

SAP Regulations and Policies

The University has a responsibility to report to any lender that you are in attendance at the University and that you are making satisfactory academic progress (SAP). This has to be completed prior to future disbursement of funds. Prior to your second disbursement we will be contacting your Schools/Supervisors for progress reports to ensure that you have progressed to meet criteria set out in University Policy in relation to satisfactory attendance and progress. Please see below for further information.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy for the Purposes of Assessing Continuing Eligibility for USA Financial Aid for Students

US Federal regulations (34CFR 668.16) require that a student must be enrolled on an eligible course and must be making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in order to be eligible to receive federal aid from the US Department of Education.

Satisfactory Academic Progression and Continued Eligibility

A student must progress satisfactorily on their chosen degree course to ensure they remain eligible for their funding. The SAP policy consists of two main components:

- 1) Qualitative grades achieved
- 2) Quantitative completion timeframe
 divided into increments
 minimum work requirements
 effect of suspension of studies or course withdrawal

SAP policy is at least as stringent as the policy for students not receiving Title IV aid.

A student shall be deemed to have passed a module if he/she obtains an overall minimum of grade D for the module. Students should pass sufficient course modules to confirm satisfactory progression. (The University Grading Scheme is described in Schedule 4.1 on page 17 of the University Academic Regulations)

Students not fulfilling this requirement will be given one semester on probation in order to satisfy this requirement. If after this probation period they do not meet the requirement, the student will lose their entitlement to future Financial Aid.

Satisfactory progress will be checked prior to disbursement of second or third payments in any one academic year. In the case of continuing students SAP will be checked prior to certification of further loans for the new academic year and then prior to further disbursements.

The University's Academic Regulations for all students can be found at:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/academic-affairs/quality-assurance-and-regulations/academic-regulations>

The following additional requirements are imposed for Students in receipt of Federal Aid:

Maximum Timeframe

A student is entitled to receive aid for 150% of the allocated course time frame, as long as they are studying full time or at least half time. i.e.

1 year degree – student is eligible for aid 1.5 years

- 2 year degree – student is eligible for aid for 3 years
- 3 year degree – student is eligible for aid for 4.5 years

Staff should be aware that granting extensions to students that extends their timeframe beyond the above may result in students no longer being eligible for financial aid.

Financial Aid Probation and/or Suspension

If a student does not meet the requirements in relation to SAP, the Robert Gordon University will put the student on probation for the following term/semester and review their progress and marks to ensure they are attaining an acceptable standard. The student should receive a face to face interview with the School and then be informed in writing of the outcome of the meeting and the probation period.

Probation

A student may fail to meet the requirements of SAP in one increment and receive aid during the next increment. If student fails to meet SAP for two consecutive increments, student is ineligible for aid during the third increment.

If the student's academic standing improves to an acceptable level and they are on track to complete in the maximum time frame, their probation period will cease and the student will be placed back into good SAP. The student remains entitled to financial aid during the initial probation period.

If a student's academic standing fails to improve during the probation period, they will lose their entitlement to receive US Federal Direct Loan program support until such a point that the required academic standard is achieved. The student should be informed in writing of the suspension of financial aid.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Appeals

Students have the right of appeal in relation to any suspension of financial aid and must submit their appeal in writing. Students who have already submitted an application for personal mitigating circumstances to their School to be considered by an examination board may have a decision to withhold financial aid based on the SAP guidelines reviewed by writing a letter requesting this to the Student Finance. The following circumstances would be considered;

- death of a family member
- extended illness of the student
- extended illness of a family member that places hardship on the student
- other mitigating circumstances, with the provision of documentary evidence.

Appeals

Appeals must be received within 10 days of the original suspension letter. Students must indicate in writing the reason for failure to meet the SAP requirements and why there should be no suspension of aid. All supporting documentation should be provided with this letter.

Grounds for the appeal may be:

- the University did not follow the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy for the Purposes of Assessing Continuing Eligibility for USA Financial Aid for Students.

- the evidence submitted to challenge the decision to withhold financial aid was not consider by the financial aid administrator

The Appeal will be considered by the Head of the Student Administration and the Student Finance Manager. The outcome of the appeal decision is final.

Registration

Please be aware that to be able to enrol and obtain your student identification card you need to be able to pay at least your first instalment of tuition fees for your course of study.

Deferral

You have the right to defer your previous loans while still in school. If you wish to do this you should obtain a deferment form from your lender and arrange a meeting with the Financial Aid Officer who will help you to complete the form.

Withdrawals, Interruptions, Refunds

Students who withdraw from their programme of study are required to inform the University in writing. Failure to attend after enrolment is deemed to be a withdrawal. Any "unearned" loan funds disbursed to you must be returned.

Federal Direct Loan students who withdraw from the course of study are not eligible for a refund of tuition fees paid.

If you interrupt your studies you must provide documentary evidence from your School that this has been agreed. You will not be entitled to further Federal Direct Loan funding until you resume studies.