

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

To be eligible for US Federal Aid loans (federal or financial aid), a student must continue to make satisfactory academic progress (SAP).

US Department of Education regulations require that, to be eligible for continued financial aid, the University's SAP policy is applied to all students using US Federal Aid loans, regardless of course, level, or mode of study. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress will result in the termination of further disbursements.

HOW SAP IS MEASURED

Qualitative standard (grade-based performance)

The **University's Regulations** set out the requirements for satisfactory academic progress and how it is assessed.

The University Regulations can be seen in full at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/>

Students on taught programmes will accumulate credit through taking, and passing, the appropriate modules as they progress through an approved programme of study; until they have met the credit requirements for their target qualification. However, there may be a number of conditions which students must meet in order to progress at specified milestones, including time limits or specific module requirements, depending on the nature of the programme of study and the award to which it leads.

Some modules may be taken as standalone short courses – these standalone short courses are not eligible for Title IV funding and therefore do not fall under this SAP Policy. Usually students will accumulate credit module by module, until they have met the overall credit requirements for their target award, subject to meeting assessment requirements and progression rules described in section 6 of the University Regulations. One credit equates to approximately 10 notional hours of learning, spent either on scheduled teaching and learning activities or working independently; and module learning, teaching and assessment strategies are designed on this principle. The credit for each module can only be awarded once in respect of the award for which a student is registered. Transcripts, showing all modules taken and credit awarded, are provided on completion of studies, alongside the certification of the award for which the student has qualified.

Modules at level 6 and below (Undergraduate) have a standard credit value of 15 credits, and a pass mark of 40%; while modules at level 7 (Postgraduate (Masters)) have a standard credit value of 20 credits, and a pass mark of 50%. Modules of multiples of these values may also be included in programmes at the appropriate levels, according to the nature of the topic being studied and the scale of the assessment task/s.

Quantitative standard (timeframe)

The US Department of Education regulations also set a maximum timeframe for loan funding which is 150% of the published length of the course for Undergraduate courses. This maximum timeframe is more restrictive than the University Regulations which would allow longer periods for completion of courses. For postgraduate courses, the maximum timeframe is 300% of the published length of a one-year course, and 200% of the published length of a two-year Master's course, provided all other requirements for Title IV funding are met throughout (see note below). For any student borrowing Title IV funds the more restrictive regulations will apply and the student will lose eligibility for funding in accordance with these timeframes.

Examples:

Degree and course length	Standard timeframe	Maximum timeframe permitted for Title IV funding	Total achieved credits required to complete the programme	Maximum credits permitted for Title IV funding	Minimum credits for each evaluation period permitted for Title IV funding
BA/BSc (3 years)	3 years	4.5 years	360	540	75
BA/BSc (4 years)	4 years	6 years	480	720	75
MSc or equivalent (12 months)	1 year	3 years	180	270	90
MSc (24 months)	2 years	4 years	240	360	90

* Whilst the maximum timeframe for completion of a Postgraduate programme can be determined by the School the eligibility requirement for any student for Title IV funding is that they must be enrolled 'at least half time' – where a full programme is 180 credits 'at least half time' would comprise a minimum of 90 credits per year – students requesting Title IV funding would therefore reach the credit limit (270 credits) earlier than the maximum 5 year allowance for completion of the course. Where a student becomes ineligible for Title IV funding they may still be eligible to continue under the University Regulations and where this is possible they would need to arrange to fund their studies in a different way.

For time limits relating to Research degrees at level 8 please refer to University regulation [6.13.5](#) which sets out the relevant time limits.

Credit Limits – please see [University Regulation 6.14](#) for details of credit limits and progression requirements.

Please see the [academic regulations](#) for details of time limits (regulation 6.13) excluding Title IV requirements.

Periods when a student does not receive funds will be included in the maximum timeframe. Students who transfer with credit from another institution will have the time spent at the previous institution included in the maximum timeframe. Periods of temporary withdrawal from a course will not be included in the maximum timeframe.

Frequency of assessment

SAP is evaluated towards the end of each payment period in line with **Subject Examination Committees**.

Please note that SAP standards are used solely to determine financial aid eligibility. SAP federal aid eligibility standards do not cancel, modify or override the **University's Regulations**. All students should familiarise themselves with the University Regulations regarding Assessment and Progression which set out more detailed descriptions of course requirements, grades, failures and reassessment opportunities. The Assessment and Progression regulations can be viewed at:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/assessment-and-progression>

Method of SAP Review

At each SAP assessment point the following SAP Review will be made for each student receiving Title IV funding:

- Qualitative Assessment – the students grades will be checked this will involve both a check of any Exam Committee Letters issued to the student by the Subject Examination Committee which will include comments regarding the students progression under the University Regulations. If an Examination Committee Letter has been sent to a student receiving Title IV funding the contents of the letter will be assessed to determine if SAP has not been reached.
 - o Example – if a student receives a P3 Examination Letter explaining that they have not met the progression requirement for their course stage they will not meet SAP.

