

# Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

## 1. Overview

The University of York is required by US Federal Law (34CFR 668.16) to define and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students who wish to access US Federal Aid, namely William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans. The guidelines have been established to encourage students to progress and successfully complete the academic programme for which aid is received.

This Policy is designed in compliance with the requirements set out by the US Department of Education and related to students who are in receipt of Direct Subsidised, Direct Unsubsidised, or Direct Plus loans, or a combination of these, or whose parents have Direct Parent PLUS Loans.

## 2. Satisfactory Academic Progress

The US Department of Education regulations require students in receipt of US Federal Aid to be enrolled in an eligible educational programme and making Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to be eligible to receive any Title IV (Direct Loan) funds.

Under Direct Loan regulations, the University of York is obliged to check student progress and will do so prior to the release of the second and third disbursements, each academic year.

Students who receive US Federal Aid will be evaluated at the end of each term. This evaluation process will consider your progress under the following criteria;

- Qualitative (grade-based) measurement
- Quantitative (time-based) measurement

To receive US Federal Aid, you must meet minimum standards for both the above-mentioned components while simultaneously adhering to [academic progress rules](#) and the [UK Government's immigration rules](#).

### Qualitative (grade-based)

Students in receipt of US Federal Aid must remain and maintain at all times in good academic standing. This is consistent with the University's requirement for graduation for all students.

### Undergraduate

Students studying at undergraduate level at the University of York must maintain a minimum of 40% (third-class Honours) grade level. Further information can be found within the University's [Undergraduate Guide for Progression and Awards](#).

## Postgraduate

Students studying at postgraduate level at the University of York must maintain a minimum of 50% (Pass) grade level. Further information can be found within the University's [Postgraduate Guide for Progression and Awards](#).

Detailed information about Academic Progress for all students studying at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research postgraduate levels is set out within the University's [Ordinances and Regulations](#) and reviewed on an annual basis. Students are asked to review and confirm that they will abide by the Ordinances and Regulations during the mandatory enrolment process at the beginning of each academic year.

In addition to the University's academic standards outlined above, additional checks are made in-year for students in receipt of US Federal Aid prior to the release of the second and third disbursements each academic year.

### Quantitative (time-based)

US Federal regulations state that the maximum timeframe for completion of a degree programme may not exceed 150% of the published length of a programme. Periods when a student is not receiving US Federal Aid funding will be included in the maximum timeframe.

Students must complete their programme at a pace that ensures they will graduate within the maximum timeframe and should remain enrolled at least half-time throughout.

These requirements apply to all levels of study at undergraduate and postgraduate; for research degrees, the published timeframe will include a continuation period, or "writing-up" period. Periods of interruption will not count towards this calculation.

Standard <sup>1</sup> Published Programme Length	Published Programme Length	Programme Length in Credits	Maximum Period of Enrolment	Maximum Timeframe in Credits
Undergraduate Honours	3 years	360	4.5 years (53 months)	540
Postgraduate Taught	12 months	180	1.5 years (18 months)	270
Postgraduate Research Degree (PhD - standard) <sup>2</sup>		n/a		n/a

Please note, that while a student may maintain their eligibility for US Federal Aid, institutional academic progress rules and student visa restrictions may impact your ability to continue within the programme. Conversely, a student may lose eligibility for US Federal Aid and still meet the institutional requirements for continued enrolment.

<sup>1</sup> For full-time study on standard programmes. Further information on the notional hours per credit are available within the [Undergraduate Guide for Progression and Awards](#) and the [Postgraduate Guide for Progression and Awards](#).

<sup>2</sup> Each research degree has its own prescribed time limit for completion set out in the degree regulations within the University's [Ordinances and Regulations](#). The [Policy on Research Degrees](#) gives indicative minimum and maximum programme durations.

### Impact of Change to Enrolment

All periods of enrolment contribute when assessing progress, including periods when the student did not receive Direct Loan funding. However, there are some special cases, as listed below;

### Change of programme, transfer credits and module changes

Change of programme, transfer of credits and module changes for the same grade level will count towards the 150% timeframe. Only those credits which count toward the award being sought will be considered for the purposes of SAP.

### Withdrawals

Students considering withdrawing from their programme are encouraged to follow the guidance to [Leave the University](#), and to seek advice on the effect withdrawal can have on loans eligibility and repayment options.

### Incomplete Courses

There is no “incomplete” status at the University of York. Where a student does not complete their programme, they will be given a “Fail” status, dependent on the proportion of assessment which has been completed, i.e. where some credit has been achieved, the student may be eligible to exit with a lower award.

### Course Repetitions

All attempted credits and courses count towards the Maximum Time Frame and grades will be calculated as part of Qualitative grade measurement.

Further information on the impact of enrolment changes can be found in Appendix 1 below.

## 3. Monitoring SAP

SAP will be monitored and confirmed prior to each disbursement period, as below;

Disbursement Period	Term <sup>3</sup> Checked	SAP Period Checked
01 January - 30 March	Autumn	01 September - 31 December
01 April - 30 June	Spring	01 January - 30 March
01 July - 30 September (PG)	Summer 1	01 April - 30 June
01 October - 31 December (continuing students)	Summer 1 (undergraduates) Summer 2 (postgraduates)	01 April - 30 June 01 July - 30 Sept

### Qualitative (grade-based)

SAP is recorded by the students’ departments confirming academic progress via the University’s student records system, which is checked prior to each disbursement payment period

<sup>3</sup> For clarification, the University of York’s academic year consists of a four-term academic year, instead of “semester” periods. Undergraduate students are usually not in attendance over the Summer 2 term.

