

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Compilation of Federal Regulations (CFR):

34 CFR 668.34 – Student Assistance General Provisions

34 CFR 668.16(e) – Administrative Capability

34 CFR 668.32(f) – Student Eligibility - General

1.1 “AT LEAST AS STRICT...”

The School of General Studies (GS) requires students to meet the same level of academic standards regardless of whether they receive federal financial aid.

1.2 CONSISTENT APPLICATION

Students enrolled in GS must follow the rules outlined in this policy to maintain satisfactory academic progress and be eligible for federal financial aid.

Generally, undergraduate students matriculated into degree programs in GS have no specific enrollment requirement; students may attend full-time, part-time, or less than half-time. Students need 124 credits to graduate.

Summer terms GS students may enroll in the summer term. As with the standard academic year semester, fall and spring, GS students have no specific enrollment requirement for the summer.

All satisfactory academic progress assessments of students enrolled in the summer term will take place in the following spring as part of the annual satisfactory academic progress assessment of all students.

In general the summer term will be treated for Financial Aid purposes as the beginning of the academic year.

The satisfactory academic progress assessment does not differ if a student attends full time or part time.

International Students Per federal regulations, international students in GS are not eligible for federal financial aid.

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.3 REGULAR EVALUATIONS

GS students will be assessed for satisfactory academic performance at the end of the spring term of the academic year. This includes the prior summer term for those students who enrolled during this term.

1.4 GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA): The minimum for undergraduates is 2.0 by the end of each academic year. The GPA will be reviewed annually, after the posting of the spring semester grades, and the overall cumulative GPA must be equal to or greater than 2.0.

Procedures:

To successfully complete credits, students must receive grades of A, B, C, or D. Non-passing grade designations include F, UW (unofficial withdrawal), and W (withdrawal). AR and INC (incomplete) grades do not count toward the GPA unless replaced by a grade.

A grade of "P" does not count toward the GPA.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Registrar calculates semester as well as cumulative grade point averages based on the number of credits per class. The GPA is used to assess a student's academic progress as well as to determine a student's eligibility for certain honors such as the Dean's List or the Honor Society. The GPA is printed on all official Columbia transcripts. GPAs are computed on the following scale:

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D = 1.00
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	F = 0.00
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.5 MAXIMUM TIME FRAME AND PACE OF COMPLETION

Maximum Time Frame:

GS Students must complete 124 credits in order to graduate. Federal regulations allow for 150% of the maximum credits necessary to graduate to remain in satisfactory academic progress. At GS this means that a student will not be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress once total attempted credits are more than 186 credits. The maximum of 186 attempted credits towards the degree including all accepted transfer credits.

GN Students must complete 40 credits for certificate completion. Federal regulations allow for 150% of the maximum credits necessary to graduate to remain in satisfactory academic progress. At GS this means that a student will not be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress once total attempted credits are more than 60 credits.

Pace of Completion:

Students must successfully complete at least 67 percent of all points attempted each semester. This is reviewed annually at the end of each spring semester and the aggregate percentage of coursework attempted and passed must equal 67 percent or greater at each review. (For example, a student who is enrolled in 12 points at the drop deadline and completes 8 has completed 67 percent of attempted points.)

The grades of P, D, and F count toward the pace of completion calculation.

1.6 EFFECT/TREATMENT OF “ATYPICAL” COURSES/SITUATIONS

1.6.1 EFFECT OF INCOMPLETES

If a student receives an incomplete, this course will count as attempted points in the assessment of satisfactory academic progress. Since incompletes are temporary grades, they have no impact on the GPA of the student. Once final grades are awarded for an incomplete, students will be re-assessed for satisfactory academic progress.

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.6.2 EFFECT OF WITHDRAWALS

Withdrawals as part of the change of program period will not be included as cumulative attempted credits. Withdrawals which are recorded on a student's permanent record will be included as cumulative attempted credits and will have an adverse effect on a student's capability to meet the appropriate standard.

NOTE: Retroactive "non-punitive" administrative withdrawal activity may result in the requirement for the student to repay any assistance received as a result of the student's enrollment at the time of receipt of the student assistance funds.

