

# 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

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 regulation as stated in the University Calendar and may not meet Immigration New Zealand requirements for visa renewal.

The U.S. Federal Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy is not a replacement of 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:

<b>Pass/ Credit Received</b>	<b>Grade</b>	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	R
	<b>Points</b>	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Fail/ No Credit Received</b>	<b>Grade</b>		D	E	F	FT	DNC	DNS		
	<b>Points</b>		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 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 towards the maximum timeframe.

### 4. 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 Compliance Team will:

- Check the Massey Student Management System to determine the GPA of each student at the end of the semester.

- Check the Massey Student Management System to determine the GPA of each student cumulatively over the duration of their studies.
- 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% timeframe of the published length of their programme.

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

Students not maintaining the minimum SAP requirements at the end of a semester will be informed by the Compliance 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 that 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 be placed on a Financial Aid **Probation status**. During this status students will not have access to financial aid funds, but will have the opportunity to appeal their probation status, as per the process outlined under Appeals below.

Students with unsuccessful Appeals will be **suspended** and will not have access to financial aid.

Suspended students, who complete an academic period successfully, without receiving financial assistance, and who meet the satisfactory academic progress 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 they:

- Have been placed on a Financial Aid Warning status, or
- Have been placed under Financial Aid Probation status, or
- Have been suspended

## 5. Appeals

Students with extenuating circumstances and who have been placed on probation may appeal the probation decision. Examples of extenuating circumstances include:

- 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, Policy and Compliance, Office of Global Engagement, Courtyard Complex, Palmerston North and must contain the following:

- Written statement indicating the reasons why an appeal is requested
- 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 Student Mobility, Massey University. The student shall be notified of the result via email within 15 business days. The appeal

decision is final.

Disbursements of funds will not be made while an appeal is being processed.

#### **AUDIENCE:**

All students applying for or receiving U.S. Federal Student Aid  
Finance staff  
Federal Aid Administrators and International Office Staff  
Pastoral Care 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	:	Greg Huff
Date Reviewed	:	24 October 2019
Review Requirement	:	Annually