

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

For the purposes of assessing continuing eligibility for US Financial Aid Students

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1. Overview

- 1.1. All students studying at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine that are in receipt of US Federal Loans are required to be in good standing and to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward their degree requirements for each term they are enrolled in order to maintain federal aid (Title IV) eligibility.
- 1.2. US Department of Education regulations require the School to check the student's progress at regular intervals, making sure that both the quantitative and qualitative measures of satisfactory academic progress are met.
- 1.3. This policy only applies to eligible US and eligible non-US citizens receiving Title IV aid, specifically the William D Ford Direct Loans (Unsubsidized and/or PLUS Loans).

Quantitative Requirements

- 2.1. Students are expected to be in attendance at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.
- 2.2. Students may not receive aid once they have taken more than 150% of the normal duration of the programme to complete their studies. This applies to all students.
- 2.3. For MSc students, the course total is 180 credits, with a maximum timeframe of 270 attempted credits for US loan purposes. Students must complete their course at a pace that ensures they will graduate within the maximum timeframe, and must maintain a minimum cumulative completion rate of 67% as calculated by dividing the number of completed credits by the number of attempted credits, in order to meet SAP maximum timeframes.
- 2.4. The maximum period of registration for full-time research degree students at LSHTM is 4 years. Full-time research degree students are therefore required to move at a pace they will allow them to complete their studies at within 4 years x 150% = 6 years. Please note that students are bound by the 4-year maximum registration period, and cannot go beyond this without an approved extension.
- 2.5. Periods of interruption will not count towards this calculation.
- 2.6. If a student has attended part of the programme below full time, then this calculation will be based on the Full-time Equivalent (FTE) of their studies (e.g. 2 years at 50% will count as 1 year Full-time (FT) study).
- 2.7. MSc students are expected to successfully complete 75% of courses attempted towards the completion of their MSc programme, achieving an overall pass mark of 2 or more. Students failing to meet this requirement will be issued with a financial aid warning.
- 2.8. Details on assessment and progression for MSc students can be found in the School's Masters Award Scheme:
<https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/new-students/starting-your-course-london/regulations-policies-and-procedures>.
- 2.9. Research degree students are expected to make satisfactory academic progress throughout their registration. Satisfactory academic progress shall be determined by the Research Degree Supervisor in accordance with the progress monitoring guidelines in the Research Degrees Handbook. The Research Degrees Handbook can be found here:
<https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/new-students/starting-your-course-london/regulations-policies-and-procedures>
- 2.10. Students repeating sections of their degree programme must pass at the next available opportunity in order to regain eligibility for Financial Aid. If a student is required to re-sit an assessment due to academic failure, this will involve being reassessed without taking further classes. The repeated section will count towards the student's quantitative pace. For example, if a student is attempting 60 credits but only passed 40 credits, their pace will be 66.66%. The next term, the student will be attempting the 20 credits again as well as a new 40 credits. If the student passes all 60 this semester, they will be at a pace of 80%.
- 2.11. If a student withdraws partway through an academic year, this count towards the quantitative measure. For example, if a student was enrolled in 60 credits and then withdraws from all 60, their pace will be 0 out of 60, which is 0%.
- 2.12. Where credits are transferred from another programme through [Recognition of Prior Learning](#) (RPL) or a change of course at the same grade level will count towards the 150% timeframe. Only those credits, which contribute towards the final award, will be considered for the purposes of Satisfactory Academic Progress. Any credits transferred through RPL will count towards the quantitative measure of the student's new programme.

2. Qualitative Requirements

- 3.1. All students are expected to maintain satisfactory progression for the duration of their study.
- 3.2. MSc students must maintain a cumulative minimum of 2.0 for their GPA throughout their course.
- 3.3. Enquiries will be made with the faculty to check that students are progressing satisfactorily in the required timeframe and to verify attendance before every US loan disbursement.
- 3.4. An assessment result of pass is sufficient for disbursements made after results have been published and for the first disbursement of the following year.
- 3.5. No progress confirmation is required for the first disbursement for a student's programme of study.
- 3.6. If the student is not progressing satisfactorily, they will be issued with a financial aid warning.
- 3.7. If at the time of the next request the student is not progressing or has not met the requirements of a probation period, they will have their US financial aid suspended.

