

Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons: Programs in Occupational Therapy

POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students enroll in the Occupational Therapy program on either a full-time basis (six semesters of continuous study), or in our three-year option program (eight semesters of study). Continuous registration is expected until satisfactory completion of all requirements. All academic and clinical requirements must be completed in five years.

Leaves of absence are granted in certain extenuating circumstances. A student who must interrupt studies for an adequate reason such as sustained ill health or military service may be granted a leave of absence for a stated period, usually not to exceed one year.

A minimum of 63 points of approved course work is required for both tracks. An average course load of 15 points a term is expected for full-time students. For students on the three-year option plan, the requirement is 8 points a term for the first four terms, and 12 points a term for the last two terms.

The maximum number of attempted points in order to achieve satisfactory progress in the required 63, is 73.

Satisfactory achievement must be earned in all courses and on all fieldwork experiences (including 24 weeks of full-time (or the equivalent) supervised field experience) in order to graduate from the OT programs. Satisfactory achievement is designated by no less than a 2.67 GPA per term. Continuing development of appropriate professional behaviors is also required for advancement throughout the Occupational Therapy program. Meeting and maintaining all medical and legal requirements of the University and of clinical sites are the responsibility of the student. Failure to meet or comply with any of these requirements may result in delay or termination of academic and/or clinical progression.

Satisfactory academic progress is monitored at the end of each semester through the review of every graduate student enrolled in our program on the following dimensions:

- Semester GPA;
- Professional development review;
- Clinical assignment review.

1.1 “AT LEAST AS STRICT...”

All applicants to our program are considered without regard to financial status, and without regard to their intention to participate in our full-time or three-year option

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program. Application for financial aid is made **after** a student is accepted for enrollment and matriculation. The student makes the decision to participate in our full-time or three-year option program after acceptance for enrollment and matriculation.

Students are held to the same academic standards regardless of whether they receive federal financial aid.

1.2 CONSISTENT APPLICATION

All students, regardless of the track they take (two years, or three years) are subject to the same policies. All students, regardless of the financial assistance they may receive, are subject to the same policies.

1.3 REGULAR EVALUATIONS

Our Progress and Promotions Committee review academic progress for all students at the end of the fall and spring terms. Off-cycle review of academic progress occurs on an ad hoc basis.

The committee, along with each student's advisor, meets to discuss progress. Verbal feedback to students by the advisor occurs during the fall and spring semesters.

1.4 GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The student's performance in a course is reported according to the following grade scale:

- A=4.00
- A-=3.67
- B+ =3.33
- B=3.00
- B-=2.67
- C+=2.33
- C=2.00
- F=0

Grades of A through C are passing grades counting for credit toward the degree and accepted as the basis for advancement to a higher course with the following exception: ***students earning grades of C in clinical courses may require remediation before advancing to the next level of study.***

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The grades of P and R are not included in the overall GPA calculation.

A student who receives a grade of **F** in a required course or fieldwork experience must repeat that course or fieldwork experience in our program and may do so only one time. A passing grade must be earned in the repeated course or fieldwork experience in order to be permitted to continue in our program and advance to the next level of professional courses or fieldwork.

The mark of **INC** (incomplete) is given to a student who has satisfactorily met all the requirements of a course but who has been compelled for reasons beyond his or her control to postpone certain assigned papers or reports. The outstanding work must be completed prior to the end of the next semester (unless a different time frame is required by the instructor) or before being permitted to advance to Level II fieldwork.

The mark of **P** (passed) is given for satisfactory Level II fieldwork education. A limited number of other courses are also offered for P/F grades.

Required GPA: In order to continue in good standing, whether enrolled full- or part-time, students must maintain an average term grade of B- (2.67 points). Students who fall below the average will be placed on financial aid warning for one term. To continue in the program, the student must achieve a B average during the following term. Any student unable to achieve this average, or not meeting SAP a second time, is subject to dismissal.

A student failing more than one course at any time during the student's tenure in the Programs in Occupational Therapy may not continue in the program. Failure of one course results in required repetition of that course before being permitted to advance to the next level of professional course work or fieldwork. The failing grade (F) remains on the student's official transcript and is included in the academic record, whether or not the student repeats the course and passes it after the second attempt. The courses in the first semester serve as prerequisites for the second-semester courses. All courses in each subsequent semester serve as prerequisites for the next semester. A student who has failed one course is automatically placed on academic probation, and may be placed on a leave of absence until the course is satisfactorily completed.

Grades of C in required courses are subject to faculty review. In clinical courses that are prerequisites to fieldwork, the record of students receiving less than B- are subject to review prior to Level II fieldwork. This review may conclude that fieldwork is to be postponed until the student achieves the desired level of competence in the clinical course.

