

Case Western Reserve University
School of Graduate Studies
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Federal regulations (General Provision CFR 668.34) require that students at Case Western Reserve University maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress to retain eligibility for Federal aid. Institutional aid (stipends, tuition assistance, etc.) is determined by the individual departments or programs. Graduate Studies staff reviews the academic progress of all students who apply for and/or receive financial assistance at the end of each term of enrollment, including summer session. Satisfactory academic progress comprises three components: a student must complete the degree within a specified period (maximum time frame); earn a minimum number of credit hours each term of attempted enrollment (quantitative requirement) and achieve a grade point average that is consistent with graduation requirements (qualitative requirement). These standards apply to all financial aid applicants, whether a previous aid recipient or not.

This policy on satisfactory academic progress relates to graduate students who apply for and/or receive Federal financial aid.

Financial Aid Programs

Federal Programs

Federal Work Study
Unsubsidized Direct Loans
Graduate PLUS Loan

Evaluation Criteria

Courses with grades of “F” (failure), “I” (incomplete), “NP” (no pass), “U” (unsatisfactory) “W” (withdrawal), and “WD” (withdrawal from all classes) are counted as courses attempted but not earned and count toward the maximum time frame. Transfer credit hours (accepted for the student’s academic program or degree) are counted as credit hours attempted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree but do not impact the cumulative grade point average. Any term in which a student has enrolled and earned zero credit hours, will be included in the evaluation of hours attempted and hours earned for completion rate. All instances of repeated coursework will be factored into the calculation of the completion rate. Courses graded on a Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis will be included in the calculation of completion rate and grade point average. Financial assistance is not offered for audited courses or classes taken as a Fellowship Course and those hours will not be considered in the Satisfactory Academic Progress review.

The University Financial Aid Office will NOT automatically adjust a student’s Satisfactory Academic Progress status when grades are changed, but the office will review upon request from the student. The grades must be available in the Student Information System before the

review will be conducted. For any grade change (for example a prior Incomplete grade has been assigned a traditional letter grade), the student is responsible for notifying the University Office of Financial Aid of such a change and requesting a review of the Satisfactory Academic Progress evaluation. This review is not an appeal and may not result in eligibility for additional student assistance.

Maximum Time Frame

A student must complete his/her degree within 150% of the published length of the program. This means that the student's attempted hours at Case Western Reserve University and accepted transfer credit hours cannot exceed 150% of the credit hours required for completion of the degree sought at CWRU. The maximum time frame is measured in semesters. There are no appeals to the maximum time frame requirement. For dual degree or combined degree candidates the maximum time frame is based on the published program length associated for the combined program or degrees. Adjustments to the maximum time frame will be adjusted for part time students.

Credits counted in the maximum time frame include all attempted credits, including those taken during terms when the student is not receiving financial assistance. Attempted credits include earned credits, all attempts of repeated courses, all withdrawals, all failures, all incompletes, and all accepted transfer credits, including consortium agreement, education abroad, and cross-registration courses counted toward the degree.

Completion Rate

Satisfactory academic progress requires a graduate student to successfully complete at least 67% of the credit hours attempted with a term grade point average at least 2.75 for a master's degree, 3.00 for a PhD, or the standards established by their department or program to demonstrate steady progress toward degree completion. Accepted transfer hours are calculated as hours successfully attempted and completed.

Grade Point Average and Academic Standing

Students academically separated from the University are automatically not meeting the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Otherwise, a student's grade point average must be at least 2.75 for a master's degree, 3.00 for a PhD or the standards established by their department or program, after each term of attempted enrollment. Transfer credits are not included in the calculation of the grade point average. Note: For new master's students matriculating in fall 2018, a 3.00 grade point average will be required.

