

**The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
Office of Student Financial Services**

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

To be eligible for federal financial assistance, a student must be in good standing and making satisfactory academic progress toward their degree objective per Federal Regulations 34 CFR 668.16(e), 668.32(f), and 668.34. Each financial aid applicant's academic progress will be officially verified at the end of each academic year once all grades have been posted using a qualitative and quantitative measure. **Qualitative standard** is the grade point average (GPA) that a student must have at each evaluation. **Quantitative standard** is the pace at which students must progress through their program to ensure that they will graduate within the *maximum timeframe*. This is calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student has successfully completed by the total number of hours the student has attempted.

A student who is not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is not eligible for financial aid and will be notified of this status by email or letter only if and when a valid ISIR has been received for the academic year. The letter will include instructions on the financial aid appeal process. A student may either appeal this decision or may re-establish their eligibility over time as explained in this policy.

#### **Transfer Students**

Academic progress will not be verified on entering students until the annual SAP evaluation.

#### **Professional Programs (Medical and Dental)**

Confirmation of a student's financial aid eligibility under this policy must be provided to the Student Financial Services Office by the appropriate school official prior to the disbursement of financial aid funds.

### **Enrollment**

Students must be enrolled at least half-time in a *degree-seeking or eligible certificate program* that is accredited by an approved accrediting agency to be eligible for federal, institutional, and state financial aid. Enrollment hours are reviewed at the time of disbursement.

#### **Undergraduate Students**

Financial Aid Standards for Enrollment			
Credit Hours			
Status	Undergraduate Fall Term	Undergraduate Spring Term	Undergraduate Summer Term
Hours for Full-Time Assistance/Term	12	12	12*

Hours for 3/4-Time Assistance/Term	9	9	9*
Hours for Half-Time Assistance/Term	6	6	6*

\*Must be enrolled May – August

### Graduate Students

Financial Aid Standards for Enrollment			
Credit Hours			
Status	Graduate Fall Term	Graduate Spring Term	Graduate Summer Term
Hours for Full-Time Assistance/Term	9	9	6*
Hours for 3/4-Time Assistance/Term	7	7	5*
Hours for Half-Time Assistance/Term	5	5	3*

\*Must be enrolled May – August

### Professional Students

Financial Aid Standards for Enrollment	
Credit Hours	
Status	Medical/DDS Dental Only
Hours for Full-Time Assistance/Term	Full-Time*
Hours for 3/4-Time Assistance/Term	N/A*
Hours for Half-Time Assistance/Term	N/A*

\* Students enrolled in Professional Programs are considered to be enrolled Full-Time.

### Qualitative Standard (GPA)

Students receiving financial aid are required to make satisfactory progress toward their degree objectives. The specific definition of satisfactory progress varies from one curriculum to another.

**Undergraduate:** SAP will be reviewed annually after the end of each spring term and after all grades have been posted. SAP for entering students will not be reviewed until after completion of at least one semester.

- A student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater at the end of each academic year. Those below the standard cumulative GPA will not be eligible for financial aid.

**Graduate:** SAP will be reviewed annually after the end of each spring term and after all grades have been posted. SAP for entering students will not be reviewed until after completion of at least one semester.

- A graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater at the end of each academic year. Those below the standard cumulative GPA will not be eligible for financial aid.

**Professional:** SAP will be reviewed after the end of each spring term (award year) and after all grades have been posted.

- **Medical:** The academic requirements for the M.D. degree include the satisfactory completion of the curriculum designated by the faculty. The progress of each student working toward an M.D. degree is monitored carefully and at least once

each academic year by the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC). The SEPC reviews the qualitative assessment of performance of each student given by the faculty in all courses for which the student enrolled. This may be an actual grade; an indication of pass, fail, or honors; or another form of evaluation.

- **Dental:** The academic requirements for the D.D.S. degree include the satisfactory completion of the curriculum designated by the faculty. The progress of each student working toward a D.D.S. degree is monitored carefully and at least once each academic year by the Student Evaluation Committee (SEC). DDS students must maintain a grade point average of 70 or above at any time during progression through the curriculum.

