

# THE CLIMATE SCHOOL POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The following policy on satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is applicable to all students at the Columbia Climate School. To comply with applicable regulations and for the sake of brevity, the School provides this single SAP policy which includes Federal regulations specific to students receiving FSA.

### Compilation of Federal Regulations (CFR)

#### 34 CFR 668.16(e) – Administrative Capability

Columbia University has the administrative capability to adequately administer the Satisfactory Academic Policy (SAP) program.

#### 34 CFR 668.32(f) – Student Eligibility

General Federal Methodology: All students applying for financial assistance must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their federal eligibility. Notification of the school's academic requirements is made in person and via electronic and paper formats. These requirements are as strict as the school's academic progress policy for students not receiving assistance under the Title IV and Higher Education Act programs.

#### 34 CFR 668.34 – Student Assistance General Provisions

This policy sets reasonable satisfactory academic progress policy standards for determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in one's educational program and may receive assistance under the Title IV and Higher Education Act programs.

Academic progress requirements at the Climate School are identical for all students, irrespective of their financial aid application or eligibility status or whether they receive Title IV aid.

The Academic Affairs Office ensures the consistent application of SAP standards to all Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs and FSA recipients within institutionally defined categories of students.

### At least as strict...

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### Consistent Application

The Academic Affairs Office ensures the consistent application of SAP standards to all Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs and FSA recipients within institutionally defined categories of students.

### Evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing

Students are responsible for tracking and maintaining their own academic progress and ensuring they have met all University and School requirements. **The Academic Affairs Office conducts SAP evaluations at the end of each term and sets expectations to help students return to satisfactory academic progress and good academic standing.** Students not achieving SAP should expect notifications from Academic Affairs after final grades are submitted. When evaluating academic progress, the School reviews:

- [Core and Cumulative GPA](#)
- Completion of coursework at the required [pace of completion](#)

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students are expected to maintain cumulative and core GPA of no less than 3.0. Students must keep track of their academic progress at the core and overall GPA level. Academic Affairs supports students by also informing students when their GPA's fall below a 3.0. The Academic Affairs Office will notify students whose core and/or cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. All students whose core and cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 are considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing and may be terminated from their degree program.

### Maximum Timeframe (Credits) and Pace of Completion

The Academic Affairs Office audits students' academic progress each semester to ensure students meet the benchmarks of their respective degree programs and are meeting an acceptable pace of completion. To successfully complete earned credits, students must receive a passing grade. Non-passing grade designations include F and W. The pace of completion by which students are expected to progress through their degree programs is the percentage value calculated by a student's minimum required credits divided by the maximum number of credits a student is allowed to attempt as a degree-seeking candidate (also known as the maximum timeframe). Should the percentage value of earned credits divided by attempted credits fall below the pace of completion, a student would be considered as not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing.

Climate & Society Enrollment Status	Minimum credits required	Maximum timeframe (credits)	Pace of Completion (percent)
Full-time	34	60	57
Part-time	34	56	60

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Below is a non-exhaustive list of how the most common unearned credits negatively impact a student's satisfactory academic progress.

### F and UW Grade

Students who earn an F or UW grade cannot repeat the course unless it is a requirement for the completion of the degree program. In cases when the course is required, the student must re-register for the course and obtain a satisfactory grade. The F or UW grade remains on the transcript even after the course is retaken for a passing grade. In instances when a student is assigned an F or UW in a pre-requisite course, the student may not begin the subsequent course until re-sitting for a passing grade (if allotted the opportunity).

**Students who earn more than one F or UW grade – whether in a single semester or across multiple semesters – are considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing.** The SAP implications of an F or UW may only be rectified by:

- retaking a course for a passing grade (only one additional opportunity is provided).
- or by complying with a School approved academic plan.

**Students who fail to meet either of these expectations may be [terminated from their degree program](#).**

### *Pace of Completion for Fs and UWs*

Further implications of an F or UW can be understood in terms of one's pace of completion. Fs and UWs factor into a student's attempted credit, which means that a student's pace of completion will fall below 57 percent (full-time) or 60 percent (part-time). Students below the percentages may be considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing.

### *Course Repetitions and GPA*

Students cannot repeat courses for credit toward their degrees or to improve their GPAs, except in cases when a student has received an F or UW in a required course. While the new grade will not replace the F or UW grade on the transcript, the Academic Affairs Office will informally recalculate a student's GPA for the purpose of determining SAP without considering the F or UW. Repeated courses count toward the maximum number of attempted credits toward the degree. Repeated courses may incur additional tuition and fees.

### *Incompletes (IN)*

The implications of carrying INs into a new semester can be understood in terms of pace of completion. Incompletes are considered unearned credits and push a student's pace of completion below 57 percent (full-time) or 60 percent (part-time). Carrying any number of INs

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will incur some intervention by the Academic Affairs Office. The pace of completion implications of an IN may only be rectified by replacing the IN no later than the deadline provided on the student's completed [Official Request for an Incomplete Form](#). INs assigned a final grade will be calculated into a student's cumulative GPA to determine if any adjustments to their SAP assessment is required.

