

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy for students who receive Title IV Financial Aid

Rights and obligations for Students at Maastricht University

At Maastricht University we have rights and obligations that apply to all students, including students who receive Title IV Financial Aid and American students who do not receive financial aid. Please find the rights and obligations in our [Student Charter](#).

The U.S. Department of Education requires that students who receive Federal Title IV Financial Assistance maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) towards their degree for each year in which they are enrolled and are also required to be in good standing (i.e. pay tuition on time and meet other University requirements).

This policy applies to eligible US and eligible non-US citizens receiving Title IV aid. The loans we offer are called Federal Direct Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, parent PLUS and Grad PLUS). Each University determines its own policy regarding satisfactory progress standards.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is evaluated at the end of each semester or upon the student's re-enrolment at the University. The review is based on qualitative (grade point average) and quantitative measures (credits completed vs registered credit). Failure to maintain satisfactory progress may result in the cancellation of financial aid awards or repayment of the funds already received.

Dutch Grading system

The Dutch grading system is generally based on a number scale, with all marks ranging between 1 (minimum) and 10 (maximum). A grade of 5.5 or more stands for 'pass', a grade of less than 5.5 for 'fail'. Students who are recipients of U.S. financial aid must achieve a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 6 or higher at the end of each semester.

Quality Assessment	US EC grade	Dutch grade
Excellent	A+	10
Excellent	A+	9.5
Very good	A+	9
Very good	A+	8.5
Good	A	8
Good	A	7.5
More than satisfactory	B+	7
Satisfactory	B	6.5
Satisfactory	C	6
Satisfactory	D	5.5
Fail	F	4
Fail	F	3
Fail	F	2
Fail	F	1

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KvK nr.: 50169181

Student Standards

Undergraduate and Graduate students must meet the following requirements for minimum satisfactory academic progress:

1. A cumulative average total grade of 6 or above. In determining the cumulative average total grade, ECTS attempted and ECTS earned are taken into consideration.
2. A minimum completion rate of at least 18 ECTS after the first semester of each academic year. After the second semester of each academic year, the student has to complete at least another 24 ECTS. In total, the student must complete at least 42 ECTS out of 60 ECTS attempted per year.

The first time a student fails to achieve the minimum cumulative grade average requirement in a particular academic year will result in he/she being placed on Financial Aid Warning. Furthermore, all graduate and undergraduate students must complete at least 18 ECTS in the first semester of each academic year and 24 ECTS in the second semester of each academic year, in order to ensure that they are not placed on Financial Aid Warning. Students will still receive financial aid for the duration of the warning period. Please note: Financial Aid Warning lasts for one semester. Students are able to receive more than one financial aid warning in their academic careers; however, not consecutively.

Students are able to appeal their ineligibility for financial aid in extenuating circumstances. If the student successfully appeals their ineligibility, they may be placed on financial aid probation. Further details concerning the appeal process and financial aid probation is provided below.

In addition to the above, graduate students will cease to be eligible for financial aid if he/she fails to complete 60 ECTS over a period of three consecutive semesters. This ruling is applicable even if the student has not received financial aid for the academic year.

Undergraduate students will be assessed at the conclusion of the second academic year to ensure their average grade requirement is 6 or above. The student will no longer be eligible for financial aid if this criterion is not met.

Maximum Time Frame

Undergraduates are required to adhere to a maximum time frame in which they can complete their program. The student must complete the study program within 150% of the published time for that program.

Example

For a Bachelor degree programme, a student is completing a program for which 180 ECTS are required. The student has attempted 240 ECTS; however, has only completed 145 ECTS. As the student can no longer achieve the 180 ECTS within the 270 attempted ECTS (150%) timeframe, he/she will no longer be eligible for financial aid. The maximum time requirement takes into account credits transferred to Maastricht University (completed) as well as those attempted whilst studying at Maastricht University.

Pace

Additionally, the student is required to adhere to a certain pace requirement to ensure that the number of ECTS required to achieve the degree can be achieved within the specified time period. Due to the 150% maximum time specified, there is a pace requirement that the student complete 67% of all attempted credit hours. The pace of

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the student is calculated by dividing the number of cumulative hours completed (ECTS earned) by the cumulative hours attempted (ECTS attempted). This calculation includes all credits attempted and earned from all schools. If a student is no longer completing the educational program at the required pace, they are no longer eligible for financial aid.

Financial Aid Warning and Probation

If a student fails to meet any of the quantitative or the qualitative standards of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy for the first time, he/she will be placed on a Financial Aid Warning for one semester. Students will continue to receive financial aid during the warning period. If a student then again fails to maintain SAP after the one semester warning period, financial aid assistance will be suspended. The student will be notified of his/her ineligibility for financial aid.

In case a student fails to maintain SAP and is placed on financial aid warning, the Financial Aid Officer will contact the student to set up an appointment with the study advisor. Together they will set up a study scheme to work on improving the study success of the student.

Appealing Probation of Financial Aid

A student can submit a written request to the Director of the Student Services Centre within 30 days after the notification of financial aid ineligibility appealing this decision. The student can only be reinstated after being placed on denied status in case of extenuating circumstances. The Director will consider this request within the regulations set by the US federal law.

The extenuating circumstances are:

- death of a relative
- illness of the student
- illness of a close relative
- other special circumstances

In the case the student wishes to appeal the decision of financial aid ineligibility, they should contact scholarships@maastrichtuniversity.nl for further information on the procedure.

If the request is granted, the student is placed on probation status for the semester. Note that the 150% time frame is set by US federal law and cannot be extended under any circumstances.

Probation status for 1 semester:

The student's progress will be reviewed at the end of the probation semester. If the student does not meet the SAP standards at this point, they will be no longer eligible for further financial aid.

Probation status for 1 year:

In case the Director of Student Services Centre determines that the student will require more time in order to meet the SAP standards, the student will be placed on probation status for the year. An academic plan will be drawn up, in collaboration with the student's study advisor. The student's progress will be reviewed during the year to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student meets the

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requirements of the academic plan at the end of the year, the student is eligible to receive US student loans as long as they continue to meet those requirements.

If the student needs to change their initial academic plan while on probation, students must submit another appeal in which they explain the circumstances leading to this necessary change, and how the revised academic plan will help the student make academic progress.

Appeal form:

Students who receive the suspension/denied status will receive an Appeal form. This document must be used for the appeal.

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