

Methodist University Office of Financial Aid Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Graduate Students

The Higher Education Act mandates institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP). Methodist University makes these standards applicable to all financial aid offered at Methodist University. A graduate student must maintain "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP) toward graduation to receive all financial aid. This includes Federal (Title IV), State (North Carolina) and Institutional (Methodist University) funding. Federal Regulations require the university to establish SAP standards in the following areas: (1) Cumulative GPA; (2) Cumulative Hours Earned; and (3) Maximum Time Frame. In addition, a school's SAP policy must include the student's total academic history.

Programs administered by agencies other than Methodist University, such as private scholarships, or grants given by states other than North Carolina, may have their own academic standards for students. Students will need to contact such agencies to determine what those requirements are.

General Satisfactory Academic Progress Principles

These principles apply to all of Methodist University's degree programs.

1. Federal Regulations require the university to establish SAP standards in the following areas: (1) Cumulative GPA; (2) Cumulative Hours Earned; and (3) Maximum Time Frame. In addition, a school's SAP policy must include the student's total academic history.
2. These general principles apply to all of Methodist University's degree programs. In addition to the general principles, students must meet specific guidelines for their individual academic program(s). Program specific requirements are detailed after the general principles.
3. SAP will be determined once per academic year, specifically, at the end of one complete year of enrollment. For example, if a student's enrollment begins in the Fall semester, his/her SAP will be evaluated before the following Fall semester.
4. To earn hours at Methodist University, a student must receive a grade of A, B, C or D. Any other grade does not earn hours.
5. Classes, from which a student has withdrawn, regardless of Withdrew Passing (WP) or Withdrew Failing (WF), will be counted as hours attempted but not hours earned, therefore, will negatively impact a student's ability to satisfy SAP.
6. Classes in which a student receives a grade of Incomplete (I) count as hours attempted but not as hours earned; therefore, will negatively impact a student's ability to satisfy SAP.
7. When a student repeats a course, the total attempted hours will increase with each repeat, but the student will only earn hours for a completed course once. Therefore, repeating classes will negatively impact a student's ability to satisfy the 67% passage rate, but may significantly increase a student's cumulative GPA.
8. Included in attempted hours are all coursework attempted, including transfer credits, passed, repeated, incomplete, failed and withdrawn courses. Attempted hours do not include credits earned through Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP) or other similar testing programs.

SAP for the Graduate Programs, as defined at Methodist University, is as follows:

Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)

Maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.5 (B)

A student must achieve and maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.5.

Cumulative Hours Earned

A student must pass (earn) at least 67% of their credits attempted (excluding non-credit courses and pass/fail courses).

Maximum Time Frame

MPAS students will be allowed a maximum of 188 attempted hours to complete their degree. This is the

maximum allowable time for receipt of eligible Federal Title IV Funds regardless of whether the student did or did not receive financial aid during any period of his/her enrollment.

Master of Business Administration (MBA), Criminal Justice (MJA), or Education (MeD)

Maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.5 (B)

A student must achieve and maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.5.

Cumulative Hours Earned

A student must pass (earn) at least 67% of their credits attempted (excluding non-credit courses and pass/fail courses).

Maximum Time Frame

Students will be allowed a maximum of 56 attempted hours to complete their degree. This is the maximum allowable time for receipt of eligible Federal Title IV Funds regardless of whether the student did or did not receive financial aid during any period of his/her enrollment.

Failure to Meet SAP Notification of Denial

Students, who are currently enrolled, will receive a certified letter of denial with the SAP Guidelines enclosed outlining why they were denied and the appeal process. Students, who withdraw, are suspended, and/or expelled from the university, will be notified by email with the SAP Guidelines attached.

Financial Aid Probation (PROB)

A student who fails SAP must successfully appeal (see Appeals) to be placed on PROB. PROB CANNOT be given automatically. Methodist University must review the student's progress at the end of that one payment period, as probation status is for one payment period only. At the end of one payment period on PROB, the student must make SAP or must be meeting the requirements of the academic plan. A student may be placed on PROB for one payment period per appeal. It is possible that a student could be placed on probation more than once in his or her academic career.

- If Methodist University determines, based on the appeal, that the student should be able to meet the SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, the student is placed on PROB without an academic plan. MU must review the student's progress at the end of that one payment period, as PROB status is for one payment period only. At the end of one payment period on PROB, the student must make SAP or will be ineligible to receive financial aid.
- If Methodist University determines, based on the appeal, that the student will require more than one payment period to meet SAP, the student will be placed on PROB and an academic plan must be developed for the student. The student's academic advisor and the student should develop a plan that ensures that the student is able to meet Methodist's SAP standards by a specific point in time. The plan could specify that the review takes place at the next point when the rest of Methodist University's population is reviewed, which could mean every payment period or annually. The plan could also specify that the student is reviewed more frequently than the rest of the institution's population; however, a student on an academic plan would not be reviewed less frequently than the rest of the institution's population. An academic plan could take the student to program completion, rather than meeting the institution's SAP standards at a specific point in time.
 - a. **If the academic plan shows that the student can make SAP**, the student will be placed on PROB and Methodist University MUST review the student's progress at the end of one payment period as is required of a student on PROB status, to determine if the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan. If the student is meeting the requirements of the academic plan, the student is eligible to receive financial aid as long as the student continues to meet those requirements and is reviewed according to the requirements specified in the plan.
 - b. **If the academic plan does NOT show that the student can make SAP**, then the student will NOT be eligible for financial aid and will be immediately placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS). Students who are placed on FAS will be ineligible for all federal, state, and institutional financial aid. This includes any alternative loans that require certification by Methodist University.

At the end of the PROB period, the student's SAP is evaluated. If the student is making SAP, then the student is no longer on PROB. **Students on PROB who still do not meet the SAP standards will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension (FAS). Students who are placed on FAS will be ineligible for all financial aid. This includes any alternative loans that have an SAP requirement.**

Transfer students will be evaluated at the time of enrollment using the same SAP standards.

Students returning to Methodist University while they are on PROB or FAS must meet Methodist's SAP policy in order to regain eligibility for financial aid.

Financial aid may be reinstated by the Director upon demonstration of mitigating circumstances which must be documented to the satisfaction of the director along with a typed letter of appeal from the student.

Appeals

Students on Financial Aid Probation or Suspension may make a written appeal to the Financial Aid Director. Financial aid may be reinstated by the Director upon demonstration of mitigating circumstances which must be documented to the satisfaction of the director along with a written letter of appeal from the student. Examples of mitigating circumstances and appropriate documentation include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Serious illness of student--statement from physician that illness interfered with student's ability to meet SAP along with written letter of appeal from student.
2. Serious illness of immediate family member--statement from a physician along with written letter of appeal from student.
3. Death of an immediate/close family member--statement from a minister, nearest relative, or an unbiased concerned adult along with written letter of appeal from student.
4. Disruptive internal family problems—legal/court documentation from lawyer, statement from parents, minister, or an unbiased concerned adult along with written letter of appeal from student.