### Quantitative Standard (Pace of Progression)

Quantitative standard is the pace at which students must progress through their program to ensure that they will graduate within the *maximum timeframe*. This is calculated by dividing the total number of hours the student has successfully completed by the total number of hours the student has attempted.

A student will be permitted a time limit of eligibility for financial aid accordingly:

#### Undergraduate Programs

Program	Standard Time Frame* (Credit Hours)	Maximum Timeframe (Maximum Credit Hours)
Dental Hygiene	120	180
Cizik School of Nursing	120	180

\*Includes transfer credit

#### Graduate Programs

Graduate credits will begin at zero. Any transfer credit applied towards the graduate program will be included in the attempted hours.

Program	Standard Time Frame (Credit Hours)	Maximum Timeframe (Maximum Credit Hours)
Post Graduate Dental	75	105
School of Biomedical Informatics		
• MS	42	59
• PHD	93	130
MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School		
• MS	45	69
• PHD	156	218

<b>Cizik School Of Nursing</b>		
• MS Anesthesia	90	126
• MS Other	42	59
• PhD	46	64
• DNP	51	77
• DNP-NAB	112	168
<b>School of Public Health</b>		
• MS	36	54
• MPH	45	68
• DPH	48	72
• PHD-Epi and Biostat	72	108
<b>Medical Clinical Research</b>		
• MS	36	50

A student must complete at least sixty-seven percent (67%) of the total credit hours enrolled to achieve the maximum timeframe to graduate. For example:

- **Undergraduate:** it takes 120 credit hours to graduate with undergraduate degree. For an undergraduate program measured in credit hours, a period no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program is required. The maximum timeframe for students in undergraduate program is 180 attempted hours ( $120 \times 150\% = 180$ ;  $120/180 = 67\%$ ).
- **Graduate:** The maximum timeframe is a period in which UTHealth defines that is based on the length of the program. Normally, this period is no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the program.

#### Professional Programs

Program	Standard Time Frame (Years in Program)	Maximum Timeframe (Years in Program)
<b>McGovern Medical School</b>	4	6
• Standard Medical Program	4	6
• Alternate Pathway Program	5	6
<b>School of Dentistry</b>	4	5

### **Medical Program:**

- The normal time for completion of required coursework for the **standard M.D.** degree program is four academic years. A student may require additional time due to academic or personal difficulties. In such situations, the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC) may establish a schedule for that student which departs from the norm and which may require repeating a year of study. To be considered making satisfactory progress for financial aid purposes, a student in the standard program must complete the first two years of the curriculum by the end of the third year after initial enrollment and must complete the M.D. degree within six years. To be considered making satisfactory progress for financial aid purposes, a student in the **Alternate Pathway** program must complete the first three years of the curriculum by the end of the fourth year after initial enrollment and must complete the M.D. degree within six years after initial enrollment.
- A student may be granted a leave of absence for a variety of reasons. The period of time for which the student has been approved and taken leave shall be excluded from the maximum time in which an individual student will be expected to complete the program.
- Medical students who are accepted for transfer from other medical schools will be evaluated with respect to level of progress attained, and a determination will be made as to remaining years of financial aid eligibility. This determination will be coordinated amongst the Associate Dean for Admissions, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Financial Services.

### **Dental Program:**

- The normal time for completion of required coursework for the D.D.S. degree program is four academic years. A student may require additional time due to academic or personal difficulties. In such situations, the Student Evaluation Committee (SEC) may establish a schedule for that student which departs from the norm and which may require repeating a year of study. A student in the D.D.S program must complete his/her degree within five years.
- A student may be granted a leave of absence for a variety of reasons. The period of time for which the student has been approved and taken leave shall be excluded from the maximum time in which an individual student will be expected to complete the program.

### **Transfer Credits**

Transfer credit hours accepted for the student's academic program or degree will be counted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree or program and therefore count toward the maximum number of hours attempted for financial aid eligibility.

### **Audit Courses**

Audit courses do not earn academic credit; therefore they are not counted in the calculation of attempted hours. Students auditing classes are ineligible to receive financial assistance for those audit classes.

