

Duke Divinity School

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

New Federal regulations that went into effect July 1, 2011, require that Duke Divinity School's Office of Financial Aid establish and implement a policy to measure whether students applying for and/or receiving financial aid are making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) towards a degree. This regulation applies to all students applying for aid, whether or not federal financial aid has been previously received. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the successful completion of degree requirements according to established increments that lead to awarding the degree within published time limits. There are three measurements that are used to determine eligibility: Credit Hour Requirement, Grade Point Average and Maximum Time Frame. Not meeting these requirements may result in loss of all financial aid.

Monitoring of Academic Progress

Students' progress will be reviewed after grades are finalized at the end of each semester (fall, spring, summer). A determination of eligibility to receive financial aid for subsequent enrollment periods will be made at this time. Any student identified through this process will be shared with the Academic Policies Committee, as part of that committee's work to review student academic progress. Although Duke Divinity School will send a notification to the student, the student is fully responsible for monitoring their own academic progress as it relates to financial aid eligibility. The student should review their grades on an on-going basis and compare it to the standards set forth in this SAP policy to determine if they are meeting (or failing to meet) the established criteria. The SAP policy for Title IV aid recipients is aligned with the Duke Divinity School's academic policy, and more information regarding academic policy may be found in each program's handbook.

Evaluations will be completed in a timely manner; however, the next term may be in progress at the time we are able to notify students of their ineligibility. Should the student be concerned that they may not have met the requirements, they may contact the Duke Divinity School Office of Financial Aid. Students will be notified via their Duke e-mail account if they have failed the measurement. Students may appeal the decision. The appeal form and directions are located on our website. There are three parts to the measurement and they are detailed by program below.

Three Measures of SAP:

1. *Qualitative:* Students in all programs must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
2. *Quantitative:* Based on their program in the chart below, students must complete a minimum percentage of cumulative credits attempted. Grades of "F", "I", "NP", and "W" do not count as successful grades for purposes of meeting SAP standards. Only an incomplete grade that has been changed to a passing grade can be added to the number of hours completed for the semester of the original registration. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Office of Financial Aid once an incomplete grade has been changed to a valid grade. Transfer credits and

repeated coursework will be included in the number of credits attempted and the number of credits completed.

3. *Maximum Timeframe*: Based on their program, Divinity students must complete the required course work to graduate within a maximum number of years from matriculation.

| <u>PROGRAM</u> | <u>CREDITS</u> | <u>Program Length</u> | <u>Rate of Progression</u> | <u>Maximum Length of Program To Graduate</u> |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| Master of Divinity | 24 courses (72 credit hours) | 3 years | 50% | 6 years |
| Master of Arts in Christian Practice | 18 courses (54 credit hours) | 2 years | 56% | 4 years |
| Master of Theological Studies | 16 courses (48 credit hours) + 4 residency periods | 2 years | 50% | 4 years |
| Master of Arts in Christian Studies | 8 courses (24 credit hours) | 1 year | 50% | 2 years |
| Master of Theology | 8 courses (24 credit hours) | 1 year including examinations or writing period | 50% | 2 years |
| Doctor of Ministry | 15 courses (45 credit hours) | 2 years plus research and writing period | 62% | 4 years |
| Doctor of Theology | 12 courses (36 credit hours) | 4 to 5 years including examinations and research/ writing period | 25% | 8 years |
| Master of Divinity/ Master of Social Work | 20 M.DIV courses (60 credit hours) + 18 courses MSW (54 credit hours) | 4 years including internships | 59% | 8 years |
| Master of Arts in Theological Studies/ J.D. | 12 MTS courses (36 credit hours) + 25 Law courses (75 credit hours) | 4 years | 58% | 8 years |
| Master of Divinity/ M.P.P. | 20 M.DIV courses (60 credit hours) +13 MPP courses (39 credit hours) | 4 years | 51% | 8 years |

SAP Warning

Students who fail to meet the Qualitative or Quantitative guidelines at the end of the semester/payment period of review are automatically placed on financial aid warning status for one semester and notified of this status. In a Warning semester, the student continues to receive federal financial aid for this semester. If at the end of the semester/payment period, the student is now meeting all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards, the warning status is removed and the student is now in good standing. Students who exceed the maximum length of time to graduate will not receive a warning semester and be automatically ineligible for financial aid.

