Credit completed x GPA value of grade)}}{\text{Total Credit completed or attempted}}$$

Grades of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, P, R will be counted towards grades earned. Grades attempted will include the above as well as the grades of F, FT, D, E, and DNC/DNS. Grades of WD will not be counted towards grades earned or attempted.

### 3. Maximum Time Frame Allowed

The maximum timeframe in which a student can receive Federal Student Aid cannot exceed 150% of the degree programme in which they are enrolled.

- 2 year degree - eligible for aid for 3 years or 6 semesters
- 3 year degree - eligible for aid for 4.5 years or 9 semesters
- 4 year degree - eligible for aid for 6 years or 12 semesters
- 5 year degree - eligible for aid for 7.5 years or 15 semesters

Students who have reached the maximum time allowed, based on 150% of the published duration of their course, will have their financial assistance suspended in accordance with U.S. Federal Student Aid Regulations.

Previous study will be taken into account in determining the maximum allowable time to complete the course when a student changes undergraduate programs prior to completion. Cross credits will count toward the maximum time frame.

Example: 120 credits x 150% = 180 attempted credits is the Maximum Time Frame

### 4. Pace of Completion

To remain eligible for financial aid, all students must successfully complete (earn) a minimum of **67%** of the total cumulative hours attempted. Attempted credit hours include all credits attempted at Massey University as well as those credits that were accepted as transfer credits. Pace of completion is determined by dividing the total number of credit hours earned (successfully completed) by the total number of credit hours attempted.

Example: 120 credits/180 credits = 66.67 (usually rounded to 67%) is the pace of completion

## 5. Transfer Credits

Transfer credits that are accepted toward the student's academic program count in the overall maximum time frame calculation and in the cumulative completion (pace) calculation. Transfer credits have no effect upon the cumulative grade point average.

## 6. Incomplete Grades

Incomplete show as an "NF" and will not show a grade until the coursework is completed and is not included in a student's GPA until either a grade or a DNC/WD is assigned.

## 7. Withdrawals

Grades of WD or withdrawn will not counted towards grades earned or attempted.

## 8. Repeating Coursework

When a course is repeated is counts towards the Maximum Time Frame allowed for the programme.

When a course is repeated, both the original course grade and the repeated course grade will count towards the student's cumulative GPA

## 9. Financial Aid Warning / Suspension

Students will be assessed to determine if they are eligible for continued financial aid at the end of each semester and prior the next semester's disbursement. The International Financial Aid Team will:

- Check the Massey Student Management System to determine the GPA of each student at the end of the semester
- Check the Academic Standing on the Massey Student Management System to determine if the student is still progressing as per Massey University requirements.
- Check that the student is still within the 150% time frame of the published length of the student's programme.
- Check to determine if the student is meeting the Pace of Completion requirement.

Students meeting the minimum SAP requirements will continue to have access to U.S. Student Financial Aid.

Students not maintaining the minimum SAP requirements at the end of a semester will be informed by the International Financial Aid Team via email that they have been placed on a Financial Aid Warning status for the next semester. Students may receive financial aid assistance during the semester they are on a Financial Aid Warning status.

Students, who fail to meet the minimum SAP requirements at the end of the warning semester, will lose their US Federal Aid (Title IV) eligibility, but will have the opportunity to appeal their Financial Aid Warning status, as per the process outlined under Appeals below.

Students with unsuccessful Appeals will be **suspended** and will not have access to Federal Student Aid.

Suspended students, who complete an academic period successfully, without receiving financial assistance, and who meet the SAP requirements, will regain eligibility to receive U.S. Federal Student Aid.

The University will notify students in writing, via email and a letter, within 31 business days of final grades being released if a student:

- Has been placed on a Financial Aid Warning status, or
- Has been suspended

## 10. Appeals

Students with extenuating circumstances and who have been placed on Financial Aid Warning status or have had their US Financial Aid suspended may appeal the decision. In the extenuating situation when a student appeals and if the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on a Financial Aid Probation. If it is required an academic plan may be created. Financial Aid Probation will only last one payment period. Upon completion of the timeframe, if the student meets the requirement, they will continue to receive US Financial Aid else, they will lose eligibility.

Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Death of a relative
- Illness or injury of the student
- Illness of an immediate family member
- Victim of natural disaster

All appeals must be submitted in writing within 15 business days following receipt of a suspension email to the Senior Advisor, International Financial Aid, Office of Global Engagement and must contain the following:

- Written statement indicating the reasons why an appeal is requested and supporting evidence, such as:
  - death certificate
  - medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner
  - written statement from an academic or programme supervisor

The appeal will be considered by the Manager Global Engagement. Disbursements of funds will not be made while an appeal is being processed. The student shall be notified of the result via email within 15 business days. The appeal decision is final.

### AUDIENCE:

All students applying for or receiving U.S. Federal Student Aid  
Finance staff  
Federal Aid Administrators and International Office Staff

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

U.S. Amended *Higher Education Act* 1965.  
U.S. Federal Regulations Title 34, 668 (Student Assistance General Regulations) and 685 (William D Ford Direct Loan Programme)

### LEGAL COMPLIANCE:

Universities accredited to administer U.S. Federal Student Aid are required to comply with U.S. Federal Regulations.

### RELATED PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS:

MU FSA Loan Disbursement Policy  
MU FSA Return of Title IV Policy  
MU FSA Cost of Attendance Policy  
MU Academic Programme Regulations  
Student Fee Policy  
General Terms and Conditions

### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT & CONTROL

Reviewed by	:	Amy Odom
Authorised By	:	Katie Harris
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