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1.5 MAXIMUM TIME FRAME AND PACE OF COMPLETION

Full-time students can expect to complete the program in twenty-four calendar months and part-time students in thirty-six months. All students must complete the entire program at a minimum pace of 86% per term. In instances where a student may withdraw from the program, be granted a leave of absence, or interrupt the program of study because of mitigating circumstances, a determination of satisfactory progress will be subject to faculty review. All academic and clinical requirements, regardless of a student participating in the full-time or three-year option program, must be completed within five years from the initial date of matriculation.

Students are allowed to attempt a maximum number of 73 points in order to obtain the required 63 for graduation from the program. Points above 73 will not be eligible for federal financial aid. The maximum time frame is therefore 116% of the stated program length.

Students must maintain at least a 2.67 (B-) average.

1.6 EFFECT/TREATMENT OF “ATYPICAL” COURSES/SITUATIONS

1.6.1 EFFECT OF INCOMPLETES

All courses in each semester serve as prerequisites for the next semester. Any course that is not completed will result in the student not being able to progress to the next semester, or being placed on the three-year track *if* the student has completed those courses in the three-year track that serve as prerequisites.

Courses completed with a grade of Incomplete (“I”) count towards the number of credits attempted but not the number of credits completed. Incomplete grades do not contribute to the GPA calculation.

1.6.2 EFFECT OF WITHDRAWALS

A withdrawal from any course will result in the student not being able to progress to the next semester, or being placed on the three-year track *if* the student has completed those courses in the three-year track that serve as prerequisites.

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A “W” contributes to the number of credits attempted, but it does not contribute to the number of credits completed or the GPA calculation.

1.6.3 EFFECT OF COURSE REPETITIONS

A student failing more than one course at any time during the student’s tenure in the Programs in Occupational Therapy may not continue in the program.

Failure of a single course results in required repetition of that course before the student is permitted to advance to the next level of professional course work or fieldwork. The failing grade (F) remains on the student’s official transcript and is included in the academic record, whether or not the student repeats the course and passes it after the second attempt. Credits and grades received in repeated courses count towards the GPA and credits attempted/completed in the same manner described for courses that were not repeated.

1.6.4 EFFECT OF DUAL DEGREES

Any student in the dual-degree program receives both degrees at the same time. The dual-degree program takes 3 years to complete. The full-time clinical experience may be completed at the end of the academic course of study for both degrees. The student will be able to take the occupational therapy certification exam after receiving both degrees. For dual degree students, the OT GPA is determined by the grades received while in residence at OT and includes all courses taken in those semesters.

1.6.5 EFFECT OF ADVANCED STANDING

There is no advanced standing in the Occupational Therapy Programs.

1.6.6 EFFECT OF TRANSFERS OF CREDIT FROM OTHER SCHOOLS OR INSTITUTIONS

Upon matriculation, students may, with faculty approval, transfer a maximum of 3 semester credits of elective graduate course work from another regionally accredited college or

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university toward satisfying the degree requirements; or up to 9 semester credits if requesting a transfer of courses taken within an accredited occupational therapy program. Courses must carry graduate credit and must be evaluated with a letter grade; the minimal acceptable grade is **B**. Requests should be submitted in writing to the Director with a university catalog that contains the course description.

These credits will be applied to the 63 required credits.

Transferring of credits does not shorten the length of time to complete the program.

1.6.7 EFFECT OF CHANGES OF MAJOR OR PROGRAM OF STUDY

Students, upon review by the Progress and Promotions Committee, may change from the two-year program to the three-year track. Students cannot change from the three-year track to the two-year track. The same courses and grading standards are required for both programs.

1.6.8 EFFECT OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS AND UNIVERSITY-WIDE CHANGES

In the event of a national or state-wide emergency, and/or where a pass/fail grading system is implemented University-wide:

Any courses graded as pass/fail will be counted in the total number of attempted hours.

When a course is successfully completed and given a grade of "P", the credits are added to the total number of attempted and earned credits hours; but, the Pass grade is not included in the GPA calculation.

When a course is **not** successfully completed and the student is given a grade of "F", it will be treated as a standard grade of "F" and this will negatively impact the progression and GPA of the student.

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Any student who fails a SAP assessment as a result of a qualifying emergency will be allowed to submit an appeal, even if an appeals process is not included in the individual school's SAP policy.

Any and all treatment of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) updates and changes will abide by existing statutory regulation on SAP, any temporary statutory relief provided by Congress, and any temporary guidance provided by the Department of Education (ED).

