

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid

1. Purpose

This policy defines Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for all Mercer University School of Medicine matriculated students including those in the following programs:

1. Master of Family Therapy
2. Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences
3. PhD in Biomedical Sciences
4. PhD in Rural Health Sciences
5. Doctor of Medicine

2. Accountability

Under the Dean and with the assistance of the offices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and the Registrar, the Student Assessment and Promotion Committee (SAPC) and/or the Graduate Program Directors are charged with the responsibility for reviewing the satisfactory academic progress of all students matriculated at the Mercer University School of Medicine.

3. Applicability

This policy shall apply to all students who matriculate at Mercer University School of Medicine.

4. Policy

Sound academic principles require that students be required to maintain standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress. The following standards apply to all matriculating full-time or less than full-time students, regardless of their receipt of financial aid funds. The standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress measure a student's performance by qualitative measures (grade point average), quantitative measures (pace of completion) and maximum time allowance.

5. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

a. Satisfactory Academic Progress Checkpoints

- Satisfactory Academic Progress is the appropriate completion of degree requirements, according to published increments, that lead to degree completion with known completion limits.
- Student's academic progress will be reviewed on an annual basis, at the end of each academic year (end of the Summer term, or end of Spring term if there is no Summer term offered in the program), with the exception of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences program who will be reviewed at the end of each semester.

b. Maximum Time Allowance

- Maximum time frame is defined by the School as the maximum number of years and/or credits a student may attempt MUSM courses in the pursuit of a degree. The measurement is cumulative, including all periods with or without Title IV assistance and all credit hours attempted in the student's degree program. Maximum time allowance will be evaluated to determine whether each student can complete the program without exceeding the maximum time frame allowed for that degree program. A student will not be making Satisfactory Academic Progress at the evaluation point where it is determined he or she will exceed the maximum time frame prior to graduation, not just at the evaluation point in which the maximum time frame is actually reached/exceeded.
- Each student will be evaluated to determine if he/she has made adequate progress toward his/her degree according to the table found below.

Program	Maximum Time From Matriculation to Graduation*
Master of Family Therapy	6 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.
Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences	2 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.

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PhD in Rural Health Sciences	6 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.
PhD in Biomedical Sciences	8 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.
Doctor of Medicine	6 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.
Doctor of Medicine, ACT Program	5 Years or 150% of the published credit length of the program, whichever occurs first.

- The maximum number of years spent is the time between initial enrollment in the Program and degree requirement completion. Time spent in a Leave of Absence or Independent Study, or terms not enrolled will be included in the total time in the program.
- 150% of the published credit length of the program includes all attempted credits in the program, including credits for repeat courses and withdrawn courses, in addition to all accepted transfer credits.

c. Completion Rate (Quantitative Measure)

- As a part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress assessment, each student's Completion Rate will be evaluated by dividing the cumulative number of hours earned (successfully completed) in the degree program by the cumulative number of hours attempted in the degree program. In order to achieve satisfactory academic progress, a student must maintain the cumulative completion percentage in accordance with the chart below. Completion percentages ending in .5 or higher will be rounded up to the nearest whole percentage (e.g. 66.5% will be rounded up to 67%.)

Program	Cumulative Completion Rate Percentage
Master of Family Therapy	67%
Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences	67%
PhD in Rural Health Sciences	67%
PhD in Biomedical Sciences	67%
Doctor of Medicine	
Year 1 and 2 Checkpoints	50%
Year 3 Checkpoint	60%
Year 4, 5, and 6 Checkpoints	67%
Doctor of Medicine, ACT Program (All Checkpoints)	67%

- Courses with Incomplete, In Progress or Absent from Final grades will count as hours attempted only, until the course is completed. A passing grade will count as hours earned and attempted; a failing grade will remain as hours attempted only. Final grades received in the middle of a term will be included in the next checkpoint review.
- Withdrawal courses will count as hours attempted only.
- Repeat courses, as well as the initial courses, are included in the cumulative completion rate percentage calculation.
- Remedial coursework is included in the cumulative completion rate percentage calculation.
- Transfer hours accepted into a student's program will count as both hours attempted and hours earned. Transfer hours received in the middle of a term will be included in the next checkpoint review.

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d. Grade Point Average Requirements (Qualitative Measure)

- MUSM students will be evaluated to determine if they have achieved qualitative levels of academic progress. GPA requirements for each program are noted in the table below. Note that most graduate classes are graded on a 4.0 scale and MD classes are graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