The Grades received during the assessment period for Title IV Students will also be manually checked by the International Students Compliance Team. This will include resit and retake grades – the impact of these types of grade on progression can be viewed in [University Regulation 6.9](#). Where a student has either an Incomplete (IC) Grade, or a Deferred Disciplinary (DD) Grade or any other provisional grade the SAP review cannot be completed until the provisional grades are resolved. On this basis, any form of provisional grade, including Incomplete grades, does not affect the SAP assessment, it just affects the point in time at which the assessment can be made. The student will need to engage with the University procedures for resolving these grade types and the SAP Review will be completed once the Incomplete grade or Deferred Disciplinary Grade have been resolved.

If a student remains on a course beyond the point at which withdrawal is permitted, and does not attempt the assessments, they will be awarded a Fail grade for those assessments and modules, and these **will** be used in the qualitative and quantitative measures of SAP assessment. Similarly, a student who fails a module and then repeats it, would have each attempt at that module included in the qualitative and quantitative measures of SAP assessment, during the relevant periods.

For a transfer student credits accepted towards the overall credit requirement will reduce the number of credits needed to complete the course and the maximum time available for completion. The Quantitative and Qualitative measures of students' pace of completion would therefore remain the same for these students, as it would be applied identically for all credits attempted at Oxford Brookes.

- Quantitative Assessment: the students pace of completion will be checked by a combination of checking relevant Subject Examination Committee Letters and the students

actual progress with their course. This assessment will be made by the International Students Compliance Team who will assess any Examination Committee Letters that are relevant to the students pace of completion and completion date.

- o Example – if a student receives a D3 Exam Committee Letter specifying that their ability to proceed is subject to passing resits that they are eligible to sit on their programme then ISCT will note to the student that the SAP Review cannot be completed until the Resit grades are released

A student will fail to meet SAP on the quantitative measure if they have not passed a sufficient number of credits during the assessment period which means that they will no longer be on target to complete their course within the maximum timeframe allowed for Title IV funding. Grades that a student has had disregarded via the University's Exceptional Circumstances procedures will not count as fails for the purposes of SAP assessment as the student has been granted a further attempt at the module. As stated above the SAP Review can only be completed after Incomplete (IC) or Deferred Disciplinary (DD) grades have been resolved.

Students should note that pace requirements will be different for undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses. Please see the Quantitative standard section (above) for details – in particular please refer to the table in that section which provides guidance as to the required pace of study for each course level.

As noted above – for some courses the Title IV maximum timeframe is more restrictive than the University Regulations permitted time limits. It may be possible for a student to continue studying on a course after failing to meet the SAP requirement but the student would lose eligibility for Title IV funding and would need to arrange to fund their studies in a different way.

A student must pass both the qualitative and quantitative SAP assessment to meet SAP.

FAILURE TO MEET SAP

Warning¹

Should a student fail to meet SAP standards, they will first be issued with a Financial Aid Warning. Students will be notified via their Brookes email if they are to be placed on a warning. This warning will last until the next disbursement, during which time a student can still receive financial aid.

Students who fail to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress by the end of the warning period will no longer be eligible for financial aid unless they submit a successful appeal (see 'Appeal' below). No further federal aid will be issued until the student meets the SAP standards.

Suspension of funding

Failure to make satisfactory academic progress will result in the suspension of financial aid unless the student submits a successful appeal and is placed on probation. The student will be notified that they have not met SAP via their University email account. No further federal aid will be issued until the student meets the SAP standards.

Appeal²

A student may appeal the decision to suspend financial aid payments if they can document that exceptional circumstances e.g. injury, illness or bereavement caused them to fail to make satisfactory academic progress or if they submit a successful academic appeal the outcome of which enables them to meet SAP standards.

Full details of the Universities Exceptional Circumstances and Appeals processes including the method of application, the types of evidence that may be required and potential outcomes can be seen at:

Exceptional Circumstances process

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/your-studies/exceptional-circumstances/>

Academic Appeals process

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/sirt/academic-appeals/>

Probation³

A student who successfully appeals the loss / termination of their financial aid will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for the following payment period. The conditions of the probation will be the same as the conditions for academic progress in the University regulations.

A student who is placed on Financial Aid Probation is not eligible to receive federal funding during the probation period.

Failure to meet the conditions required to be restored to normal academic progress will result in the termination of loan funding until SAP standards are met.

Please note that SAP standards are used solely to determine financial aid eligibility. SAP federal aid eligibility standards do not cancel, modify or override the **University's Regulations**.

Regaining Eligibility

Reinstatement of eligibility for US federal loans is not automatic. A student can only regain eligibility by submitting a successful appeal which leads to them either meeting SAP or being placed on probation or by taking action that brings them into compliance with the SAP standards.

Please contact the University's **International Students Compliance Team** should you have any further questions.

Definitions:

¹Warning – A status the University assigns to a student who is failing to make SAP. The University reinstates eligibility for aid for one payment period without the student needing to appeal.

²Appeal – A process by which a student who is not meeting SAP standards petitions the University for reconsideration of their eligibility for US Federal Aid.

³Probation – A status the University assigns to a student who is failing to make SAP and who successfully appeals. Eligibility for aid may be reinstated for one payment period only.

Last Reviewed by the International Students Compliance Team, April 2022