If a student holds an IN for a course that is a pre-requisite for a subsequent course, the student may not begin the subsequent course until the IN is resolved. Any number of INs may prevent a student from beginning their culminating experience (capstone or internship).

### Status Definitions for Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing

#### Federal Student Aid-Specific Definitions

Certain status definitions are applicable only to students who receive FSA and who find themselves not making SAP. Students who fail to achieve SAP are placed either into an FSA Warning or FSA Probation status.

#### *FSA Warning*

The Climate School places students who receive FSA into a Warning status the first time they do not achieve SAP. Disbursement of FSA is allowed without disruption. Students will receive an email notifying them of this Warning status and the accompanying School-specific status, which may indicate School-level intervention. Students in an FSA Warning status must return to achieving SAP in the next semester of enrollment, or they will be placed in a [Probation status](#). It is possible for a student to not achieve SAP in one semester (Warning), achieve SAP in the subsequent semester, and then be placed into a Warning status again in the third semester should SAP not be achieved.

#### *FSA Probation*

A student who does not achieve SAP following the semester of FSA Warning will automatically be placed into a Probation status and **the disbursement of FSA will be held until the student's SAP appeal** is approved. Students will receive an email notifying them of this Probation status and any accompanying School-specific status.

Some academic plans may take more than one semester for a student to achieve SAP. It is possible for students to remain in a Probation status for successive semesters, as long as they keep to their academic plans. Even in these cases, a student's FSA will be held until the academic plan can be reassessed based on the student's performance during the first semester of probation.

#### Notifications of SAP and Academic Standing Status

Students who are not meeting achieving SAP and in poor academic standing must be notified of their status. **The Academic Affairs Office will notify all students via email to the [student's](#)**

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[Columbia email account](#). Students should expect notification following the deadline for faculty to submit grades.

## Consequences of Not Achieving Satisfactory Academic Progress

When evaluating academic progress, the School checks a qualitative measure (GPA), as well as completion of coursework at the required pace of completion (unearned credit verse earned credit). Students are not achieving SAP if they qualify for any of the above-mentioned status definitions for Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing and are:

- at risk of losing their FSA eligibility (per the Federal Student Aid-Specific Definitions)
- at risk of jeopardizing their degree candidacy at the Climate School and may be eligible for termination from their degree program
- at risk of being removed from activities or services: A student may be restricted from participation in academic or extracurricular activities and/or University organizations (including appointments, awards, leadership roles, committee roles, etc.) or restricted from university services.

Students whose SAP appeal has been granted may be required to submit an [Academic Agreement](#) or [Academic Plan](#) after their performance during the most recently reviewed semester.

## Academic Agreement

Students in need of signing an Academic Agreement will be provided with a set of academic standards that they must abide by to assist students in returning to satisfactory academic progress. Standards may include target GPAs for subsequent semester, retaking a course, and more.

**Failure to meet the standards noted in the Academic Agreement may prevent a student from returning to satisfactory academic progress, thereby impacting their eligibility for Federal Student Aid and their degree candidacy with the Climate School.**

## Academic Plans

Students in need of an Academic Plan develop them in partnership with the Academic Affairs Office. Academic Plans will provide academic standards and course requirements designed to help students return to satisfactory academic progress. Standards may include target GPAs for subsequent semester, retaking a course, and more. Designated course requirements may span between one and three semesters. Academic Plans are signed by the student and the Academic Affairs Office.

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**Failure to adhere to the conditions of an Academic Plan may prevent a student from returning to satisfactory academic progress, thereby impacting their eligibility for Federal Student Aid as well as their degree candidacy with the Climate School.**

## Restoring FSA Eligibility for Students on Probation

Students who have not met SAP standards in consecutive semesters are determined to be ineligible for Federal Student Aid (FSA) because of an FSA Probation status. Students have the option to appeal the decision. The previously outlined requirements for Academic Agreements and Academic Plans satisfy an FSA appeal's requirements. Students who fail to submit either an Academic Agreement or Academic Plan as directed by their notification will remain ineligible for Federal Student Aid.

## Termination Due to Poor Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing

**Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress and are in poor academic standing in one or more semesters may be terminated from their degree program.** A student terminated from their degree program will receive an official letter from the Academic Affairs Office. If the student disagrees with the decision of termination, the student may appeal to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Administration within seven business days of receiving the official notification. Grounds for appeal are considered on two criteria:

- **Procedural Error:** Student must identify and define with specificity any errors in the evaluation of their academic progress and how it negatively impacted the final decision.
- **New Information:** Students wishing to submit new information must explain why this information was not made available to school officials when notified of their SAP and Academic Standing Status and how this information would have substantially impacted the final decision.

The Senior Associate Dean of Academic Administration will review the appeal. The decision of the appeal is final and will be sent to the student within seven business days of the appeal request.