Failure to Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress

Since Graduate Studies evaluates academic progress after each term of enrollment a student may be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester and receive Federal aid. The student does not have to submit an appeal to be placed on Financial Aid Warning. After one semester

of Financial Aid Warning the student is placed on Financial Aid Suspension if they do not meet the cumulative quantitative and qualitative requirements of the school or program. Upon request, Graduate Studies will offer the student a multi-semester Academic Plan with specified quantitative and qualitative requirements (number of credit hours to be completed and term grade point average to be achieved or standards of their department or program to achieve) to regain Federal aid eligibility. The student's performance will be evaluated at the end of each semester of the plan. If meeting the requirements, aid eligibility is continued for the next term. If not, the student is returned to Financial Aid Suspension and cannot develop a new academic plan for the next term.

Students who fail to meet one or more requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress will be notified by e-mail of their status by the Office of University Financial Aid and will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester of enrollment. During the semester of Financial Aid Warning, a student will receive all Federal aid and institutional funding will be determined by their department or program for which they have applied and is otherwise eligible. Consecutive semesters of Financial Aid Warning are not permitted. Students who withdraw completely during a term will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next period of enrollment if previously meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. If the student was on Financial Aid Warning, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension. The student may submit an appeal following the instructions below if there are mitigating circumstances.

Students who do not successfully complete the required number of credit hours based upon semesters of attempted enrollment and/or attain the required grade point average and/or meet the standards established by their department or program by the end of the term of Financial Aid Warning will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and terminated from receiving financial assistance from the Federal sources previously listed. Institutional aid will be determined by the department during the semester of Financial Aid Warning. Additional institutional funds to replace lost Federal assistance will not be available. If it becomes mathematically impossible for the student to complete graduation requirements within the 150% program completion maximum, the Office of University Financial Aid reserves the right to terminate the student's financial aid eligibility.

Appeal Process

A student may appeal this denial of aid to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Committee of the Office of University Financial Aid and request a semester of Financial Aid Probation. An appeal must be in writing and based upon extraordinary circumstances, such as personal injury or illness, death of a relative, or other reason that caused undue hardship and impacted the student's academic performance to a significant degree. The student must show an understanding of the specific Satisfactory Academic Progress components that were not met and must indicate what changes have occurred that will enable the student to be academically successful in the next term. A student may submit a letter of support from an academic advisor. Note that submission of an appeal does not guarantee reinstatement of eligibility for

financial assistance. An appeal may be denied. The committee will send a response to the appeal by e-mail within ten days of receipt.

If the appeal is denied, the decision is final for that semester. The student may re-establish eligibility for financial assistance for a subsequent semester by successfully completing coursework at CWRU that restores compliance with the quantitative and qualitative standards of the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. Coursework taken at other institutions may not be used to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress standards following a failure to meet the requirements.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for the semester. The student will receive all Federal and institutional funding will be determined by the department or program for which they have applied and is otherwise eligible. By the end of that semester, the student must have successfully completed the required number of credit hours and attained the required cumulative grade point average and/or met standards established by their department or program to meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards based upon total terms of attempted enrollment at CWRU. Students who do not meet all standards will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension.

A student may not submit an appeal for consecutive terms; however, a student may submit an appeal with documentation of new circumstances that prevented the student from making Satisfactory Academic Progress. A student will be permitted a maximum of two appeals throughout enrollment at Case Western Reserve University.

Academic Plan

Students with a significant credit hour deficit or very low grade point average and all students returning from Academic Separation should meet with an academic advisor in the school of enrollment to develop an Academic Plan that will permit the student to retain financial assistance for more than one semester. Academic Plan Forms are available through the Office of University Financial Aid. An Academic Plan provides a specific listing of the credit hours the student will take in subsequent semesters to fulfill all degree requirements within the 150% timeframe upon satisfactory completion of all courses attempted and become compliant with all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Students who meet the requirements of the Academic Plan during the Satisfactory Academic Progress review conducted at the conclusion of each term will retain eligibility for Federal and institutional financial assistance for the next term of enrollment. An Academic Plan may extend for a maximum of four (4) semesters.