Program	Requirements
Master of Family Therapy	Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and have no more than two final grades of "C" or "C+" and no final grade less than "C".
Master of Science in Biomedical Science	Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and all final course grades must be "C" or above.
Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences	Students must achieve a minimum 2.5 GPA after their first semester of enrollment and subsequently maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. All final course grades must be "C" or above.
PhD in Rural Health Sciences	Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and have no more than one final grade of "C" and no final grade less than "C".
PhD in Biomedical Sciences	Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and have no more than two final grades of "C" and no final grade less than "C".
Doctor of Medicine	Students enrolled in the Year 1 curriculum must receive a "Satisfactory" in PBL Blocks 1 and 2, AND be allowed to proceed into the Year 2 curriculum by the SAPC upon completion of all Year 1 academic requirements.
Doctor of Medicine, PC-ACT Program	Students enrolled in the Year 2 curriculum must receive a "Satisfactory" in PBL Blocks 3 and 4, AND be allowed to proceed into the Year 3 curriculum by the SAPC upon completion of all Year 2 academic requirements
	Students enrolled in the Year 3 curriculum must receive a "Satisfactory" in at least 67% of the core clerkships attempted AND be allowed to proceed into the Year 4 curriculum by the SAPC upon completion of all Year 3 academic requirements.
	Students enrolled in the Year 4 curriculum must receive a "Satisfactory" in at least 85% of the Year 4 coursework attempted.
	NOTE: All Doctor of Medicine students must pass the USMLE exams in accordance with the guidelines published by Academic Affairs. Students who are not allowed to enroll in classes due to USMLE exam failure or failure to take a USMLE exam, will not be considered as maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress.
	Percentages ending in .5 or higher will be rounded up to the nearest whole percentage.

- Grades of Withdrawal, Incomplete, In Progress, Absent from Final, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory are not included in GPA calculation. Final grades received in the middle of a term will be included in the next checkpoint review.
- Repeat courses, as well as the initial courses, are included in the qualitative requirements calculation.
- Remedial coursework is included in the qualitative requirements calculation.
- Transfer credits are not included in the qualitative requirements calculation.

e. Notification of Lack of Satisfactory Progress

- Following the annual evaluation, or semester evaluations for the MSPS program, notification will be transmitted from the Office of Student Financial Planning to all students who have not met the standards for SAP. The notification shall indicate the nature of the deficiency and any consequences that have resulted, or may result, including financial aid ineligibility. A student who has lost eligibility for financial aid does not automatically regain eligibility simply by paying for tuition and satisfactorily completing the coursework, nor by sitting out for a semester.

f. Financial Aid Warning Status

- There are currently no programs in the School of Medicine whose students qualify for financial aid warning status.

g. Financial Aid Ineligibility Status

- When the satisfactory academic progress review reveals that a student does not meet the quantitative measures, the qualitative measures and/or maximum time frame schedule, then that student becomes ineligible to receive Federal financial aid for future semesters, until all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are met.

h. Appeal for Reinstatement of Financial Aid Eligibility

- Students who wish to appeal for reinstatement of financial aid eligibility should submit a written appeal to the Office of Student Financial Planning. Exceptional circumstances warranting an appeal and possible exception include, but are not limited to, circumstances such as the death of a relative and injury or illness of the student.
- An appeal form must include an explanation regarding why satisfactory academic progress was not maintained and what circumstances have changed that will allow satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation checkpoint. The appeal must be submitted prior to the last class day of the term in which the student is seeking financial aid funding. Appeal decisions are made by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee, which consists of the Director and Associate Directors of Financial Planning. All appeal decisions are final.

i. Financial Aid Probation

- Financial Aid Probation is awarded to a student if the Appeal has been approved. While on financial aid probation status, the student is eligible to receive financial aid funding for one semester.
- The student's Satisfactory Academic Progress will be reviewed at the end of the financial aid probationary semester. If the student is compliant with all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of the probationary semester, they will regain Federal financial aid eligibility for future semesters. If the student is not compliant with all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards at the end of the probationary semester, they will become ineligible to receive Federal financial aid until all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are met. The student will have the option to appeal again – updated information is expected in subsequent appeals.
- Note that students who regain Federal financial aid eligibility must also meet all student loan eligibility requirements established by the either the One Big Beautiful Bill or by previous loan eligibility requirements, if the student qualifies for Legacy grandfathering status, in order to receive Federal student loans.

j. Academic Plan

- An Academic Plan is created for a student who will not be able to mathematically regain Satisfactory Academic Progress standards within one semester while on financial aid probation. The Academic Plan will include benchmarks that the student must meet for each successive semester to ensure that Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are met by a specific point in time.
- Students are eligible to receive Federal financial aid while on an Academic Plan. Satisfactory Academic Progress will be reviewed at the end of each semester included in the Academic Plan. If the student met all benchmarks included in the Academic Plan they will regain Federal financial aid eligibility for the next semester included in the Academic Plan. If the student is compliant with all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards, they will regain Federal financial aid eligibility for future semesters. If the student is not compliant with all benchmarks included in the Academic Plan, they will become ineligible to receive Federal financial aid until all Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are met. The student will have the option to appeal again – updated information is expected in subsequent appeals.
- Note that students who regain Federal financial aid eligibility must also meet all student loan eligibility requirements established by the either the One Big Beautiful Bill or by previous loan eligibility requirements, if the student qualifies for Legacy grandfathering status, in order to receive Federal student loans.

k. Dismissal or Withdrawal

- Students who are dismissed or who have voluntarily withdrawn from the School are not making satisfactory academic progress and are not eligible to receive financial aid.

l. Documentation

- Documentation of decisions concerning financial aid probation and/or academic plan, appeal or re-establishment of satisfactory academic progress shall be transmitted to the student and will be maintained in the student file in accordance with the MUSM record retention requirements.

m. Dissemination

- This policy shall be published in the same manner as other academic policies of the School including online publication.

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n. Standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress Established Upon Matriculation

- Standards for Satisfactory Academic are applicable for the duration of the student's continuous matriculation in the same program unless any changes in the standards are made. These changes will be posted.

Effective 2026-27