3. Other Requirements

- 4.1. The US Department of Education has set the minimum enrolment of at least half-time. The School's Student Attendance Policy requires that all students attend a minimum of 80% of the teaching sessions associated with each programme element. If it is stated by the Programme Directors, Personal Tutors or Supervisors that the student is not attending at least 80% of each associated programme element within the term, or time put into the research is felt by the department not to be equal to 80% or above, US Federal Aid will be suspended.

4. Financial Aid Warning, Probation and Suspension

- 5.1. Academic progress will be reviewed at the completion of each term to determine eligibility for the following term. At this time (i.e. between the end of each term and the next US loan disbursement) satisfactory academic progress will be certified by the student's Programme Director (for MSc students) or their Supervisor(s) (for research degree students).
- 5.2. **Financial Aid Warning**
Where a Programme Director/Supervisor does not certify satisfactory academic progress the student will be issued with a financial aid warning. This warning will last for one payment period (i.e. one term; until the next disbursement is due), during which time the student can still receive Financial Aid. At the start of the financial aid warning status term students will be expected to complete the financial aid warning paperwork with their Programme Director (for MSc students) or Supervisor (for Research students), which will outline an action plan for the student to get back on track.
- 5.3. If a student fails to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress by the next disbursement point, they will become ineligible for federal financial aid unless they are successful in an appeal (see the relevant section below). Students will receive email notification of their ineligibility and suspension from the Financial Aid programme.
- 5.4. **Appeals**
Students who have their eligibility for US Federal Aid suspended or withdrawn may appeal the decision.
- 5.5. Appeals should be submitted to the Head of Student Records and must indicate in writing the reason(s) for failure to meet the necessary financial aid SAP requirements and why US Federal Aid should not be suspended.
- 5.6. Full documentation in support of the appeal is required at the time of the appeal submission.

- 5.7. If the unsatisfactory progress is due to illness, bereavement or other extenuating circumstances, students should set out what has changed in their circumstances that will allow them to meet SAP at the next evaluation date.
- 5.8. All appeals must be received in Registry within **fourteen calendar days** of receipt of the notice of financial aid suspension.
- 5.9. Disbursement of loan funding will not be made while an appeal is being processed. Each appeal will be individually reviewed, and the Head of Student Records will use his or her professional judgement to determine whether there are grounds on which to uphold an appeal.
- 5.10. The result of the appeal will usually be notified to the student in writing within fourteen calendar days of receipt. All decisions are final.
- 5.11. **Financial Aid Probation**
If a student's appeal against suspension is successful, their good standing will be placed on probation for the payment period. Probation provides students who have had their US loan suspended the opportunity to re-establish their eligibility for Federal Aid. The duration of probation will normally last for one disbursement period.
- 5.12. A student that has had their US Federal Aid suspended but continues their studies under their own means and subsequently meets satisfactory academic progress standards will be entitled to regain a probationary status and apply for and receive US Federal Aid.
- 5.13. Students that fail to meet satisfactory academic progress standards after a period of probation cannot receive US Federal Aid unless they are successful in a further appeal and develop an academic plan approved by their Programme Director (for MSc students) or their Supervisor (for research degree students) by which their progress towards satisfactory academic progress can be monitored.
- 5.14. **Financial Aid Suspension**
If a student fails to meet satisfactory academic progress standards by the next disbursement period after a financial aid warning or probation (without an academic plan) they will become ineligible for US Federal Aid.

5. Important Information

- 6.1. Financial aid warnings, probation and suspensions are related solely to a student's eligibility to receive US Federal Aid from the US Department of Education and will not affect enrolment status at the School.
- 6.2. Students that have exceeded the 150% time limit on their programme cannot receive US Federal Aid and cannot be reinstated at any point.
- 6.3. Any student undertaking any part of their course in the USA and/or any student whose enrolment drops below 50% FTE will not be entitled to US Federal Aid. This regulation is not covered by the School's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and is therefore not subject to a financial aid warning, probation, or suspension.

6. Contact Details

- 6.1. For further advice or clarification regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress processes, practices or the content of this Policy, please contact fees@lshtm.ac.uk.