



SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) GUIDELINES  
FOR GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS  
(Financial Aid Recipients)

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2014

The Higher Education Act and state government require recipients of any Title IV (Federal PELL Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), Federal Direct Stafford Loan(s), and Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan for Undergraduate Students) and State Student Incentive Grant, **to maintain satisfactory academic progress towards a degree.** Satisfactory academic progress applies to all terms regardless of whether the student received financial aid. All students are required to meet both Quantitative (pace) and Qualitative (grade point average or GPA) standards. A review will be made at the end of each academic quarter to determine if the student meets these criteria.

**Graduate/Professional**

A. **Quantitative (PACE)**

In order to maintain academic success and financial aid eligibility, a Graduate/Professional student must complete at least **75%** of the total credit hours attempted cumulatively. Courses that are accepted as transfer credit are added into the cumulative total of successfully completed credits when calculating PACE.

**Cumulative number of credits a student successfully completed**  
**Cumulative number of credit hours a student attempted**

B. **Qualitative (GPA)**

In order to maintain academic success and financial aid eligibility, a Graduate/Professional student is required to maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA each quarter.\*

**Master's Degree Programs:**

<b><u>Graduate/Professional hours attempted</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum GPA</u></b>
10-15 quarter hours	2.0

*\*Doctor of Ministry Degree Program: Successful completion of courses is equal to a grade of "P" (Pass). Note: This degree program does not calculate GPA.*

C. **Maximum Allowable Time**

**Master's Degree:**

A student pursuing a Graduate/Professional degree at The Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University (which requires at least 135 quarter hours for completion in the Master of Divinity degree program and 90 quarter hours for completion in the Master of Christian Education degree program) may register for a maximum of 202 credit hours for MDiv and 135 credit hours for MACE or 150% of the length of the program (excluding repeated courses). **Full time students in the Master's Degree program are required to maintain 10-15 hours per quarter. Part-time students are required to enroll in 5 credit hours per quarter to be eligible for consideration of federal aid.**

**Doctor of Ministry:**

A student pursuing a Graduate/Professional degree at The Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University (which requires at least 55 quarter hours for completion in the Doctor of Ministry degree program) may register for a maximum of 82 credit hours or 150% of the length of the program (excluding repeated courses). **Full time students in the Doctor of Ministry program are required to average 7 - 13 hours per year.**

**Failure to meet both Quantitative (PACE) and Qualitative (GPA) will result in the student being ineligible to enroll or receive federal financial aid.**

**If a student is suspended or expelled from the University, for any reason, the student will not be eligible for enrollment or Federal aid until the minimum standards are met.**

## **FINANCIAL AID (S.A.P.) WARNING**

All students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 (4.0 grading scale.) Students with lower grade point averages are subject to academic warning, probation or expulsion. The minimum grade point average for graduation is 2.0 or a "C." Required courses are passed with a minimum grade of "C." Failure to achieve at least a "C" in required courses will necessitate repeating the course. Satisfactory Progress is determined after the end of each academic quarter.

Full-time and part-time students failing to meet the full requirements of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (PACE and GPA) for the first time will be placed in a Warning status for one quarter **without an appeal.**

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress by the end of the Warning period will be able to enroll but **will lose** their aid eligibility unless they successfully appeal and are placed on probation.

**If the student becomes ineligible for Federal Financial Aid, the student can appeal the decision by following the guidelines as set forth in the Financial Aid Appeal Process.**

## **FINANCIAL AID APPEAL PROCESS**

Waivers for failure to make satisfactory academic progress will be considered if the student has suffered undue hardship such as death of an immediate family member, injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstances as determined by the financial aid administrator or designee (*include appropriate documentation to support reason(s)*). Students requesting an appeal must submit a letter requesting reinstatement to the Financial Aid Office explaining the circumstances which affected the student's academic performance.