### **Incompletes**

A grade of "I" (Incomplete) accepted for the student's academic program or degree are counted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree or program and therefore counted toward the maximum number of hours attempted for financial aid eligibility. A grade of "I" (Incomplete) will not impact eligibility for financial aid if a passing grade for that course is earned and replaced on the transcript records during the following semester or the very next semester the course is offered.

### **Failing Grades**

All failing grades will affect the SAP calculation. Failing grades will be counted as attempted hours.

### **Withdrawals**

All course withdrawals will be counted when measuring the maximum time frame to complete the degree or program and therefore counted toward the maximum number of hours attempted for financial aid eligibility.

### **Repeated Coursework**

A student may receive federal financial assistance for retaking coursework that he or she has previously passed in a term based program. **This policy applies only for financial aid eligibility.**

- Repeated coursework that MAY count towards enrollment
  - Repeated coursework may be included towards enrollment if a student receives an unsatisfactory or failing grade. Students may repeat a failed course until it is passed.
  - Repeated coursework may be included towards enrollment if a student is required to meet academic standards in a course that was previously passed. For Example: If a student earns a grade of "D" in a course that requires a minimum grade of "C" for the degree plan, then the course may be counted towards enrollment. This is limited to one repetition of a passed course.
- Repeated coursework that MAY NOT count towards enrollment
  - Repeated coursework may not count towards enrollment if the student takes the passed course more than once. For Example: If a student earns a grade of "D" in a course and repeats the course to increase his GPA, then he is allowed to repeat the course only once. If the student repeats the course a second time, then the course would not be counted towards the student's enrollment for that term.

All repeated coursework will affect the SAP calculation. Repeated coursework will be counted as attempted hours.

### **SAP Appeal Process**

Any student denied state, institutional, and/or federal Title IV financial aid who can prove special circumstances (i.e. illness, injury, family emergency, etc.) pertaining to his/her case may appeal the decision denying aid. Students who wish to appeal their student financial aid eligibility must submit the following documents within 10 business days of the notification/determination date:

- Appeal letter
  1. A signed detailed letter explaining why the student failed to meet SAP.
  2. What has changed that will allow the student to meet SAP at the next evaluation period?
- A student may provide additional documentation supporting the appeal (i.e., medical documentation, death notice of family member, etc.) The lack of supporting documentation *may* result in an appeal denial.
- An academic plan outlining the steps to be taken to achieve SAP requirements will be necessary only if requested by the Financial Aid office. The Academic Plan/Degree Plan must be signed by the Student's Academic Advisor or Dean.

Appeals submitted after the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of the notification/determination date will not be evaluated or effective until the next term. Submitting an appeal does not guarantee the reinstatement of financial aid eligibility.

### **SAP Appeal Decisions**

Appeals will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee (FAAC) within 14 business days from the date the appeal and documentation was submitted. Students will be notified in writing (email or letter) of the appeal decision once the review is complete.

- Appeal Approved – Financial Aid Probation
  - If the appeal is approved and it is determined that the student has the ability to meet SAP requirements at the end of the semester, the student will be placed on financial aid probation for that semester.
  - After the financial aid probation period, the student must be making SAP in order to maintain financial aid eligibility.
- Appeal Approved – Revised Academic Plan
  - Students who require more than one semester to regain SAP, will be required to submit and follow a revised academic plan.
  - If the student was required to submit and follow a revised academic plan, then the student must be successfully following the academic plan which will be reviewed each semester.
  - If the student does not successfully follow the revised academic plan, then the student will lose financial aid eligibility and they will be notified of this status by email or letter. In the event that the course on the academic plan is not available/offered/cancelled for the specified term, the student will be given the opportunity to submit a revised academic plan.
- Appeal Denied
  - If the appeal is denied, the student loses eligibility for state, institutional, and federal student financial aid until they re-establish minimum SAP requirements.

### **Re-establishing Title IV Financial Aid Eligibility**

A student seeking to re-establish eligibility for financial assistance may do so by:

- Achieving the required standards over time.
- Successfully appealing the financial aid decision.

It is the student's responsibility to present evidence to the Office of Student Financial

Services at the time he or she has met minimum requirements for reinstatement of student financial aid.