SAP Probation and Appeal

Students who are on a Warning status and do not meet all of the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of the next semester/payment period of review lose federal financial aid eligibility until they are making progress in all categories (see Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility section below). Students who lose eligibility for financial aid may appeal the decision by following the procedures outlined below.

Those wishing to submit an SAP appeal must indicate mitigating circumstances that occurred during the course of the semester in question, that could not have been anticipated prior to that period, and that adversely affected their ability to successfully complete their required coursework. To appeal, a student must submit a letter of appeal to the Office of Financial Aid. The appeal letter should include the following:

- Mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from meeting the requirements of academic progress (i.e. death in the family, student illness or injury, other personal circumstances). Mitigating circumstances do not include: withdrawing from classes to avoid failing grades, pursuing a second major or degree, etc.
- Documentation that supports the student's basis for the appeal
- Steps the student has taken/will take to ensure future academic success. This plan should outline the student's academic goals for each period (e.g. number of credit hours and/or cumulative GPA) that will enable the student to meet the requirements of academic progress at a specified future point in time.
- Anticipated graduation date

In most cases, the SAP Appeals Committee will render a decision within two weeks of receipt of a fully completed appeal. All decisions of the SAP Appeals Committee are final. Notification of the decision will be sent via the student's Duke e-mail account.

If the SAP appeal is approved, financial aid will be awarded for the next semester on a probation period. An approved Academic Plan may be required as a condition of the appeal. An Academic Plan must be formulated in conjunction with the student's advisor and the Office of Academic Programs. Term and Academic Plans and/or other conditions of appeal approval will be included in the notification letter.

Students who fail to meet the requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress for their probationary semester or do not complete the requirements of their academic plan (if applicable) will again be

ineligible for financial aid and subject to the appeal process. Any subsequent appeal must include information regarding new extenuating circumstances or what has changed since the last appeal.

Students who meet the requirements for academic progress for their probationary semester will resume good standing and again be evaluated at the conclusion of the following semester/payment period. If the SAP appeal is denied, financial aid will be cancelled. If you have been denied aid, please review the section Regarding Financial Aid Eligibility below.

Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility

Students denied financial aid after completing the appeal process or failing to meet their Academic Plan can regain full eligibility for financial aid by:

- Raising their GPA to the qualitative standard outlined above by degree
- Successfully completing coursework that will meet or exceed the minimum required for quantitative standard outlined above by degree
- Students who have reached their maximum time frame are not able to regain eligibility except in the case of a successful appeal of the maximum time frame requirement.

Students who are ineligible to receive financial aid may use one or more of the following payment options while attempting to regain eligibility: student's own resources, Duke Tuition Management Payment Plan, and/or Alternative/Private Educational Loans. Students who have taken the necessary measures to regain eligibility for financial aid must contact the Financial Aid office immediately upon doing so and apply for Reinstatement of Eligibility. The student's academic performance will then be reviewed, and if all required SAP criteria is met, full financial aid eligibility will be reinstated, effective the following semester.

To retain all scholarships, students must maintain satisfactory scholarship progress:

- If a scholarship student's GPA declines over two consecutive semesters but remains above the 3.0 GPA threshold, a consultation with the academic dean and associate dean for student services will be required.
- If a scholarship student's cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year (August to May) falls in the range from 2.5 to under 3.0, the student will be placed on scholarship probation for the first semester of the next academic year.
- Students on probation must inform and receive approval from the academic dean regarding courses registered for during the probationary semester; such students will be required to follow the paradigm.

- The student's cumulative GPA must be above the 3.0 threshold at the end of the probationary semester; if not, the student forfeits the scholarship. If the cumulative GPA exceeds the 3.0 threshold following the probationary semester, the student retains the scholarship.
- Only one probationary semester is granted during a student's tenure at the Divinity School. Consequently, if the cumulative GPA of a scholarship student who has already been on probation falls below 3.0 a second time, the student must forfeit the scholarship.
- A scholarship student whose cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year (August to May) falls below 2.5 automatically forfeits the scholarship with no probationary period allowed.
- Students must refrain from academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.)