1.6.3 EFFECT OF COURSE REPETITIONS

If a course can be taken for credit multiple times according to its course description, then the earned credits for the course will count as accepted credits and the grades will be factored into the GPA calculation in any assessment for satisfactory academic progress.

If a student passes a previously failed course, then the course will count toward attempted credits and both grades will be factored into the GPA calculation in any assessment for satisfactory academic progress.

If a student retakes a class that s/he previously passed, then the course will not count toward completed credits, but will be counted towards attempted credits. The course grade will not be calculated into of the GPA in any assessment for satisfactory academic progress. An exception will be made when the repeated class is necessary for the student's major or concentration. In these cases, the credits will count towards that students' full time status for the semester.

1.6.4 EFFECT OF TRANSFERS OF CREDIT FROM OTHER SCHOOLS OR INSTITUTIONS

GS allows a maximum of 60 transfer credits toward the undergraduate degree. All transfer credits will be counted both as completed credits toward the degree, and toward attempted points at Columbia. The maximum credits may include Advanced Placement and transfer credits.

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.6.5 EFFECT OF CHANGES OF MAJOR OR PROGRAM OF STUDY

All GS students are expected to complete their degree within the 186 attempted credit allowance even if they change their major. Changes of major have no impact on the required pace of completion time permitted by the program.

1.7 STATUS DEFINITIONS

1.7a Financial Aid Probation:

GS assesses satisfactory academic progress at the end of each spring term.

If during GS' annual evaluation process, a student receiving federal aid is found to not be meeting SAP requirements, that student will be notified in writing and placed on Financial Aid Probation.

Students on Financial Aid Probation are not eligible to receive federal financial aid during the next term in which they enroll and until they regain eligibility.

For students placed on Financial Aid probation, academic progress will be evaluated at the end of each term.

Students may appeal a Financial Aid Probation status by following the steps outlined in section 1.8, Appeals, below.

Academic Suspensions: A student who has been suspended for academic reasons and falls below satisfactory academic progress guidelines may be on Financial Aid Probation upon re-enrolling.

Students may appeal this decision by following the appeals process.

1.8 APPEALS

A student may appeal loss of financial aid eligibility.

Appeals Process: Students not meeting satisfactory academic progress at the end of the annual spring assessment, who are placed on Financial Aid

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

Probation, may appeal the loss of their financial aid eligibility by submitting a successful appeal by August 1.

The committee will meet in mid-August and notify students of the decision prior to the start of the fall term. To appeal, students must complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form, which allows a student to explain and document circumstances and develop an Academic Plan, if necessary, in consultation with an academic adviser. Qualifying circumstances for an appeal may include death of a relative, injury or illness of the student, their spouse and/or their dependents, or other special circumstances.

A successful appeal of Financial Aid Probation means students will be monitored and have one semester of continued eligibility or a specific number of semesters as specified by the Academic Plan to meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements and be removed from financial aid probation.

Students with a successful appeal and an approved academic plan are removed from probation and continue to receive aid while on financial aid.

ACADEMIC PLANS

A SAP Academic Plan will outline the specific plan/corrective action to improve academic progress. Students will be required to follow the SAP Academic Plan in order to receive federal 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 for federal aid. Failure to meet the terms of the Academic Plan will jeopardize eligibility for federal financial assistance.

1.9 RESTORING ELIGIBILITY

A student can regain financial aid eligibility by either following the appeals process above, or by becoming compliant with satisfactory academic progress policies.

1.10 NOTIFICATIONS

The Financial Aid Office will notify students in writing when federal aid eligibility is affected by satisfactory academic progress evaluation.

School of General Studies
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

The Financial Aid Office will send written communication independently to students who are placed on or removed from Financial Aid Probation.

Students whose appeal has been approved will be notified in writing that they have been removed from Financial Aid Probation. Students with approved appeals are given one semester (spring or fall) to become compliant. If after the next academic semester, the student is still not meeting satisfactory academic progress, financial aid will be suspended.