

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)



11 PURPOSE

This document sets out the US financial aid satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements for students enrolled at Victoria University of Wellington (the University) receiving US financial aid. To be eligible for US federal aid funds, a student must make satisfactory academic progress, and the following outlines the procedures and processes in place for monitoring progress.

12 OVERVIEW

Victoria University of Wellington is required by US law 34 CFR 668.34 to ensure all US Federal Student Aid funded students enrolled at the University meet SAP requirements, both quantitative and qualitative, for their academic programme.

For the purposes of US financial aid, this document refers to semesters, as defined as March-June; and July-November. Some programmes include courses over the summer period from November to February.

The document should be read in conjunction with, and complements, the University's institutional Academic Progress Statute. For more information on this Statute, see: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress>

13 GRADES AND PACE OF COMPLETION

Students receiving US federal aid funds will have their academic progress assessed at the end of each payment period (semester). The assessment will consider the following:

- **ACADEMIC STANDING**
Satisfactory grade point average (Qualitative component)
- **MAXIMUM TIMEFRAME and PACE**
Timeframe eligibility for degree completion (Quantitative components)

For students to remain eligible, they must meet the minimum requirements for the above-mentioned components, as well as the Victoria University of Wellington Academic Progress Statute and Immigration New Zealand visa legislation.

Any study completed at Victoria University of Wellington while not receiving US federal loans will also be included in determining SAP.

13.1 ACADEMIC STANDING (QUALITATIVE COMPONENT)

First-year undergraduate study: Students must maintain at least a GPA of 2.0 (C average or above) after the completion of each semester and cumulatively of the student's first academic year.

Subsequent years of undergraduate study: Students must maintain at least a GPA of 2.0 (C average or above) after the completion of each semester and cumulatively over the student's programme of study. Students enrolled in academic programmes, which are longer than two years, must achieve a minimum GPA of at least 2.0 (C average or above) at their second academic year.

Postgraduate study by coursework: Students must maintain at least a GPA of 2.0 (C average or above) after the completion of each semester.

The equation below shows how the grade point average (GPA) is calculated.

$$GPA = \frac{\text{Sum (Points completed X Point value of the grade)}}{\text{Total points completed}}$$

PASS GRADES

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
Point Value	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

OTHER PASS GRADES

P = Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)

G = Aegrotat Pass

J = Pass in recognition of prior learning

L = Compensation Pass

Z = Special Pass

FAIL GRADES

Grade	D+	D	D-	E
Point Value	0	0	0	0

OTHER GRADES

F = Fail (for a course classified as Pass/Fail; also used for an unsuccessful Special Pass application). Point value is zero.
K = Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements (incomplete), even though the student's course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50 percent. Point value is zero.

U = Withdrawal approved by Dean. Point value is zero.
WD = Withdrawal during permitted period. Point value is zero.

Please refer to <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades> for further details.

Postgraduate by Research only:

Please note that a GPA is not qualitative measure during research programmes at Victoria University of Wellington, only a final grade is received once the research programme is completed, so a comparable measure is in place. See below:

Master's by thesis: Master's students are required to meet milestone reports as set by the Faculty. Master's supervisors will be required to confirm that a student is at satisfactory progress at the end of each semester and prior to the next term's disbursement.

Doctoral (PhD): PhD students are required to meet milestone reports as set by the Faculty of Graduate Research. PhD supervisors will be required to confirm that a PhD student is at satisfactory progress at the end of each semester and prior to the next term's disbursement.

132 MAXIMUM TIMEFRAME OF COMPLETION (QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT)

For the purposes of US financial aid, the maximum timeframe in which a student borrower may receive federal loan funds cannot exceed 150% of the minimum length of programme.

To achieve this, student borrowers must pass two-thirds (66%) of the standard full-time load for the semester they have studied. A standard full-time load is 60 points in each teaching semester (March to June and July to November). To clarify, this means passing 40 points of a 60 points per semester.

