



SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

All Maynooth University students on full-time Undergraduate degree programmes, Postgraduate Taught & Research degree programmes and PhD programmes, applying for or receiving US Federal Aid (Title IV) (subsidised, unsubsidised or PLUS) at Maynooth University must progress satisfactorily towards completion of a chosen academic programme.

Maynooth University is required by US Federal law to define and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The guidelines have been established to encourage students to complete successfully academic programmes for which aid is received.

While in receipt of US Federal Aid (Title IV) loans for the academic period outlined on the loan application, all students on all programmes are required to be enrolled in their programmes and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. This is as strict as the policy applied to all MU students not receiving Title IV loans.

Enrolment

Students are entitled to modify their enrolment within the first two weeks of each semester and retain eligibility for aid, provided they maintain a full-time enrolment. It is an Irish immigration requirement that students must be enrolled as a full-time if registered with immigration authorities as a student in Ireland.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively for each UG, PG and PhD student at the end of each academic year to determine eligibility for continued awards of aid. If one or other or both are failing, SAP is considered failing.

In an undergraduate or postgraduate programme of more than a year in duration, all students receiving or not receiving Title IV are normally expected to reach a required standard in one academic year of study before progressing to the next. A student who passes the required credits (three-year UG=180 ECTS, four-year UG=240 ECTS, one-year PG=90 credits) taken in an academic year of study is allowed to progress to the next academic year of study. Where a student does not meet this standard but is sufficiently close to allow compensation or progression with a deficit, a “restricted” rating is applied, and a student may progress in subjects in which the progression standards have been met.

A student may pass by compensation in a subject where:

- The overall weighted average mark across all modules taken in the subject is 40% or above;
- No module has a mark below 35%;
- At least half of the credits taken in the subject have marks of 40% or above;

- The student has passed all required modules without compensation.

Where the overall result is not within the compensation/deficit range, a student may not progress to the next academic year of study, regardless of the performance in individual subjects.

Progression carrying a deficit is allowed only where this does not conflict with the subject progression requirements. In exceptional circumstances a Department may approve progression in a subject carrying a deficit of up to 10 credits in that subject. Where this is done, the student must make up the deficit before becoming eligible for the award.

This evaluation process will consider the student progress under the following categories:

- Academic Standing (Qualitative)*
- Maximum Timeframe (Quantitative)*

Academic Standing

All students on Undergraduate degree programmes, Postgraduate Taught & Research degree programmes are normally expected to reach a required standard by the end of each academic year before progressing to the next. In addition, in most cases where assessment is by written examination, there is an option of an autumn resit examination normally held in August, which provided an opportunity to remediate a poor result within the same academic year of study.

Where a programme uses marks, an annual mark is calculated as the credit weighted average of module marks taken in the academic year of study, excluding modules assessed on an ungraded basis, using only modules in which credits are earned (i.e. passed modules) and eliminating duplicate results for modules which were repeated to have an average mark of at least the pass threshold (normally 40%) and have passed the minimum credit value at the end of each academic year for progression.

If no scheduled PhD testing occurs during a payment period, SAP is assessed and reported by appropriate members of the teaching staff. Please see [Maynooth University Marks and Standards](#)

Satisfactory academic standing means that students are required to comply with this standard in each year. Failure to do so will result in students being ineligible to receive subsequent disbursements of their loans or future loans.

Maximum Timeframe

All Undergraduate degree programmes which involve full-time study (nine months) over two semesters is 60 [ECTS](#) credits per academic year.

All Postgraduate one-year degree programmes which involve full-time study (twelve months) are normally 90 [ECTS](#) credits. All Postgraduate two-year degree programmes which involve full-time study (12 months) are normally 120 [ECTS](#) credits.

All PhD four-year programmes which involve full time study (12 months) are normally 240 [ECTS](#) credits.

An Undergraduate/Postgraduate student is entitled to receive Federal Aid for 150% of the published length of the educational programme as measure in ECTS credits. See examples below:

- three year UG degree (180 ECTS) - eligibility for aid is 4.5 years
- four year UG degree (240 ECTS) - eligibility for aid is 6 years

- one year PG degree (90 ECTS) - eligibility for aid is 1.5 years
- two year PG degree (120 ECTS) - eligibility for aid is 3 years
- four year PhD degree (240 ECTS) – eligibility for aid is 6 years

Students should be advised that whilst federal eligibility may allow them to continue, student immigration restrictions may impact on the students' ability to continue within the programme. In order to retain eligibility, students are normally expected to reach a required standard in one academic year of study before progressing to the next. Each academic year will count towards the qualitative and quantitative components.