### **Quantitative (time-based)**

SAP is monitored by students' supervisors during regular supervisor meetings. Where a student is not progressing in a satisfactory way, departments discuss this directly with students in the first instance. Where a student continues to fail to make satisfactory academic progress this is brought to the attention of the Student Financial Support (SFS), usually via the University's student record system, which is checked prior to each disbursement payment period.

## **4. Financial Aid Warning**

Failure to achieve the required standard of academic progress will result in a Financial Aid Warning. This warning will last for one payment period (i.e. until the next disbursement), during which time the student can still receive US Federal Aid. Students will be notified of this Warning in writing.

If the student regains satisfactory academic progress by the next disbursement due date, the next disbursement will be released, and they will be removed from the Financial Aid Warning status.

If the student fails to regain satisfactory academic progress by the next disbursement, they will no longer be eligible for Federal Aid, unless an appeal is submitted (see section 5), and funds will not be disbursed.

### **Re-establishing Title IV Funds**

Where a student has failed to achieve the required standard of academic progress and subsequently becomes ineligible to receive US Federal Aid, they may once again become eligible providing they have met the required standard of academic progress for the subsequent period of payment. The student will remain eligible providing the required standard of academic progress is maintained.

Should the student fail to achieve the required standard of academic progress in future payment periods, the above Financial Aid Warning process will be used.

## **5. Appeals**

The University of York does not have the right to waive the SAP requirement for any student. However, where a student is given notice of termination of their Federal Aid due to failure to maintain SAP, they may appeal within 10 days of receiving the notification if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

The following will be considered as appropriate grounds of appeal;

- death of an immediate family member (parent, grandparents, spouse, sibling, or dependent child),
- an extended illness which has resulted in an absence from academic activities for at least fifteen days,
- the extended illness of an immediate family member that places a hardship on the student,
- the student was the victim of a natural disaster that caused them to be absent from the University,
- or prolonged illness or personal injury of the student.

Appeals should be submitted in writing, by email, from the student's University email account to [sfsu@york.ac.uk](mailto:sfsu@york.ac.uk) and addressed to Ms Louise Bleakley, Student Services Manager. This process is separate from any academic appeals process.

All appeals must be submitted with supporting documentation to evidence the appeal and confirmation of what has changed to allow the student to make satisfactory academic progress at the next payment period. Suitable evidence may include, but is not limited to, medical documentation, including fit to study letters from a medical professional, death certificates for immediate family members, and any other documentation that the student feels would support their appeal.

The appeal will be considered on its merits and a response to the appeal will be provided within 14 working days. Disbursement of loan funding will not be made while an appeal is being processed. The decision following an appeal is final, although students have recourse to the [University's student complaints procedure](#) in the normal way.

If a student's appeal is successful they will be placed on Federal Aid probation for the duration of the subsequent payment period and will continue to be eligible to receive funding for that period. The student must meet SAP requirements in order to remain eligible for Federal Aid.

Following this, if the specific probation requirements are not met, the student will once again become ineligible for Federal Aid. The student will be notified in writing.

If the appeal is denied a student may regain eligibility if they continue to study and their minimum cumulative pass grade reaches the required levels. They will be notified in writing of their change in status within 14 working days after they complete the applicable payment period.

**Please note:** Regardless of the above, students who exceed 150% (where applicable) of the published length of their programme are no longer entitled to receive further Federal Aid.

*Student Financial Support*  
[sfsu@york.ac.uk](mailto:sfsu@york.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 1 - Change to Enrolment**

### **Withdrawals**

Students considering withdrawing from their programme are encouraged to follow the guidance to [Leave the University](#), and to seek advice on the effect withdrawal can have on loans eligibility and repayment options.

If a student did withdraw from a course, they must reapply to re-join the program. If the university did accept an application to re-join any prior credit would count against the applicable Maximum Time Frame. Likewise, the student would return at the same level of eligibility status regarding the Qualitative standards. For example, if they left on a Financial Aid Warning, they would return at the warning level (see Section 4)

### **Incomplete Courses**

There is no “incomplete” status at the University of York. Where a student does not complete their programme, they will be given a “Fail” status, dependent on the proportion of assessment which has been completed, i.e. where some credit has been achieved, the student may be eligible to exit with a lower award.

If a student did not complete a course, they would be discharged from the program after their third examination. If they were to be allowed to re-join, any prior credit would count against the applicable Maximum Time Frame. Likewise, the student would return at the same level of eligibility status regarding the Qualitative standards. For example, if they left on a Financial Aid Warning, they would return at the Warning level (see Section 4).

### **Change in Programme**

Where a student has changed their programmes of study, the work completed in the previous program would count towards their Maximum Time Frame and any previously awarded grades would be considered as continuing towards their Qualitative grade measurement.

### **Course Repetitions**

All attempted credits and courses count towards the Maximum Time Frame and grades will be calculated as part of Qualitative grade measurement. Further information on capped compensation grades can be found within the linked guides in section 2.

### **Transfer Credits**

Credits transferred in from another university may count towards the Maximum Time Frame at the University of York. The grades may be considered for the Qualitative measurement if the prior university’s grade system is equivalent to the UK system. If the system is not equivalent the grades will be considered as a “pass” level.