All appeals should be submitted, **via** email ([Gradaid@vuu.edu](mailto:Gradaid@vuu.edu)) or **US Postal** mail and addressed to the attention of the Coordinator of Graduate Financial Aid, Virginia Union University, Kingsley Hall, 1500 N Lombardy St., Richmond, VA 23220. Appeal letters must be received by the Office of Graduate Financial Aid no later than **July 31<sup>st</sup> for the Fall quarter, November 1<sup>st</sup> for the Winter quarter, January 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Spring quarter and April 30<sup>th</sup> for the Summer quarter.** In some instances, an interview may be scheduled for the student to meet with the SAP committee that is reviewing the appeal to answer any questions concerning the appeal letter. (Please note that any information mentioned in the appeal is subject to verification and all information will be taken into consideration.)

The financial aid appeal letter should:

- include the student's name, address, phone number, student ID number and Degree program
- clearly state why the student was not able to make SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress).
- state what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation.
- detail what the student will do differently academically if they are granted an appeal to continue matriculation at VUU

As part of the appeal process, the letter of appeal will be sent to the SAP committee to be reviewed. If the SAP committee recommends approval, an Academic Success Plan must be developed, signed, and agreed upon by the University Official and the student. **If the appeal is granted, the original signed copy of the Academic Success Plan must be filed in the Office of Enrollment Services prior to enrollment and the Office of Graduate Financial Aid prior to any aid being disbursed.**

## **FINANCIAL AID (S.A.P.) PROBATION**

Only students whose appeal has been granted will be placed on SAP Probation. If the appeal is **approved, the student will be placed on Probation for one quarter.** At the end of the academic quarters, the student's academic record will be reviewed to determine if the student has met the requirements specified in the academic plan. Their continued enrollment is contingent upon:

- Receiving not less than a 2.0 grade point average per term
- Obtaining a cumulative grade-point average of not less than 2.0 within their next two successive terms
- Completing all course work attempted - two terms in succession

If the student does not obtain the required 2.0 cumulative grade-point-average in the time specified, or complete all attempted course work in these two specified terms the student will be dismissed. **During the student's matriculation, the student will not be allowed to appeal more than two (2) times.** Once a decision has been rendered, no further information will be considered.

## **DISMISSAL**

Dismissal will occur if the student:

- Does not receive a term grade–point–average of at least 2.0
- Does not obtain a cumulative grade–point average of 2.0 after academic probation period
- Does not complete 75% of their all attempted coursework

## **RE-ESTABLISHING SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Any student whose financial aid has been terminated may re-establish satisfactory progress by any of the following methods:

- Repeating **and passing** failed courses
- Removing Incomplete grades

Cumulative grade point average can only be increased by completing courses at Virginia Union University.

✚ **NOTE:** A student's non-enrollment for two consecutive quarters affects a student's academic progress standing, so this is not sufficient to re-establish enrollment eligibility.

**WITHDRAWALS (W GRADES), which are recorded on the student's transcript,** will be included as credits attempted and will have an adverse effect on the student's ability to maintain satisfactory academic progress. The successful completion of a course is defined as receiving one of the following grades: A, B, C. Courses with grades of D, F, I, and W will not qualify in meeting the minimum standard.

**REPEATED COURSES** will be counted as hours completed **only once**. The student's highest grade will be counted toward satisfaction of degree requirements.

## **CHANGE OF DEGREE PROGRAM**

A student may change from one degree program to another during attendance at the University. Students who change from one degree program to another are still expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and complete the course work within the time frame or hour limitation stated unless an appeal is approved.

## **CLASS LOAD**

The number of hours in which a student is enrolled at the end of the published add/drop period will determine the class load. Full-time status is 10 hours or more.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS** will be evaluated on the number of quarter hours earned and the grade point average while in attendance at Virginia Union University.

## **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

A student who has incomplete grades has *30 days* from the end of the term to complete and submit all assignments to the instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the terms of receiving and removing an "I". If a student does not comply with the terms of the incomplete policy, the "I" grade will revert to the grade listed by the instructor on the "Request for Incomplete Grade" form.

**NON-MATRICULATING STUDENTS** are not eligible for federal and state aid.

## ✚ **NOTE:**

The Graduate Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy of **all Graduate/Professional students** is also found on the VUU website ([http://www.vuu.edu/samuel\\_dewitt\\_proctor\\_school\\_of\\_theology/Graduate\\_financial\\_aid.aspx](http://www.vuu.edu/samuel_dewitt_proctor_school_of_theology/Graduate_financial_aid.aspx)).