Students must complete 67% of their attempted credits each academic year and must also complete the programme at a pace which ensures that they will graduate within the maximum timeframe. See example below:

Four year UG degree (240ECTS) programme:

$240 \text{ ECTS} \times 150\% = 360$ attempted credits to include transfer credits is Maximum Timeframe

$240 \text{ ECTS} / 360 \text{ credits} = 67\%$ is the pace of completion.

Students will be ineligible at the evaluation point where indicated will exceed maximum time frame and **not** just at the point where they reach the maximum time frame.

Incomplete modules and withdrawing from modules without registering for a replacement module, will not meet the qualitative and quantitative aspects of full-time registration requirements. Please see [Maynooth University Marks & Standards](#) SAP would not be met.

Students who leave a programme without making SAP at the time of leaving and subsequently return to the programme would not be eligible for Title IV until they meet SAP at the point of departure. Previous SAP would be checked by verifying ratified results.

Notification of Suspension

If Financial Aid is suspended, students will be notified in writing with the reason why and how Financial Aid can be re-established. Appeal is possible for verifiable extenuating or unforeseen circumstances. Maynooth University cannot waive the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for any student to receive Financial Aid. Maynooth University does not use a Financial Aid Warning.

Students may opt to meet all tuition fees and living expenses from their own means and make SAP again.

Financial Aid SAP Appeal

Students who have their eligibility for US Federal Aid (Title IV) suspended may appeal the suspension if one or more extenuating circumstances, such as the following exist:

- Death of a family member (parent, spouse, sibling, dependent child etc)
- The extended illness of the student – extended illness as defined as a documented chronic or recurring medical or emotional illness that causes the student to be absent from class at least 15 days or more
- The extended illness of a family member that places hardship on the student
- Mitigating circumstances as determined by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee

All appeals must be received within ten days of receipt of the Notice of Suspension. Students must indicate in writing to the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee the reason(s) for failure to meet the necessary Financial Aid SAP requirements and why Financial Aid should not be suspended. All documentation to support the appeal is required at the time of appeal submission. In particular, the appeal must include information as to why the student failed to make SAP and what has changed that will allow the student to make SAP at the next evaluation.

Students must send appeals to: US Financial Aid Official, International Office, Humanity House, South Campus, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland *or* by email to: usfinancialaid@mu.ie The SAP Appeals Committee will consider each case and their decision is final. Appeals will not be accepted in cases where a student is not attempting any new modules i.e. registered just for resit examinations.

Note: The SAP policy is separate from academic appeals relating to exam results or test scores. The outcome of a SAP appeal has no bearing on results achieved or grades awarded. SAP decisions are based on official exam results and test scores only. In cases where no scheduled testing occurs during the academic year, SAP is assessed and reported by appropriate members of the teaching staff.

If the appeal is successful, the student is placed on Probation. If the appeal is unsuccessful, students will be ineligible to Title IV loans until they make SAP again.

Financial Aid Probation

To be placed on Probation (one payment period), a student must:

- Appeal and have it approved by the university AND
- Be making SAP in the next payment period OR
- Be successfully following an academic plan designed to ensure the student will be able to meet SAP by a specific point in time. A student on Probation may only receive Title IV funds for ONE payment period

A student on Probation may not receive Federal Aid (Title IV) funds for the subsequent payment period UNLESS

- Student is making SAP OR
- Institution determines student met requirements specified by the school in the academic plan and student is still covered by the academic plan

SAP will be checked at the end of the probationary period. Students who have been placed on Probation and subsequently meet the academic requirements in the next semester will be placed back in to good Financial Aid SAP standing.

Students will be notified of Probation by letter and/or email.

Academic Plans

The academic plan is developed by the institution and the student individually. As part of the general university procedures, Programme Co-Ordinators reviews the student's academic progression on an annual basis. Compliance of academic plans may be monitored collaboratively between, but not limited to the following units:

- Academic Departments
- Programme Co-Ordinator

The academic plan must be designed to ensure that the student is able to meet the institution's SAP standards by a specific point in time.

SAP Evaluations

Each official evaluation at the end of the academic year will include evaluation of the qualitative (grade based), quantitative (time related) and maximum timeframe standards outlined above.