A student is ineligible for US federal loan funds when it is determined impossible for the student to complete the programme within 150% of its length for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Example:

A 3-year Undergraduate Degree must be completed within 4.5 years. Students who exceed 150% will no longer be eligible for US federal aid funds in accordance with US regulations.

A 1-year Postgraduate-taught Degree must be completed within 1.5 years. Students who are on track to exceed 150% will no longer be eligible for US federal aid funds from the point this is determined, in accordance with US regulations.

133 PACE OF COMPLETION (QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT)

In addition, a student borrower cannot attempt more than 150% of the minimum number of points required to complete the programme as a full-time student. To achieve this, students must pass two-thirds (66% or 40 points) of the standard full-time (60 points) load for the semester they have studied. Pace of completion is cumulative (as is GPA).

Example:

An Undergraduate Degree consisting of 360 points must be completed without attempting any more than 540 points. Students who exceed 150% will no longer be eligible for US federal aid funds in accordance with US regulations.

A Postgraduate-taught Degree consisting of 180 points must be completed without attempting any more than 240 points. Students who are on track to exceed 150% will no longer be eligible for US federal aid funds from the point this is determined, in accordance with US regulations.

14 TRANSFER OF CREDITS AND REPEAT COURSES

Credits *completed and awarded* from previous study and that count towards the programme at Victoria University of Wellington are included in the SAP assessment of maximum timeframe and pace of completion. The length of time that the student has credited to Victoria University of Wellington will count towards maximum timeframe; and the points waived due to the credits from the other institution are counted as part of the total allowed points for pace. Courses credited that do not count towards the programme at the University will not be included in the SAP assessment. The credited courses from another institution will not count towards the cumulative GPA component.

Students who transfer within the University to a new academic programme and/or major will have the transferred credit count towards the cumulative GPA, timeframe, and pace components. Students will also carry forward any US federal aid-related warning, probation, or suspension status into the new academic programme.

141 **INCOMPLETES AND WITHDRAWALS**

Incomplete grades and withdrawals (U, WD, K) are included in the calculation of the maximum timeframe and pace of completion; however, they are not included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA until a grade is awarded.

Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for US Financial Aid if it means that they will not complete their programme within the maximum allowed timeframe and pace of completion components. Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for US Financial Aid if it means that they are not enrolled at least half time (30 points) for that semester. Students who have received Faculty approval to reduce their course load in one or more semesters are required to meet SAP to remain eligible to receive US Financial Aid.

142 **REPETITIONS (REPEAT COURSES DUE TO FAILED GRADE)**

Courses previously awarded US federal aid loans may be eligible for further aid. To be considered for funding, a student must a) have met SAP; b) the course was completed but a passing grade was not achieved; and c) the course or courses are required for degree completion. A course may only be repeated once for US federal loan funding purposes. All courses will count towards cumulative GPA, timeframe, and pace components.

143 **NON-CREDIT REMEDIAL COURSES**

These courses are not eligible for US federal loans and therefore do not count towards SAP eligibility.

15 **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS ASSESSMENT**

At the end of each payment period (semester) and prior to the next disbursement, SAP will be assessed for both the quantitative and qualitative components. The Financial Aid Coordinator at Wellington University International will complete the following:

- Review the academic record available through Student Records to determine the student borrower's semester and cumulative GPA
- Contact postgraduate supervisors, where applicable, for their written comments on their postgraduate research student's progress prior to the next disbursement
- Determine the student borrowers' progress against the maximum timeframe requirements
- Determine the student borrowers' progress against the pace of completion requirements.

Students maintaining the minimum SAP requirements will continue to have access to financial aid.

16 **US FINANCIAL AID WARNING**

As the University assesses SAP at the end of each payment period, student borrowers who do not meet SAP will be placed on a financial aid warning for the subsequent payment period (semester), during which the student borrower may continue to receive federal loan funds.

