

**Satisfactory Academic Progress for U.S. Financial Aid Recipients****Purpose**

To set out the conditions and requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving U.S. Federal Aid must meet in order to be eligible to receive continued U.S. Federal Aid.

**Audience**

This policy applies only to Murdoch University students receiving U.S. Federal Aid.

**Definitions**

- **U.S. Federal Aid** - Education loans issued as part of the U.S. Department of Education's Direct Loan Program (DLP) including:
  - Stafford subsidized,
  - Stafford unsubsidized, and
  - PLUS loans.
- **Financial Aid Administrator** - Staff member/s trained and familiar with the legislative requirements in the administration of the Title IV program at Murdoch University.
- **Title IV** - A part of the US *Higher Education Act of 1965* that provides financial assistance programs to help eligible US post-secondary students.

**Policy Statement**

Murdoch University complies with U.S. Federal Law (34CFR 668.16, 34CFR 668.32 and 34CFR 668.34) requiring it to define and enforce standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving Federal Aid.

In order for Murdoch University students to be eligible to receive Federal Aid, students must meet minimum standards for both Academic Standing and Maximum Timeframe, whilst simultaneously adhering to University Academic Progress rules and to Australian Immigration / visa legislation. Where there is difference between requirements across legislation, the stricter requirement takes priority.

This means that where this policy may allow students to continue to be eligible to receive Federal Aid, the University Academic Progress Rule and Australian student visa restrictions may impact on the students' ability to continue with the program.

This also means that where students are not eligible to continue with Federal Aid, this does not, in and of itself, prevent them from continuing in their program.

Students receiving Federal Aid have their SAP evaluated at the end of each teaching period. This evaluation process considers the student's progress under both academic standing (grade point average) and completion within the maximum timeframe (pace).

## **Academic Standing**

Murdoch University has a policy and procedure to identify and support students who are at risk of not progressing through their course to graduate in an acceptable timeframe.

In most courses you are required to pass at least half of your credit point enrolment in each semester to demonstrate Satisfactory Academic Progress, however some courses have specific progression rules and you can find details under those courses in the handbook

For the purposes of eligibility for U.S. Federal Aid, students whose academic standing meets one of the below criteria has not meet the satisfactory academic progress test:

- Evaluated as "Cause for Concern" AND has failed more than 50% of the enrolled credit points in one semester
- Are unable to proceed in their course/major under section 6.5

Students receiving Federal Aid must maintain at least a cumulative Pass in each teaching period (an average GPA of 1.0 or greater on a 4 point scale across all courses attempted in each teaching period) throughout their program.

Grades that are included in this calculation are:

<b>Student's Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>	<b>Murdoch GPA scale</b>
N	Below 50%	0.00
P	50 – 59%	1.00
C	60 – 69%	2.00
D	70 – 79%	3.00
HD	80 – 100%	4.00

## **Maximum Timeframe (Pace)**

Students complete their program within 150% of the published program duration. To achieve this, students pass at least two-thirds of the standard full-time load for the session/semester they have studied. A standard full-time load is 12 credit points per teaching period (January-June and July-December). This means passing at least 6 credit points of a 12 credit point load in a teaching period.

For example:

- 3 year degree – eligibility for aid 4.5 years
- 4 year degree – eligibility for aid 6 years
- 5 year degree – eligibility for aid 7.5 year

*All studies are included in this calculation, including withdrawals and incomplete grades.*

Periods of enrolment during which a student does not receive Federal Aid are also counted toward the maximum timeframe for completion.

Pursuit of a second degree resets the maximum timeframe for completion to the length of the new degree, taking into account any credit as per below.

### **Credit from Previous Studies**

Where a student has been awarded credit that will shorten the duration of their studies, US Federal Law (34 CFR 668.34) requires the student to complete the program

within 150% of the revised course duration. This is the revised maximum timeframe for completion.