1.6.9 MANUAL ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO SYSTEM LIMITATIONS

In cases in which there are any limitations or nuance of a student's academic records in SIS or any other system in use for the storage of academic records, such that what is reflected in the system does not fully represent what is utilized for measuring academic progress in accordance with academic policy, the Office of Financial Aid will accept the decision of advisors in the Office of Academic/Student Affairs as overriding the data in SIS.

1.7 STATUS DEFINITIONS

In order to continue in good standing, whether enrolled full- or part-time, students must maintain an average term grade of B- (2.67 points). Students who fall below the average will be placed on academic probation. To continue in the program the student must achieve a B average during the following term. When the B average and Pace are attained, the student is considered making SAP. Any student unable to achieve this average, or not meeting SAP a second time, is subject to dismissal.

Students who fail to meet SAP for one term will receive a written Financial Aid Warning notice.

Financial Aid Warning

A student who fails to meet SAP (excluding maximum time frame) at the end of an enrollment period will be placed on "financial aid warning," not to exceed one enrollment period. During the "financial aid warning" enrollment period, the student may receive federal financial aid despite the determination that the student is not meeting SAP standards. The student must meet SAP standards at the end of the financial aid warning period or will become ineligible for further financial aid.

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Financial Aid Probation

If, at the end of the “financial aid warning” enrollment period the student fails to meet SAP, he or she will be ineligible for further federal aid. That is, the student must pay for any additional course enrollment during the next enrollment period through personal or private funds. Should extenuating circumstances exist, the student may appeal. If the appeal is successful, the student will be placed on financial aid probation and will be eligible for federal aid for the subsequent term. At the end of the financial aid probation term, the student’s SAP will be reviewed to determine whether they are meeting SAP requirements and/or their academic plan.

1.8 PROVISION FOR A FINANCIAL AID WARNING STATUS

Per federal regulations, because the College evaluates academic standing each term, a Financial Aid Warning is used to indicate a student not meeting SAP is at risk of losing federal aid eligibility. Any student in their first term of academic probation is sent a letter which includes the requirements for returning to good standing.

1.9 APPEALS

Academic Grievance Issues: Any student in the Program in Occupational Therapy who disagrees with a decision that affects his/her standing in the program has the opportunity to appeal. The appeal must be made in writing within seven working days from the date the student is notified of the decision and submitted to the Academic Standing Committee.

The appeal shall set forth a concise statement of the incident to include times, dates, people involved, the grounds for the appeal, and the specific request that the student is making. Acceptable appeals (i.e., death in the family) will be considered on a case by case basis.

Procedure

The student who disagrees with a decision must first try to resolve the issue at the point of origin with the person or persons concerned or request a review by the Academic Standing Committee (within the program). If the issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the following 5 steps need to be followed in consecutive order:

1. The Director of the Program in Occupational Therapy will convene the Program Grievance Committee and issue a recommendation.

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2. The Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine will review the issue and issue a recommendation.
3. The Vice Dean for Education for the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons will convene a grievance committee and issue a recommendation.
4. A Committee of the Faculty Council, Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, will review and issue a recommendation.
5. The Dean will issue a decision.

Nature of the Appeal

If a student chooses to appeal a decision, the appeal must be presented as follows:

1. The appeal shall set forth a concise statement of the incident to include times, dates, people involved, the grounds for the appeal, and the specific request that the student is making. Acceptable appeals (i.e., death in the family) will be considered on a case by case basis.
2. The appeal shall be filed with the appropriate person within seven working days following the incident in question.

Every effort should be made to resolve the appeal at the level at which it occurs. If at any step the appeal is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student may pursue the matter at the next step according to the procedure outlined above.

The Program Director notifies the student of the committee's decision within three working days of the committee's formal determination.

The Office of Student Financial Aid and Planning is notified if the decision is a leave of absence or dismissal.

1.9.1 ACADEMIC PLANS

A SAP Academic Plan outlines the specific plan/corrective action to improve academic progress. Students will be required to follow the SAP Academic Plan in order to receive federal, state and institutional financial assistance. Students must be enrolled only in the course work listed on their SAP Academic Plan, meet minimum completion rates, and be making progress each semester toward all SAP requirements, as outlined by the School, by the Academic Plan projected end date and/or graduation date to retain Title IV eligibility. Failure to meet the

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terms of the Academic Plan will jeopardize eligibility for federal, state and institutional financial assistance.

1.10 RESTORING ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is restored when one achieves satisfactory academic progress, per either the guidelines or with the aid of a student-specific academic plan. If one is on a leave of absence, eligibility is restored when the student resumes their matriculation.

1.11 NOTIFICATIONS

The Program Director sends a letter to any student on academic probation, or regarding the decision to allow a leave of absence.