

School of Social Work
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

1.1 “AT LEAST AS STRICT...”

Students in the Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) are held to the same academic standards regardless of their federal aid status.

SAP information will be updated in CUSSW Student Handbook & in other publicly available information sources.

1.2 CONSISTENT APPLICATION

All CUSSW SAP policies that will be instituted are universally consistent throughout all academic programs and students.

Part-time students are allowed to accumulate 12 credit hours before they are subject to academic evaluation or financial aid warning/ineligibility.

1.3 REGULAR EVALUATIONS

CUSSW will conduct SAP evaluations each term for each student.

1.4 GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The CUSSW minimum satisfactory GPA is 3.0.

1.5 MAXIMUM TIME FRAME AND PACE OF COMPLETION

Maximum time frame is 130%: 78 maximum attempted credit hours to complete the 60 credit hours required for the degree. The required minimum pace of completion is 77% of attempted credits per term.

For the PhD in Social Work, students are required to complete 49.5 credits to obtain the degree. Therefore, they may attempt 64 credits to complete the 49.5 credits required for the degree. The required minimum pace of completion is 77%.

1.6 EFFECT/TREATMENT OF “ATYPICAL” COURSES/SITUATIONS

School of Social Work
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FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.6.1 EFFECT OF INCOMPLETES

Incompletes (“IN” grades) can only be granted under the circumstances where, owing to an illness or emergency, a student cannot complete the final assignment. The extension period is normally no more than 10 days in length. NOTE: An Incomplete grade cannot be awarded if the student still needs to complete significant portions of classroom work that predate the end of the semester.

Until any “IN” grades are resolved, financial aid will not be disbursed. “IN” grades have no effect on GPA until an official grade change.

1.6.2 EFFECT OF WITHDRAWALS

Withdrawing from courses has no effect on GPA, but these courses will count as attempted credit hours.

1.6.3 EFFECT OF COURSE REPETITIONS

Course repetitions are only permissible when connected to academic plans/appeals. Students must retake *required* courses in order to advance/earn MSW.

Student may repeat courses and receive federal student aid while enrolled at the School of Social Work. However, each time a student repeats a course, it is included in the total, cumulative attempted credits. Therefore, repeated courses, regardless of the prior grade, reduce a student’s ability to meet the program’s maximum timeframe.

1.6.4 EFFECT OF DUAL DEGREES

For dual-degree programs, students spend a term or a year in residence at a specific school. Financial aid eligibility is driven by school in which student is “in-residence.”

School of Social Work
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

1.6.5 EFFECT OF ADVANCED STANDING

Not applicable.

1.6.6 EFFECT OF TRANSFERS OF CREDIT FROM OTHER SCHOOLS OR INSTITUTIONS

Only courses with B or better grade (3.0) from an accredited program are allowed to be accepted as transfer credits.

All transfer credits will be counted as both completed credits, and toward attempted points toward the degree at Columbia.

1.6.7 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.

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.

School of Social Work
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

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).

1.7 STATUS DEFINITIONS

Financial Aid Warning: CUSSW will grant all students placed on academic probation while receiving federal aid a **Financial Aid Warning** that lasts one term/payment period. During this term, the student will be allowed to receive federal funds while on financial aid warning. The student will not need to submit an appeal request. However, at the end of the term of Warning, the student must meet satisfactory academic progress as defined in this document, or he or she will no longer be eligible for federal student aid.

Students will be notified in writing via Columbia email by the Office of Financial Aid that they have been placed on financial aid warning. They will be informed that they will be reviewed for financial aid eligibility at the end of the subsequent term.

Financial Aid Ineligibility: Federal aid recipients who do not meet satisfactory academic progress after one term of Financial Aid Warning are placed on Financial Aid Ineligibility. Students in this status are not eligible to receive federal financial aid unless they successfully appeal.

Financial Aid Probation: Financial Aid Probation is a status assigned to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress and successfully appeals the suspension of Title IV aid. Under federal regulations, a student placed on Financial Aid Probation is conditionally restored to financial aid eligibility for one term (or under an approved Academic Plan). The appeals process applies to extenuating circumstances and is outlined in section 1.9 below.

1.8 PROVISION FOR A FINANCIAL AID WARNING STATUS

School of Social Work
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS

CUSSW will conduct SAP evaluations each term. The financial aid office will issue a Financial Aid Warning to students after one term of unsatisfactory academic progress. This serves as notification that their federal aid eligibility is at risk.

1.9 APPEALS

Appeals may be submitted in cases where extenuating circumstances are present and those circumstances result in failing satisfactory academic progress. Upon approval of an appeal, the student is placed on Financial Aid Probation and conditionally restored to aid eligibility. Students are required to submit their appeals to the Office of Student Services and Office of Advising.

1.9.1 ACADEMIC PLANS

If a student appeals successfully, a corresponding Academic Plan will be issued by the Office of Student Services and Office of Advising to restore Federal Student Aid funding. The Academic Plan will be documented in the student's file.

1.10 RESTORING ELIGIBILITY

Students who fall below SAP guidelines must complete an Academic Plan as issued by the Offices of Student Services and Advising to restore eligibility for Federal Student Aid (FSA). Students cannot regain FSA eligibility by taking a leave of absence or by simply not enrolling for a period of time. Eligibility for FSA can only be restored by successfully completing the requirements of the approved Academic Plan, which ensures that the student is making progress toward meeting SAP standards.

Students who are ineligible for aid but still have enough academic standing to remain enrolled may register for courses and pay out-of-pocket, but FSA eligibility will only be restored via successful completion of the Academic Plan.

School of Social Work
POLICY ON SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA) RECIPIENTS
1.11 NOTIFICATIONS

Students will be notified via institutional email regarding a Financial Aid status, including Financial Aid Warning, Financial Aid Ineligibility, or Financial Aid Probation status, if applicable. Notifications will be sent within 10 business days following each SAP evaluation. These notification will include the results of the evaluation and any impact on the student's eligibility for Title IV, HEA programs funds, along with instructions on the steps to appeal or initiate an Academic Plan, if applicable. Each notification will be documented in the student's financial aid file.