17 **APPEALS, PROBATION, AND SUSPENSION OF US FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY**

Student borrowers who fail to make satisfactory progress after the warning period lose their US federal aid eligibility, unless they successfully appeal.

17.1 **APPEAL PROCESS**

Students who lose US federal aid eligibility because they failed to make satisfactory progress after the warning period may appeal based on: injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other extenuating circumstance, such as a natural disaster.

Appeals must be formally requested in writing by the student borrower to the Financial Aid Coordinator at Wellington University International within 10 working days from the date of being notified of the loss of eligibility. Appeals must contain the following:

- Written statement, explaining why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress and what has changed in their situation that will allow them to make satisfactory progress at the next evaluation
- Supporting evidence, for example:
 - o Copy of death certificate
 - o Medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner
 - o Student's degree planner
 - o Written comments from Faculty Advisor, Associate Dean, and/or postgraduate supervisor.

Appeal documentation must be sent to:

Financial Aid Coordinator
Wellington University International
Level 2, Easterfield Building
Kelburn Campus
Phone: 04 463 5350
Email: financial-aid@vuw.ac.nz

Appeals will be considered by Wellington University International - specifically the Associate Director, International Recruitment and Business Development and Deputy Director, International.

Notification of the decision will be sent to the student's preferred email address within 10 working days from receipt of the appeal documentation. The appeal decision is final.

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

If Wellington University International determines that the student should be able to meet the SAP standards, and the appeal is successful, the student will be placed on probation.

Students with an unsuccessful appeal will be suspended for US financial aid purposes from receiving further federal loan funds until SAP has been re-established.

172 US FINANCIAL AID PROBATION FOLLOWING A SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

For a student who is on probation for US financial aid purposes, the Financial Aid Coordinator will review the student's progress at the end of that payment period (semester), as probation status is for one payment period only without an academic reinstatement plan (US financial aid purposes).

A student may be placed on probation for one payment period per appeal. At the end of the probation period, the student must meet SAP or will be suspended from receiving further US federal aid funds until eligibility is re-established.

If the University determines, based on the appeal, that the student will require more than one payment period to meet progress standards, the student will be placed on probation and an academic reinstatement plan (for US financial aid eligibility purposes) will be developed for the student, in collaboration between the student, Wellington University International, and the Faculty. The plan developed must ensure that the student is able to meet the University's satisfactory progress standards by a specific time or through to successful degree completion.

The Financial Aid Coordinator will review the student's progress at the end of one payment period, to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic reinstatement plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic reinstatement plan (or the SAP requirements, outside of any individualized academic reinstatement plan), the student is eligible to receive US federal aid if the student continues to meet those requirements.

18 NOTIFICATION

If the SAP requirements have not been met, the Financial Aid Coordinator will notify the student borrower by email, sent to the student's preferred email address, within 14 working days of final grades being released, and inform if they have been:

- Placed on Financial Aid Warning, or
- Placed on Financial Aid Probation status, or
- Suspended to receive further US federal aid.

19 RE-ESTABLISHING US FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

Student borrowers deemed ineligible for US Financial Aid due to failing to meet SAP can re-establish eligibility for US Financial Aid. This will be established by:

- a. Obtaining a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above; and
- b. On track for completion of programme within the maximum timeframe and pace components.

A student who believes they have regained US federal loan eligibility must submit the following documentation before eligibility can be determined:

- Current Student Aid Report (ISIR)
- Completion of online Master Promissory Note (MPN)
- Completed Victoria University of Wellington Financial Aid Application

Upon receipt of the above documentation, the Financial Aid Coordinator at Wellington University International will assess the application, check the SAP components, and notify students within 10 working days, in writing to the student's preferred email address, of their eligibility status.

CONTACT US

For any enquiries about US financial aid at Victoria University of Wellington, please email financial-aid@vuw.ac.nz

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