

# Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

UC Santa Cruz Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

## Graduate Students

The Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) derives from Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by the campus Academic Requirements and Standards, and also complies with federal student aid regulations. In some cases due to federal requirements, students who minimally meet campus academic progress requirements for enrollment may not be eligible for financial aid/support. Graduate students may refer to the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for more information on campus policies.

To remain eligible for financial aid/support, a student must meet three components of Satisfactory Academic Progress:

1. Cumulative GPA requirements
2. Minimum pace required to complete a degree within the maximum time frame
3. Maximum time frame for degree completion

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### 1. Maintain good academic standing status by meeting campus GPA and progress requirements

Refer to “Academic Good Standing” in the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) for these requirements.

### 2. PACE - students must earn minimum number units each year. Units completed in summer count towards the yearly expectation.

Certificates, Masters and PhD students not advanced to candidacy

Full-time students must undertake a minimum of two upper division or graduate level courses per quarter and pass a minimum of five 5-credit courses (25 credits) toward a terminal degree or certificate by the end of each academic year. Part-time students must undertake a minimum of one upper division or graduate level course per quarter and pass a minimum of three 5-credit courses (15 credits) toward a terminal degree or certificate by the end of each academic year.

PhD students advanced to candidacy

Students advanced to candidacy must undertake and pass at least one course per quarter (15 credits per year).

### 3. Maximum Time frame - Degree requirements must be completed within a specified number of calendar years from the date of first enrollment.

**Full-time** graduate students are expected to complete their degree objectives within the following maximum time frames:

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- Certificate students: 1 calendar year from the date of first enrollment in the program
- Master's degree students: 3 calendar years from the date of first enrollment in the program
- Ph.D. students not advanced to candidacy: 4 calendar years from the date of first enrollment in the program
- PhD students advanced to candidacy: 3 calendar years from the advancement term

**Part-time** graduate students are subject to the same provisions as full-time students, except that the maximum time frame is prorated accordingly:

- Certificate students: 2 calendar years
- Master's degree students: 6 calendar years
- Ph.D. students not advanced to candidacy: 8 calendar years
- PhD students advanced to candidacy: 3 calendar years (Once advanced to candidacy a student is considered full-time when enrolled in thesis research.)

## Incompletes, Withdrawals, and Repeated Courses

For the purpose of measuring satisfactory academic progress, course incomplete, withdrawals, repetitions, and noncredit courses do not count as courses completed.

## SAP Review

All periods of enrollment count when measuring financial aid SAP, even periods when a student does not receive financial aid/support. Financial aid eligibility will be suspended for students who do not meet one or more of the Financial Aid SAP requirements.

**GPA and Pace requirements** are measured at the end of each academic year - at the end of spring quarter. Or, if a student enrolls in summer courses, these requirements are measured at the end of summer.

**The Maximum Time to Degree requirement** is measured at the end of each term of enrollment.

## Appeals

To regain eligibility for financial aid/support, students may submit an appeal in cases where there have been extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control which prevented him/her from meeting Financial Aid SAP requirements: examples include childbearing, the death of a close relative, a serious injury or an illness.

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The appeal must include a letter to the Dean of Graduate Studies explaining the reason why SAP was not met and what has changed that ensures the student will be able to make satisfactory academic progress in the future. The appeal must also include an academic plan signed by the student's faculty adviser and endorsed by the graduate representative of the department that demonstrates:

1. SAP can be met by the end of the next quarter or,
2. If followed, the student will be able to meet SAP progress standards by a specific point in time not to exceed an academic year in length.

Appeal documents must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the appeal deadline prior to the start of the quarter for which the student wishes to receive aid/support. The Dean of Graduate Studies will transmit his/her decision on the appeal in writing to the student and communicate the decision to the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office.

## Deadlines for appeals due to failing SAP Measures

1. Fall Quarter – September 1<sup>st</sup>
2. Winter Quarter – December 1<sup>st</sup>
3. Spring Quarter – March 1<sup>st</sup>
4. Summer Session – June 1<sup>st</sup>

## Financial Aid Probation

If financial aid eligibility is regained as a result of an appeal, the student will be considered to be on **financial aid probation for the period of the plan**. Aid eligibility will be reinstated if the student meets the requirements of the approved academic plan by the end of the established probationary period. If the student fails to meet financial aid SAP standards (as defined by the academic plan), or if the student does not follow the academic plan, the student will be ineligible to receive financial aid/support. No further appeals will be granted at this point unless the student can demonstrate extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control which prevented meeting the requirements of the academic plan. These circumstances must be different circumstances than those for which the appeal was granted.

In this case, students may continue coursework at UCSC without the benefit of financial aid/support. Remember, the financial aid SAP policy must comply with federal regulations and may, in some cases, differ from campus conditions for Academic Satisfactory Progress. In some cases a student may still be permitted to enroll under the campus Academic Requirements and Standards rules for graduate students, yet lose eligibility for financial aid/support under the Financial Aid SAP policy.