**It is important to note that you become ineligible for aid as soon as it is established that you do not have enough time to complete the course.** eg if you have a full year (24 credit points) of study remaining to complete a 3 year course and you have studied for 4 years you will immediately be ineligible for aid. i.e. you cannot access aid for the remaining 0.5 years of time allowed for that course

Students should be advised that student visa restrictions may also impact on the students' ability to continue with the program

Periods in which a student is not receiving Title IV aid (due to suspension or student choice) will be counted towards the maximum timeframe.

#### *Incomplete Assessment (Supplementary Exams and Assessments)*

Satisfactory Academic Progression will not be evaluated for a standard teaching period until the incomplete grade is submitted. This is in reference to all supplementary exams and assessments as per Murdoch University's Supplementary Examinations Policy <<http://our.murdoch.edu.au/Student-life/Get-organised/About-exams/Supplementary-exams/>>.

A student is required to achieve a grade on any deferred or supplementary assessment within 6 months of completing a class. Once the grade has been submitted Satisfactory Academic Progression will be evaluated as normal.

#### **Withdrawal**

Under Australian Government legislation Student Visa holders are expected to complete their program within the timeframe given on their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for Federal Aid if it means that they will not complete their program within the maximum timeframe for completion.

Withdrawal from a course or courses affects a student's eligibility for Federal Aid if it means that they are not enrolled in at least 50% load for that teaching period.

Students approved to reduce their study load in one or more semesters are required to complete their program requirements within 150% of the published duration of their program to remain eligible to receive Federal Aid.

#### **Repeating**

A failed unit grade will require a repeat. This will affect both the qualitative and quantitative measures of Satisfactory Academic Progression. Providing a student maintains SAP as defined in this document and they can continue to complete their course within 150% of the registered timeframe of the course, the student will remain eligible to receive U.S. Federal Aid.

## **Federal Aid Probation and Suspension**

At the end of each Semester, a student who was previously in good standing and is now assessed as not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress will be placed on one of the following:-

➤ **Financial Aid Warning**

Students who have not met the Satisfactory Academic progress test will be placed on a Financial Aid warning. While on this warning you will continue to receive US Federal Aid as long as you fulfil the requirement to pass 50% or more units in all future enrolment periods.

➤ **Financial Aid Suspension and Probation**

Students who do not make satisfactory academic progress in a second subsequent semester are identified as Unstatisfactory Progress. Students whose academic standing is Unsatisfactory academic progress are not eligible for financial aid and their aid will be suspended

The policy for Federal Aid Probation and/or Suspension is as follows:

1. Students who fail to achieve the required GPA level commensurate with the longevity of their degree program, and their academic level within that degree structure, will be placed on Federal Aid Warning for six months.
2. Students who have been placed on Warning and subsequently meet the GPA requirements in the next semester will be placed back into good Federal Aid (SAP) standing
3. Student who have been placed on Warning and do not meet the requirements applicable to degree and level will be suspended and ineligible to receive aid until such time as they achieve the required GPA.
4. Students may appeal their suspension, via written appeal to the WAFAA Appeals Committee. Students who appeal will be informed of the committee's decision, which is **final**.
5. Students who successfully appeal a suspension will be placed on Federal Aid Probation

## **Appeals**

Students who have their eligibility for U.S. Federal Aid suspended may appeal the suspension if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

1. Death of a family member (parent, spouse, sibling, dependant child etc)
2. The extended illness of the student – extended illness as defined as a documented chronic or recurring medical or emotional illness that causes the student to be absent from class at least 15 days or more
3. The extended illness of a family member that places hardship on the student. Immediate family member includes parent, spouse, sibling, dependant
4. Mitigating circumstances as determined by the Financial Aid Appeals committee.

All appeals must be received within ten days of receipt of the Notice of Suspension. Students should submit an appeal to

Student Financial Support Office  
Attn: WAFAA Appeals Committee  
Murdoch University  
South Street  
Murdoch WA 6150

Students must indicate in writing to the chairperson the reason (s) for failure to meet the necessary Federal Aid SAP requirements and why Federal aid should not be suspended. All documentation to support the appeal is required at time of appeal submission.